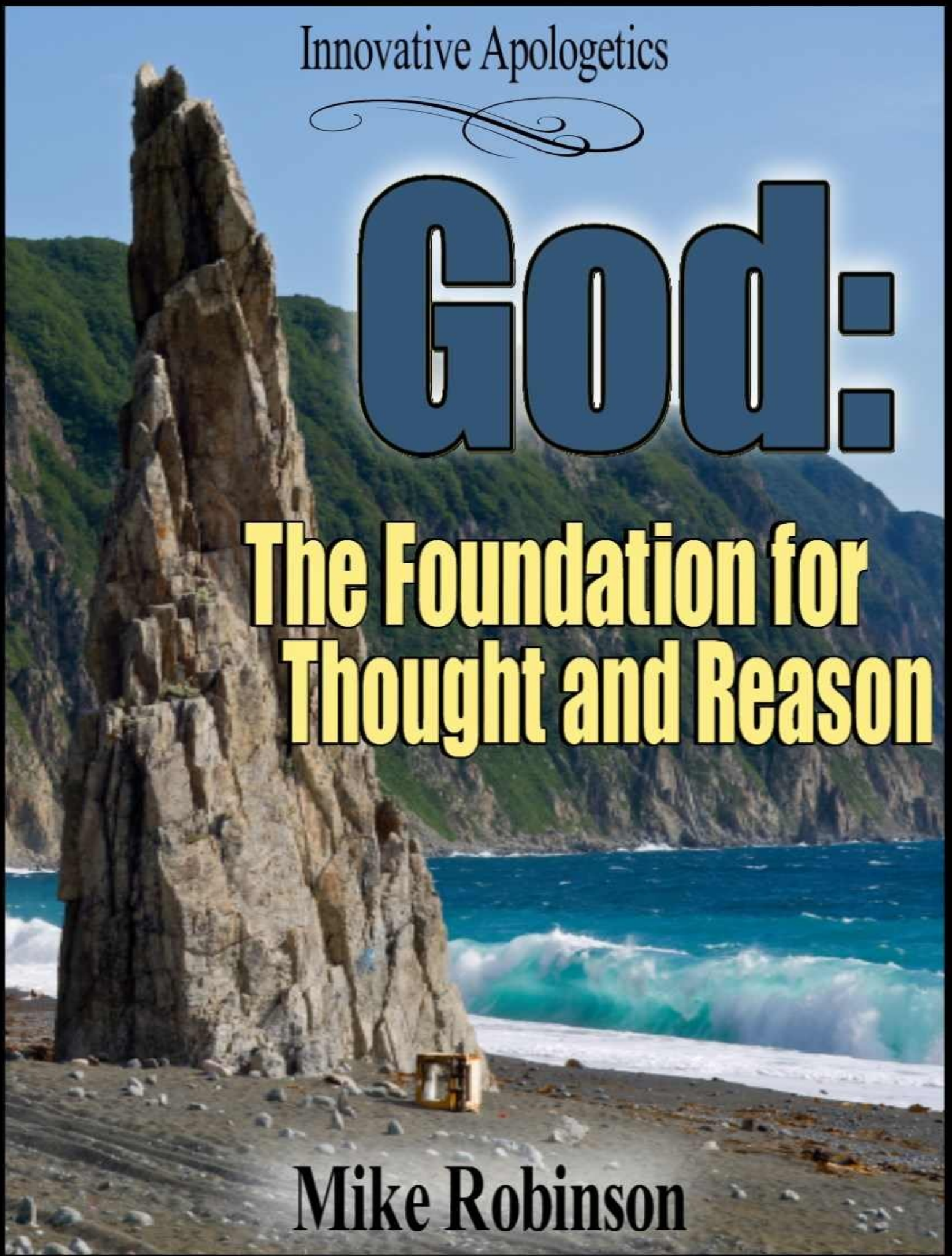
Innovative Apologetics
God:
The Foundation for Thought and Reason
Mike Robinson

God: The Foundation for Thought and Reason

The Rational Requirement of Christian Theism

Mike A Robinson

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Dedication

To the valiant and sagacious Christian thinkers who have boldly defended the Faith, may you only seek *Deo dignus vindice nodus* (a knot worthy of God to untie).

INTRODUCTION

> He that perverts truth shall soon be incapable of knowing the true from the false. If you persist in wearing glasses that distort, everything will be distorted to you (Charles H. Spurgeon).

Many nonbelievers do not realize that they have personal biases, presuppositions, rational precommitments, and ethical assumptions that distort their view of reality. They are unaware that their worldview (WV) misrepresents and warps all aspects of human experience. Many spend the majority of their adult life carefully husbanding their thoughts, shielding their WV and ultimate precommitments from critical analysis. Many atheists base their philosophy on wishful thinking as they seek to put away theism's moral absolutes. Since they do not want to be restrained from their profligacy, they vociferously declare that God does not exist. Rubbish. Disliking something does not mean that it does not exist. Paul draws this out:

> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen (Romans 1:18-25).

Jonathan Edwards offers this explanation: "There is no one thing whatsoever more plain and manifest, and more demonstrable, than the being of God. It is manifest in ourselves, in our bodies and souls, and in everything about us wherever we turn our eye, whether to heaven, or to the earth, the air, or the seas. And yet how prone is the heart of man to call this into question! So inclined is the heart of man to blindness and delusion, that it is prone to even atheism itself." Spurgeon adds, "He who hates truth soon hates its advocate." Their abhorrence of the Almighty is one reason that atheists deny God's existence.

It is more than a little odd that professional anti-theists not only lack an absolute epistemic ground (they cannot supply an immutable ground for immutable universals), but they maintain a public presence and make a living promoting irrationality; hence much of their anti-theistic goals are incongruous.

> Of all the offspring of time, Error is the most ancient, and is so old and familiar an acquaintance, that Truth, when discovered, comes upon most of us like an intruder, and meets the intruder's welcome (Charles Mackay).

A worldview based on Christian Theism (CT) furnishes the epistemic wellspring and absolute ethical ground for truth. The Christian Worldview (CWV) provides immutable universal absolutes (moral laws and laws of logic) necessary to account for reason, intellectual advancement, and knowledge as it offers an immovable epistemic base for "true truth."

Purpose Requires a Starting Point

D. Brookes tells a story of a backwoods railroad in the old days —just a train with a wood-burning engine and a lot of cars. The people would put the cargo and goods on flat cars and have it carried by the train to the next station. One day a man shipped a goat up the line with a tag on him indicating the specific station to put him off. The goat began to eat everything in sight (as a goat will), and finally chewed up his tag and swallowed it. The brakeman did not know where to transport him, so he let him go to the end of the line. "Why didn't you put that goat off?" the conductor asked. "Well, boss," he replied, "he don't know where he's going, and I don't know, 'cause he's chewed up his tag." Non-believers are like that—they don't know who they are or where they are going because they remove the word of God from their lives; the truth that reveals their identity and purpose. In the end, atheists place their WV on self-grounded reason; thus they are devoid of a means to accurately discern truth and direction.

Presuppositions and Worldview Lens

> Many questions are answered wrongly, not because the evidence is

> contradictory or inadequate, but because the mind through its fundamental dispositions and presuppositions is out of focus with the only kind of evidence which is really available (H.H. Farmer quoted by Paul Moser: *The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined*).
>
> Scrivener argues that "the Lord is the presupposition of anything and everything" (Steve R. Scrivener; John Hughes, Editor: *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Theology of John M. Frame*).

One spring morning in Los Angeles I walked to an empty field, where I sat down and laid on the grass to rest. I looked to my side and focused on some blades of grass next to where I was positioned on the ground. The grass appeared blurry and unclear because it was so close to my eyes. This short-ranged focus not only strained my peepers, but it also made everything beyond the tip of my nose blurry and indistinct. As I adjusted my sights, I needed to rise up to a higher position in order to see with clarity. Accordingly, to have lucidity, one must arise and find a loftier epistemic position than that of the unaided and finite human mind. The transcendent God has that lofty and superior status to provide clarity and comprehension needed to understand. God and His revelation provide perspicuity to believers.

> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (Psalm 36:6).

The Laws of Logic

> The ultimate norms for human knowledge are found not in any human mind or minds, or anywhere else in creation, but in the mind of God (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> There is a patent self-contradiction running through all attempts, however sophisticated they may appear, to derive rationality from irrationality (John Lenox: *God's Undertaker*).

In this volume, when I discuss logic, I am referring to the laws of logic (also named the laws of reason, laws of thought, and the laws of thought). There are

things that transcend the material realm, including the laws of logic. A = A (Law of Identity) and A~~A (Law of Non-contradiction) universally; an immutable universal (something that is always true) cannot be grounded by a mutable particular (non-universal) cosmos, which atheism rests upon. Therefore atheism lacks the necessary ontological endowment to underwrite the laws of logic.

I employ the expression "a particular" as an individual thing, a specific entity that may be material, abstract, or spiritual. It lacks universal reach forasmuch as it is one finite thing. A material particular cosmos that is mutable lacks universality and immutability required to account for the universal immutable laws of logic; God possesses these attributes, thus He sufficiently accounts for the laws of logic. The laws of logic must be utilized in everything one does: in all one's actions and in all knowledge claims. They are inescapable; hence God is inescapable. Atheists innately know this truth but they do not wish it to be true; consequently, in many important ways, they are irrational.

The Importance of Rhetoric

> And he (Paul) went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, *reasoning* and *persuading* concerning the things of the kingdom of God. … he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, *reasoning* daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks (Acts 19:8-10; italics mine).

The truth of Scripture is the most significant apologetic resource available. Employing correct reasoning is very important. Additionally, the apologist should develop his rhetorical skills. Plato characterized humanity as a "featherless biped." When the philosopher Diogenes learned about Plato's definition, he offered his rival a plucked chicken. "Here is Plato's man," Diogenes exclaimed. Visual flair and high-quality rhetorical skills can be effective tools to win arguments and communicate important ideas, yet one quickly learns that others can present potent rhetorical contrivances as well. The apologist must strive to improve his rhetorical skills so he does not become a "bad lawyer with a good case."

Cicero defined rhetoric as "speaking in a persuasive manner."

Rhetoric is essential in view of the fact that there is an important distinction between proof and persuasion. High-quality rhetorical skills facilitate persuasion. Of course only God's sovereign grace saves men through His word and Spirit, yet we are called on to pursue truth and take part in the advancement thereof.

Augustine is an excellent example of one who embraced the art of rhetoric, especially as a minister of the word. He asserted that rhetoric is neither good nor bad in itself, but it can be used effectively to support or defend both what is true and what is false (a good lawyer wins a bad case). Thus one of my goals is to provide weighty proof encased in high-quality rhetoric (which is easy to say and hard to do!).

Augustine goes on to point out that if one wishes to defend truth, it's important to be eloquent in order to refute what is false through the power of rhetoric: this means that the rhetor must not only instruct the audience in truth, he must also persuade them of the truth so that they will apply it.

Truth and Excellent Rhetoric

Henry Ward Beecher gave a very gripping report of a sermon by Jonathan Edwards. Beecher reports that in the doctrinal component of Jonathan Edwards' sermon, the powerful preacher was only getting his "guns into position," but that in his "applications he opened fire on the enemy." He lamented: "There are too many of us, I am afraid, who take so much time getting our guns into position that we have to finish without firing a shot. We say that we leave the truth to do its own work. We trust to the hearts and consciences of our hearers to apply it. Depend upon it, gentlemen, this is a great and fatal mistake." One must discover the importance, manner, and effectiveness of potent rhetoric and the application of truth.

> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and respect (1Peter 3:15).
>
> A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I

> saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent (John Calvin).

Henceforth my aim is to provide biblically-motivated arguments that sway believers and unbelievers towards the truth and sufficiency of Christian theism.

The Supremacy of Scripture

> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as *nonsensical*, when he has used them—as steps—to climb beyond them. He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it (Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Tractatus;* italics mine).

Late in life Thomas Aquinas was asked whether he might ever continue his writing. "No," he replied, "All that I have written seems to me like straw compared with what has now been revealed to me." Compared to Scripture and its infallible truth, the following pages are but straw. Scripture is the rule for faith and life; it should be the foundation for all apologetic endeavors and my hope is that this volume consistently reflects the truth of God's word as it equips the reader to know that God is necessary for knowledge. Christianity provides salvation by grace alone and the steps to grow in knowledge that are true and sound.

Truth, Accuracy, and Sound Arguments

> The demand for certainty is one which is natural to man, but is nevertheless an intellectual vice (atheist Bertrand Russell).

In writing an apologetic book one must correctly summarize the arguments from opponents of CT and my goal is to do so accurately. Nonetheless all volumes

produced by flawed men fall into ambiguity of expression and deliver some contentions without sufficient argumentation. I pray that the reader may learn, improve upon, and apply the truths herein and seek to expand Christian apologetics in their own circle of influence.

Influenced By Countless Scholars

"Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal," penned T.S. Eliot. I concur with Tony Woodlief who commented on Eliot's quote: "I am neither poet nor thief." Yet he utilizes "by necessity the work and ideas of others" (*Wall Street Journal*, 7/9/10). And in this text the influence of countless Christian thinkers appears throughout. Without the work of evidential, covenantal, and classical apologists this work would not be possible. I thank God for the faithful labor of the scholars who came before me as well as many of the erudite contemporary apologists and philosophers. Moreover, I attempt to base the content of this volume on the truth found within the biblical worldview.

I agree with Van Til's admission: "The argument for the existence of God and for the truth of Christianity is objectively valid. We should not tone down the validity of this argument to the probability level. The argument may be poorly stated, and may never be adequately stated. But in itself the argument is absolutely sound" (Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*).

The following pages provide many arguments that are sound and they have convinced numerous people of their effectiveness. I know that the truth and the proof for that truth are presented herein. Nevertheless I leave the verdict of my persuasive power (or lack thereof) up to the reader as I submit the results to my Lord and set them at His footstool. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The Effect of the Cross

> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Where is the wise?

> Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (1 Corinthians 1:18-20).

Noteworthy Words, Language, and Terminology

The following definitions are needed to provide clarity for the remainder of the book. If you are not familiar with apologetics and its terminology, you will want to place a bookmark on this page and refer to it until you are fluent in the vocabulary.

- **Apologetics**: The study and application of defending the faith (See 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; Acts 17-20).

- ***A Priori* Argument**: An argument prior to or independent of observation and experience, which is assumed to be true without the necessity to prove it. It is fully and universally independent of experience, discernment, and discovery by the five senses.

• **Empiricism**: The belief that truth is to be found through the use of the five senses alone. Observation and measurement are the means to discover reality. All truth is discovered by the senses—what we can see, feel, observe, and measure.

• **Epistemology**: The study of how we know what we know; the nature and basis of knowledge; the accounting and justifying of knowledge claims; and the sources and scope of knowledge.

"What do people ordinarily mean, when they say that they 'know' something?" (Greg L. Bahnsen: *Van Til's Apologetic*). A true belief (epistemic feature) reflects the way a thing really is or how reality really is (metaphysical feature), thus ontology and metaphysics relate to the knowledge process and its justification (epistemology). Consequently the knower must begin with a worldview that is the foundation for one's epistemic position. Epistemic rights abide only in a system of knowledge that provides universals and invariants.

• **Immutable**: Unchanging; invariant; that which cannot change; always remaining the same; not mutable; perpetually the same, unceasingly unchanging, changeless (God, the laws of logic, and moral law are immutable).

• **The Laws of Logic**: Abstract laws of thought, truth, and reason that are immaterial, aspatial, atemporal, universal, obligatory, necessary, immutable, and absolute. Some academics identify them as the laws of thought or the laws of reason. A few scholars strongly prefer to name them the laws of logic because they are independent of human minds. All rational thinking (and communication) presupposes and uses the laws of logic.

The most well-known law is the Law of Non-contradiction: A cannot be A and Non-A at the same time in the same way (A~~A). A man cannot be his own father.

The Law of Identity is A is A (A=A).

The laws of logic reflect the nature and mind of God; thus, they have ontological grounding—that is, they are grounded in the very nature of truth itself and cannot be reduced to human convention, opinion, or psychology. Without these laws, knowledge and rational thinking are impossible. To deny the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one's attempt to deny them. Those who deny the laws

of logic are participating in a self-defeating endeavor.

The law of logic known as the Law of Non-contradiction (LNC), the Principle of Contradiction or the Law of Contradiction is perpetually necessary and in the words of Aristotle: “One cannot say of something that it is and that it is not in the same respect and at the same time.”

Allan Bloom stated that “The earliest-known explicit statement of the principle of contradiction, the premise of philosophy, and the foundation of rational discourse” is given in Plato’s *Politeia.* Therein is where the character Socrates states, “It’s plain that the same thing won’t be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing.”

- **Materialism/Physicalism:** All that exists is composed of or depends on matter and motion.

> Physicalism is the thesis that everything is physical, or as contemporary philosophers sometimes put it, that everything supervenes on, or is necessitated by, the physical. The thesis is usually intended as a metaphysical thesis, parallel to the thesis attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Thales, that everything is water, or the idealism of the 18th Century philosopher Berkeley, that everything is mental. The general idea is that the nature of the actual world (i.e. the universe and everything in it) conforms to a certain condition, the condition of being physical. Of course, physicalists don't deny that the world might contain many items that at first glance don't seem physical — items of a biological, or psychological, or moral, or social nature. But they insist nevertheless that at the end of the day such items are either physical or supervene on the physical (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

I employ the terms atheism, materialism and physicalism interchangeably: I apply these three positions as strict materialism. There are selected scholars who make distinctions even though they all ultimately appear to reduce to strict materialism. Subsequently, general atheistic materialism is a physical-only philosophy. It asserts the belief that only the physical/material universe exists; there are no gods, angels, or spirits. The advocate for strict materialism tries to prove that only the material world is there, all the while he uses immaterial reason, thus he supplies his own defeater. Hard materialism cannot justify immaterial objective moral values, mathematical truths, perpetual personal identity, and the laws of logic.

> If materialism is true, then I think Nietzsche is right: truth is not a value; life-enhancing illusions are to be preferred. If truth is out of all relation to human flourishing, why should we value it? (Bill Vallicella).

• **Nothing**: A strict universal negation. Take anything, and it is not anywhere. Take anything, and it does not exist in anyway. Nothing at all.

• **Ontology**: The study of the nature of being; from the Greek word *ontos*. Ontology is the study and analysis of “existence,” or reality in general, in fundamental categories as well as relations thereof.

The view of universals I utilize in this volume is connected to my position on ontic reality, of being (ontic: pertaining to ontology; relating to real or factual existence). My concept of being is comparatively univocal as I affirm that being is a broad category.

Ontic actuality is predicated of a thing; one thing that is always predicated and essential is that the thing exists forasmuch as all things that may be intelligible are in the class of things that exist as material, abstract, mental, fictional, or spiritual kinds.

• **Perichoresis**: A theological term concerning the doctrine of the Trinity that specifies the intimate union, mutual indwelling, and mutual interpenetration of the three members of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in relation to one another within the one God.

• **Presupposition**: One's primary rational principle. A preeminent belief held to be true and taken as a precommitment. It is the belief that is held at the most foundational level of one's grid or web of beliefs. It is the lens through which one interprets reality; it is taken for granted and assumed in making a statement or a theory. It is one's rational starting point; primary and fundamental assumption; and metaphysical foundation. Everyone has presuppositions—primary belief patterns that influence one's thinking and outlook. Reason, logic, mathematics, knowledge, predication, and morality are consistent with Christian presuppositions (see below for additional explication).

• **Rationalism**: The belief that truth is found only by the right use of reason and logic.

• **Reason**: Rational capacity, and the ability and proclivity to follow the same in a logical manner. To reason or to use one's reasons in an orderly manner. The concept of reason is closely related to the concepts of language and logic, as reflected in the multiple meanings of the Greek word *logos*, the root of logic, which translated into Latin became *ratio* and then in French *raison*, from which the English word "reason" was derived. In contrast to reason more generally, language refers not to the thinking as such, but to the communication or potential communication of rational thoughts. Plantinga opines: "Reason is the power or capacity whereby we see or detect logical relationships among propositions" (Alvin Plantinga: *Warranted Christian Belief*).

> I do not believe Van Til defines reason anywhere, but it is clear that he views it primarily as a human capacity or faulty. Specially, reason is the capacity of a person to think and act according to logical norms, including the capacity to form beliefs, draw inferences, and formulate arguments (Frame: *CVT*).

Reason: (1) The ability to understand and explain cogently, based on evidence and according to logical principles; (2) the ability to treat others fairly and decently, unless one is harmed by them.

I. This is a fundamental human capacity, and based on the capacity to represent things symbolically. A cogent explanation is one that is based on true or probable premises and deductively entails what it explains. Science is based on reason, and the test that something is a real science is that it has produced a real technology that works independent of belief in or understanding of the science that produced it.

There are three basic kinds of reasoning, where reasoning involves argumentation of any kind using assumptions and inferences of conclusions:

> 1. Deductions: To find conclusions that follow from given assumptions
> 2. Abductions: To find assumptions from which given conclusions follows
> 3. Inductions: To confirm or infirm assumptions by showing their conclusions do (not) conform to the observable facts (PhilosophicalDictionary.com).

• **Transcendental Argument (TA)**: Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen states "A transcendental argument begins with any item of experience or belief whatsoever and proceeds, by critical analysis, to ask what conditions (or what other beliefs) would need to be true in order for that original experience or belief to make sense, be meaningful, or intelligible to us." TAs begin with the form "p presupposes q" in contrast to arguments for theism which begin with the premise "p implies q."

I affirm that TAs are lofty arguments inasmuch as all men must begin with some *a priori* assumptions within sound or even unsound argument forms. Additionally, TAs can be sound in an affirmation or even a denial of their premise (e.g., anti-theism presupposes theism).

Transcendental arguments “attempt to discover the preconditions of human experience.” For x (some aspect of human experience) to be the case, y must also be the case since y is a precondition of x. Since x is the case, y is the case. It is “not a deductive consequence of the premises of the argument but rather the metaphysical and logical ground of the very possibility of the premises themselves” (Bahnsen).

• **Truth**: Truth is that which is consistent with actuality; it objectively matches reality and is not merely reliant on subjective convictions. “While God wants to reach the heart with truth, he does not bypass the mind” (Jonathan Edwards). Lawson comments: “What is truth? It is defined as that which conforms with fact or reality. … Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, character, glory, and being of God. Truth is the self-disclosure of God Himself. … All truth must be defined in terms of God, whose very nature is truth” (Steven J. Lawson).

> Truth is only the agreement between reason which judges and reality which the judgment affirms. Error, on the other hand, is but their disagreement. I say that Peter exists; if this judgment of existence is true, it is because Peter does indeed exist. I say that Peter is a rational animal; if I am speaking truly, it is because indeed Peter is a living being endowed with reason. (Etienne Gilson).

> Truth is the cry of all, but the game of few (George Berkeley).

• **Universals**: A universal is something that is true or applies everywhere and at all times. Immutable laws in mathematics and logic are universals. Universals are applicable to or affecting all things, individuals, conditions, or cases; in general. Existing or prevailing everywhere, applicable or occurring throughout or relating to everything everywhere in the cosmos and outside the material cosmos. An assertion, statement or proposition that affirms or denies something about every member of a class, as in all men are mortal; a general term or concept or the type such a term signifies all of one thing, concept, or truth; a metaphysical entity taken to be the reference of a general term, as distinct from the class of individuals it describes.

In general, I employ this term in reference to laws or entities that are not limited ontologically to the spatio-temporal realm; the Law of Non-contradiction and the

Law of Identity are examples of universals.

There are diverse meanings and applications of the term “universal,” but herein I develop the classification above.

- **Worldview (WV)**: An overall perspective of life. One sees and defines the world through a basic grid of presuppositions, a worldview. It is the rational network used to evaluate reality.

> All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions: 1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope? (Immanuel Kant).

• **Yahweh (YHWH)**: The Lord God of the Bible sometimes imprecisely called Jehovah and translated in the Old Testament as LORD (all caps). Christians profess that He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one God. He alone is the true and living God. He also calls Himself “I AM that I AM” (Exodus 3:14; John 8:24, 58). He is the only true and living God.

Supplementary Material on Presupposition

> Most of my errors are errors of assumption (Hall of Fame Quarterback Fran Tarkenton).
>
> All scientific observation is to some extent interpreted through a paradigm. However neutral he or she might pretend to be, the scientist always filters data through a set of unspoken (or unconscious) presuppositions (James Spiegel: *The Making of an Atheist: How Immorality Leads to Unbelief*).
>
> Perfect objectivity is impossible, at least for mere mortals. Yet some persist in claiming that science gives us an objective, unfiltered view of the world. For scientists are not immune to the influence of their own beliefs and values as they do their research and theory formulation (Spiegel: *The Making of an Atheist*).

Varied Use of the Term Presupposition

> He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:15-17).

The term “presupposition” has developed in various categories of philosophy (including in the branch of pragmatic linguistics) as an assumption concerning reality. It can also be thought of as the back-setting belief involving an assertion, for this belief is assumed and understood in a communication act. This use is similar in selected ways to my use, but with important differences. Nonetheless, an exposition on linguistic use will help the reader better understand its employment within a TA.

Notice how these linguistic presuppositions function:

- I stopped attending the opera.

This statement presupposes I have been to the opera before.

A necessary precondition for my discontinuing the act of going to the opera is that I must have attended an opera previously.

One of the most remarkable aspects about arguing from presupposition is that the negation of an assertion does not affect its truth. In linguistics one can assert:

- I need to eat again.
- I do not need to eat again.

Notice that both of the aforementioned assertions, the affirmation and the negation, presuppose that I had eaten previously. Thus one can see that a presupposition is differentiated from what is implicated or what can entail from

the assertion.

- My lawn is green.
- My lawn is not green.

Both statements presuppose I have grass; if true both statements require that I have a lawn.

If one says that your car looks like a Ford, yet your car is a Chevy, his mistaken assertion presupposes that you own a car. Regardless of whether he was correct concerning the trade name of your car, he still presupposes that you own a car. In addition to linguistic presuppositions, there are epistemic presuppositions: things one must assume within the knowledge enterprise (the laws of logic, truth, and predication).

Presuppositions and Christian Truth

> Unbelievers "are presupposing the Lord whenever they claim to possess any knowledge, discern any truth, use logic, etc." (Steve R. Scrivener: *Speaking the Truth in Love).*
>
> We all have presuppositions, the non-Christian as well as the Christian, the Islamist, the Mormon, the secularist, and Uncle Tom Cobbly and All. Another word for "presupposition" in this sense would be "premise" or "assumption." So we start our arguments, all of them, from premises, or from assumptions, things we take for granted. An assumption may simply be that, an assumption, taken to be true for the sake of the argument. But it may also be something that the arguer holds to be true. We all have such assumptions, from the least of us unto the greatest, matters which we take to be true and which form the basis of other claims that we make. Besides, we all have agendas too (Paul Helm: *HelmsDeep.blogSpot.com*).
>
> Presupposition = narrative = worldview (Helm: *HelmsDeep*).
>
> What I do know of myself, I know by Thee enlightening me

(Augustine: Confessions 1:1).

I employ non-lexical or non-linguistic presuppositional focus in my arguments for the existence of God as I amble through epistemological and ontological fields to contend for the truth of the CWV. I contrast non-theistic presuppositions with Christian presuppositions using ultimate rational standards such as the laws of logic, predication, and moral absolutes. I often employ an ontological TA (not to be confused with an Ontological Argument) that seeks to prove the necessity of God's ontological status to account for some essential element within human experience.

The prefix "pre" in presupposition does not concern a temporal position, but I use it as a position of preeminence, superiority, and importance. It concerns a belief that takes preeminence, the more ultimate criterion or standard providing the conditions for intelligibility; the ultimate presupposition is the triune God as He supplies the *a priori* essentials to make sense of human experience.

It's hard to see the rainbow through dark glasses (Johnny Cash).

James Spiegel continues to expose the biases of atheists inasmuch as they suffer from "paradigm-induced blindness. Their theoretical framework prevents them from seeing the truth, even when it is right in front of them" (Spiegel: *The Making of an Atheist*). Atheists are rationally and ethically blind in their assessment of Christian theism (CT).

K. Scott Oliphint echoes previous scholars as he notes: "Given any fact or experience, it (TA) asks the question as to the presuppositions behind that fact, and which make it possible." Michael Butler adds that "only the Christian worldview provides the necessary preconditions for the intelligibility of human experience. That is, only the Christian view of God, creation, providence, revelation, and human nature can make sense of the world in which we live."

John Frame contends: "Among all the sources of divine revelation (including nature, history, human beings in God's image), Scripture plays a central role. Indeed, though the point cannot be argued in detail here, my view is that Scripture is the supremely authoritative, inerrant word of God, the divinely authored, written constitution of the church of Jesus Christ. Scripture is therefore the foundational authority for all of human life including apologetics. As the ultimate authority, the very word of God, it provides the foundational

justifications for all our reasoning, without itself being subject to prior justification." Thus the complete CWV, in principle, must be presupposed for the intelligibility of human experience.

> What's the condition of the possibility of the world being intelligible? God (Bernard Lonergan: *Intellectuals Speak Out About God*).

The skeptic Tom Paine asked Benjamin Franklin what he thought of the book he wrote that aimed to undercut Christianity. The only reply from Franklin was: "Tom, he who spits against the wind spits in his own face." And the non-believers who attack the CWV have more than epistemic spittle on their faces given that they have to presuppose the truth of CT even in their attacks against it.

Stephen Prothero rightly notes (vis-à-vis judges) that when it comes to scholars and their biases, there are "only two types: those who acknowledge their biases and therefore try not to succumb to them, and those who are ignorant of their biases and therefore succumb to them unwittingly" (*USA Today*, 5/17/10). All men have their own controlling presuppositions; no one is truly detached but is empowered by *a priori* biases and engrained assumptions.

Recognizing One's Rational and Ethical Predispositions

> Belief in God is ultimately, of course, the presupposition that controls even one's concept of reason itself (John Frame, *DKG*).

> The man of science is a poor philosopher (Albert Einstein).

Dr. Lennox presses the need to recognize one's biases and presuppositions when looking at the world as well as science: "What about bias? No one can escape it–neither author nor reader. We are all biased in the sense that we all have a worldview that consists of our answers and partial answers to the questions that the universe and life throw at us. Our worldviews may or may not be even consciously formulated, but they are there nonetheless. Our worldviews are … shaped by our experience and reflection" (John Lennox: *God's Undertaker*).

On pre-theoretical commitments concerning science Michael Polanyi notes: "These maxims and the art of interpreting them may be said to constitute the

premises of science but I prefer to call them our scientific beliefs. These premises or beliefs are embodied in a tradition, the tradition of science." Foundational beliefs are important, essential, and cannot be avoided.

> Admitting our biases is the best way towards rational discussion (John Lennox: *Expelled*).

All men approach the pursuit of truth or science with rational precommitments and personal biases. The wise man recognizes this and the honest man admits it. I have a rational precommitment to the CWV forasmuch as it is true and it provides the necessary pre-essentials to account for knowledge.

Greg L. Bahnsen's Definition of Presupposition

> Presuppositions form a wide-ranging foundational perspective or starting point in terms of which everything else we believe is interpreted, in terms of which everything else we believe is evaluated and interrelated. And that's why presuppositions are said to have the greatest "authority" in one's thinking. Presuppositions will turn out to be the least negotiable beliefs a person has. People will grant to their presuppositions the highest degree of immunity to revision (Greg L. Bahnsen).

> It's only to be expected that in matters of ultimate commitment the intended conclusion of one's line of argumentation will also be the presuppositional standard which governs his manner of argumentation for that conclusion (Bahnsen).

> Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction (David Hume).

The Christian worldview is true because of the impossibility of the contrary. The contrary of the CWV implies an incongruity inasmuch as the denial of the CWV leaves one without the ontic (ontic: relating to ontology; relating to existence, being) foundation to ground immutable universals such as the laws of thought and moral laws, which are required for knowledge. The denial of knowledge (or its ground) is a self-stultifying endeavor. This feature is an aspect of the Transcendental Argument for the Triune God (TATG).

McDurmon summarizes the ontic necessity of God to account for the laws of logic: “From the biblical point of view we learn that God makes orderly experience possible because of His own self-consistent, self-authoritative, and faithful nature… Man must think God’s thoughts after Him” (Joel McDurmon: *Biblical Logic: In Theory and Practice*).

The God of Christian Theism

The God I profess is revealed in the Old and New Testaments and His person and divine nature is summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter Two, Of God, and of the Holy Trinity:

> I. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.
>
> II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone foundation of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleases. In his sight all things are open and

> manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.
>
> III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Herein my apologetic foundation is the biblical worldview revealed by the Lord God Almighty of the Bible and not any other professed god or gods.

CHAPTER ONE

God: The True Foundation for Knowledge

> That no man fashions his house to his hangings, but his hangings to his house (John Cotton, *Letter to Lord Say and Seal*).

An important aspect of my apologetic method advocates an assured argument for the existence of God. Additionally, in contrast to probability arguments, I argue that God alone furnishes all *a priori* essentials for the necessary epistemic equipment utilized in all thoughts and achievements. God has the ontic attributes of omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence (He has universal reach) enabling Him to be the ground for universal operational features of human experience. This includes the immaterial universal and immutable laws of logic and ethical necessities (moral law). Any position that rejects the CWV as the epistemic (knowledge) base cannot be true, thus whatever evidence one discovers, must be discerned and processed with the rational tools that arise from Christian theism and the WV that streams from the triune God.

God the Pre-essential for Intelligibility

> The "pre" in presupposition—not meant to be temporal. Nor is it meant to indicate a hypothesis. Rather it indicates preeminence

(William Edgar: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

> Bas Van Fraassen's restatement of Strawson's concept of presupposition: "A presupposes B if and only if A is neither true nor false unless B is true" (Van Fraassen: *Presupposition*, from Don Collect: *Speaking the Truth in Love).*

The biblical God is the *a priori* truth necessity for self-knowledge and the intelligibility of the world. Without God, man is lost in the epistemic hole of finite subjective opinion. Only through Yahweh (One God in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), His revelation, and the WV that extends from God's truth can a man have an objective basis for reality. God is the absolute and transcendental necessity for the intelligibility of all human apprehension. He is the pre-essential for the grounding and understanding of knowledge. Christianity is true not only because it seems more probable than its antithesis, but also because it supplies the foundation for the essential operational aspects of human rationality and understanding.

> Truth—is as old as God—His twin identity and will endure as long as He a co-eternity (Emily Dickenson).

Yahweh is necessary for predication, intelligibility, logic, ethics, and truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the *truth*, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6; italics mine). The transcendent, aphysical, invariant, and multi-personal-unified God of the Bible, with universal knowledge and reach, provides the necessary truth conditions for the transcendent, aphysical, invariant, and multi-unified laws of thought.

Even non-Christians presuppose the rational necessities that the CWV supplies while they verbally reject it. What are the obligatory conditions that make thought possible? The triune God furnishes those preconditions to establish the rational flooring for intelligibility. Van Til called this "method of implication into the truth of God a transcendental method. That is, we must seek to determine what presuppositions are necessary to any object of knowledge in order that it may be intelligible to us."

Atheists Borrow from the CWV

> The feathers in your cap are borrowed (Spurgeon).

Atheists can be rational because they borrow rational essentials from the CWV; the atheistic WV fails to account for the laws of logic that the CWV underwrites all the while borrowing them out of necessity.

Transcendental analysis of anti-theistic materialism demonstrates that it is self-nullifying inasmuch as it fails to give what it does not possess. The material cosmos, as a particular thing, is devoid of a foundation for eternal invariant universals; and as noted by Cotton above, one cannot hang one's house on one's paintings, but one hangs one's paintings on one's house. CT is the immovable truth required to hang knowledge claims, including atheistic claims.

The Rational Pre-essentials for Knowledge

I will employ a transcendental analysis by determining what the rational pre-essentials are for knowledge and understanding human experience; what must be true to be able to account for intelligibility. The triune God is the transcendental necessity who provides the preconditions for knowledge of reality. Mere men, devoid of immutability and universal rational attainment, cannot supply the transcendental conditions that are needed for the Law of Non-contradiction, truth, and knowledge.

To rightly understand reality one must have universals to generalize the particulars. This implies that the sheer anthropology of atheism cannot supply the general and universal realities that must be present for the necessary and unavoidable transcendental conditions listed beforehand.

Christianity is the Foundation for Reason

> My first principle is this: Christ laid down one definite system of truth which the world must believe without qualification (Tertullian).

All truth is given by revelation, either general or special, and it must

> be received by reason. Reason is the God-given means for discovering the truth that God discloses, whether in his world or his Word. While God wants to reach the heart with truth, he does not bypass the mind (Jonathan Edwards).
>
> Heart commitments aren't neutral (William Edgar).
>
> The human mind is not capable of grasping the Universe. We are like a little child entering a huge library. The walls are covered to the ceilings with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written these books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. But the child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the books—a mysterious order which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects (Albert Einstein).

All men, from every religious or non-religious position, bring a personal view of reality to the investigation, examination, and affirmation of human experience; their worldview (bundle of presuppositions) interprets reality and forms their theory of knowledge. Thus one's ethical and rational precommitments determine how they view history, science, law, and human relationships.

A person's worldview can be detected by asking the following questions:

- What can human beings know and what in fact do they know (epistemology)?

- What makes up reality (its nature, composition, power, and motion: ontology) and how did it come to exist and what sustains it (metaphysics)?

- Do moral absolutes subsist (ethics relating to ontology)?

- Does certain and immutable truth exist (epistemology kin to ontology)?

The God revealed in the Bible is the foundation and source of all meaning, purpose, and rationality. He is the absolute ontic source to ground what men know. God alone is the one who makes rationality and argument possible.

Without God, the unbeliever cannot account for anything in the universe including the rational tools used in all argumentation. The atheist, in reality, has no argument. God must live or we could not argue at all.

Atheists cannot even make reason, reasonable. They can be reasonable, but they cannot explain where reason comes from, and why one *should* be reasonable. They cannot account for or justify the immutable epistemic tools that reason must use (LNC, fixed personal identity, moral law, etc.). Atheists, when asked why reason is useful, will often say, "It's just the way the brain works." Nevertheless the atheist cannot observe the brain emitting the application of the LNC. Thus the atheist lives on blind faith. In like manner, the atheist cannot supply an objective justification for his arithmetic. He can correctly add two plus two and get four, but he cannot justify his counting inasmuch as "2 + 2 always = 4" is an unchanging universal truth whereas the ever-changing particular cosmos cannot ground such an unchanging universal. There are a great many other things in life that the skeptic takes for granted and cannot justify absolutely. He cannot account for his enduring self, motion, mathematics, morality, or logic. The non-Christian cannot ultimately explain anything.

Jesus the Logos

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).
>
> The Lord is the I AM, therefore I think (Steve R. Scrivener: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> In Greek the word translated "Word" is Logos, which was often used by the Greek philosophers for the rational principle that governs the universe. Here we have the theological explanation for the intelligibility of the universe, for the fine-tuning of its physical constants and its word-like biological complexity. It is a product of a Mind, that of the divine Logos (Lennox: *God's Undertaker*).

Christians should aim to be faithful followers of Christ and be committed to His word as well as to reason and logic. Jesus is the great Logos, and logic is an element of His being and nature. Reason comes from the nature of God. The true

and living God is a reasonable God. Reason cannot be held over His head, yet reason is a reflection of His immutable nature. We must embrace it in submission to God's revelation in the Bible. Christians should base their worldview on God's Word and His character.

The laws of logic have no physical content or weight. The abstract application of reason also has no material content. The laws of logic are essential and a precondition for any intelligent communication. The Law of Non-contradiction (LNC) was not invented by philosophers. The LNC is the foundational instrument necessary for all discourse, debate, science, mathematics, and learning. Without using the laws of logic, one cannot even deny that these laws are mandatory for communication. The *a priori* truth condition for the laws of logic is the God of the Bible. The sovereign, immaterial, non-temporal, and transcendent God with universal reach accounts for the transcendent, immaterial, non-temporal, and universal laws of logic. God is the truth condition for the laws of logic. The laws of reason are *a priori* essentials for knowledge, discourse, and argumentation. The laws of logic are absolutely necessary for the intelligibility of life, and God is absolutely necessary for logic. Thus God is, and has to be.

Atheist philosopher W.V.O. Quine admitted that within his non-theistic WV: "An exhaustive formulation of logical truth … is not to be aspired to" (Quine: *Mathematical Logic*). Atheists cannot account for the invariant nature of the laws of logic. They must use the laws of logic, but logic has no physical form or concrete properties. These are timeless, universal, immaterial laws, hence they do not possess size, weight or shape; they are not extended in space. They have no biological properties, and no chemical features, and they are not in motion. You cannot leave your fingerprints on the laws of logic or pick them up at the swap meet.

Materialistic atheism precludes an ultimate grounding and absolute foundation for the absolute laws of logic. The laws of logic are universal and transcend the material world. Yet, ultimately there can be nothing transcendent or universal in the atheist's worldview. Atheistic materialism is rationally untenable on its own grounds. An atheist cannot argue against Christianity without assuming Christian thought because he depends on the laws of reason to assert this claim.

Theism and the Possibility of Predication

> In whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).
>
> To say … a word has a given property … we attach the appropriate predicate to name the … word in question (Quine: *Mathematical Logic*).
>
> The triune God is "the ontological basis for the possibility of predication" (Don Collect: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> Without God, there can be no meaning, no grounds for predication… Without presupposing the ontological Trinity, one has no basis for predication (William Edgar: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

Calvin comments: "The meaning, therefore, is that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ—by which he means, that we are perfect in wisdom if we truly know Christ, so that it is madness to wish to know anything besides Him. For since the Father has manifested himself wholly in Him, that man wishes to be wise apart from God, who is not contented with Christ alone." Accordingly one should realize that one's epistemic base (foundation for knowledge) must be Christ and not some finite source that will turn into scrap under the ravages of time and corruption. Christ as the Logos is the foundation for all the pre-necessities of knowledge and truth.

When unbelievers use reason, they presuppose and rely on God who is revealed by Christ, even as they are attempting to disprove God. The denial of God presupposes that God lives. Without presupposing the God of the Bible, one is short of the epistemic credentials required to justify the predication of anything. Collect argues that "all human predication, whether that of affirmation or negation, referentially presupposes the truth of God's existence" (Don Collect: *Speaking the Truth in Love*). There must be predication. Atheism falls infinitely short as a possible ground to justify universals required for predication. There is predication. Therefore, atheism is not viable.

Atheism Provides its Own Defeater

> In the final analysis there is no rational disproof of God; there is only a moral distaste of God (Norman Geisler).

As Van Til demonstrated, the atheist is like the little child on her father's lap who slaps her dad in the face, but in order for her to slap her father; she must sit on his lap. The atheist who attempts to refute the existence of God must rest on the presupposition that God exists. God must be his unacknowledged presupposition inasmuch as he uses logic and reason to attempt to slap the Lord. Yet as an atheist, he cannot account for reason. When he attacks God using reason, he borrows from the CWV, which alone can account for reasoning. So anti-theism presupposes theism. Attacking the existence of God, with rational thought, actually depends on that which they are attempting to disprove.

The advocate for strict materialism tries to prove that only the material world is there, all the while he uses immaterial reason, thus he supplies his own defeater.

Reason Depends on God

> "Let us reason together," says the LORD (Isaiah 1:18).

> A truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God; of his dependence on Him; of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom; and that it is by God's power that he is upheld and provided for, and that he needs God's wisdom to lead and guide him, and His might to enable him to do what he ought to do for Him (Jonathan Edwards).

Matthew Henry explains: "Religion has reason on its side; there is all the reason in the world why we should do as God would have us do. The God of heaven condescends to reason the case with those that contradict him and find fault with his proceedings for he will be justified when he speaks, Psalm li. 4. The case needs only to be stated (as it is here very fairly) and it will determine itself." One cannot account for reason if one denies God. If I pick up my wife's eyeglasses and look through them, and suddenly find I see better, I could benefit from wearing her glasses. The atheist benefits when he puts on Christian glasses. This is what all atheists and unbelievers do: they borrow from the CWV whenever

they use reason, employ unalterable concepts, and embrace absolute moral principles. These are nonphysical dynamics that only the theist can justify, not the atheist. Remember, the unqualified materialist only believes that the physical world exists, reality consists of matter and motion and nothing more. Such atheists, when they use and apply logic or morality, are borrowing glasses from the CWV. The job of the Christian is to take the glasses off their head and let them know, without theism, they cannot see anything at all. Augustine has the oft-noted view that he believes in God as he believes in the Sun; not so much that he "sees the Sun, it is more that without the Sun, he cannot see anything at all."

The only lens that can make sense of the world and give one vision is the CWV.

God is Essential for Knowledge

All men presuppose some unknown concepts; additionally all men presuppose that God lives, even those men who attempt to deny God. The CWT is a system that accounts for the whole knowledge enterprise. Kelly builds on T.F. Torrance's thought: "What we are concerned with ... here is the … procedure inherent in any coherent system of thought operating with ultimate axioms or beliefs which cannot be justified or derived from any other ground than that which they themselves constitute. Thus ... ultimate axioms ... for which we can offer no independent demonstration, but without which the scientific system concerned, together with the knowledge it yields, would not be possible at all" (Douglas Kelly: *Systematic Theology*).

One can see in Kelly's precommitment the necessity of a transcendental starting point to make science and knowledge possible. Kelly then quotes Torrance on Michael Polanyi: "Polanyi reminds us in his Gifford lectures that we cannot convince others by formal argument, for so long as we argue within their framework, we can never induce them to abandon it. 'Formal operations relying on one framework of interpretation cannot demonstrate a proposition to persons who rely on another framework'" (Kelly: *S.T.*).

Professor Kelly's means of validating theological truth claims:

1. We do not step off the grounds where the living God has given Himself to be known (His word and Spirit), and hence:

2. We operate outside all framework of unbelief so as to call their inhabitants forth in faith and repentance into an utterly new paradigm (Kelly: *S.T.*).

CHAPTER TWO

Atheism Lacks the Necessary Substructure for Truth

> When the reality of an objective anchor of our knowledge was called into question, the very possibility of knowledge was once again called into question (Esther Meek: *Longing to Know*).

If a friend, who is a book lover, stops by my house when I'm not home and borrows a book from my library and forgets to tell me, I won't be able to find it.

I will think it is lost. Later my friend returns the book and I rebuke him for not informing me that he borrowed it. But then he notifies me that he had placed a bookmark in the book with a note informing me that he had borrowed it. Nevertheless that note would not have helped me in my previous search at all. I thought the volume had been lost; a note in a missing book is also lost and missing. And such is the problem with the non-believer. He is lost, and he cannot use his own unaided reason or experience to find his way to truth. He is lost, and his autonomous reason is lost with him. The only way he can find the truth is through an objective, unchanging source. That is God. Without God, man is lost,

holding his own note. Only through God and His revelation can a man be found and have an objective basis for knowledge.

Science and Indispensable Truth Conditions

> Evolution, akin to religion, involves making certain *a priori* or metaphysical assumptions, which at some level cannot be proven empirically (Atheist Michael Ruse).
>
> Conflicts between science and religion result from misinterpretations of the Bible (Maimonides).
>
> We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit (John Calvin).

Jesus declared, “I am the truth” (John 14:6) and in Scripture, the Lord Jesus said to the Father, “Your word is truth” (John 14:17). Lawson comments: “What is truth? It is defined as that which conforms with fact or reality. It is genuineness, veracity, or actuality. In a word, truth is reality. It is how things really are. Theologically, truth is that which is consistent with the mind, character, glory, and being of God. Truth is the self-disclosure of God Himself… All truth must be defined in terms of God, whose very nature is truth” (Steven J. Lawson: *Tabletalk Magazine*). God’s existence is essential for the discovery of truth because He is the springhead for truth.

Gerald Schroeder cogitates, “God chose from the infinite realm of the Divine, ten dimensions or aspects and relegated them to be held within the universe. These dimensions are hinted at in the ten repetitions of the statements, ‘and God said...’ used in the opening chapter of Genesis. With an amazing congruity, particle physicists now talk of the String Theory, a unified description of our universe in ten dimensions.” So many underlining ideas within theoretical science baffle men and often draw humanity toward God and His majesty. Nevertheless, it’s not so much that science can prove theism but that it *requires* theism. Science utilizes changeless necessities that only theism can account for. The latest scientific theory (whether it endures the test of time or not) rests on

the absolute changeless truths that only theism can deliver.

There is true truth. Every scientist or philosopher who is searching for truth must begin the epistemic process with God and His revelation in Christ if he desires to maintain a legitimate epistemic status. Science is involved with more than rocks, slime, and stars. The concepts of truth, justice, ethics, and reason lay beyond the world of concrete nature, yet, they are essential elements of scientific endeavors. Moreover, these abstractions cannot be explained in terms of the material world alone. Even the material dynamic within our world cannot be explained solely by physical terms.

> Since the material reality is not completely intelligible in itself it has to be grounded in something which has an intelligibility that is at once complete and real. This is … identified with the unrestricted act of understanding that possesses the property of God and accounts for everything else (Bernard Lonergan: *Insight*).

The physical world is selectively composed of organized energy. The materialist cannot explain what energy is and why it "self-organized." The believer can declare God's thoughts after Him, and He has revealed that all power comes from Him. He organized it for His glory and the delight of mankind. The strict materialist is always going to be at a loss for words when you ask him for foundational answers. Ultimately he cannot account for anything in the physical or nonphysical world. His rational paradigm is self-defeating, backward, and destructive to science.

Whenever materialists discover something that will benefit the world, they have breached their worldview, and in that discovery they have borrowed from the CWV (the foundation for truth). Jesus is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14); the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Truth" (John 15:26) and the Bible is "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Full-fledged materialism denies the source of truth and thus contradicts true science and inhibits the motivation for progress.

> If a worldview, such as naturalism, gives us no reason to think that our belief-forming mechanisms are generally trustworthy, then we have no reason to believe that worldview is true (Spiegel: *The Making of an Atheist*).

The argumentative skeptic Voltaire once said to a friend, "It took twelve

ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity; I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it." Setting to his task, he openly mocked Isaac Newton. One day Newton made a prediction based on Daniel 12:4 and Nahum 2:4: "Man will someday be able to travel at the tremendous speed of 40 miles an hour." Voltaire responded: "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man, such as Sir Isaac Newton! Doesn't he know that if a man traveled 40 miles an hour, he would suffocate and his heart would stop?" A few years after Voltaire died, his house was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and became a Bible storeroom, and his printing press was used to print Bibles. In the modern era, the Bibles were delivered by trucks going faster than 40 miles an hour (without mass heart stoppages). CT does not make men fools; it confers the only changeless ground for knowledge, including scientific knowledge.

Empiricism Cannot Account for Knowledge

> The thing that could persuade me is the *illusion* of empirical evidence (Atheist W.V.O. Quine: *Goldfarb Panel*, 4: 830; italics mine).
>
> The concept of empiricism is itself decidedly unempirical (John Dewey).
>
> I was once a skeptic but was converted by the two missionaries on either side of my nose (Robert Brault).

Many people say that they cannot believe anything unless they can experience it themselves by using their five senses. This is a type of empiricism. Many people advocate empiricism as their worldview. They declare that unless something can be tested empirically, by using the five senses, it is not true. The main predicament with those statements is that they are not testable by sight or the other four senses. Thus they are self-vitiating contentions; the notion self-destructs under its own assertions.

An added dilemma surfaces because our senses are not perfectly accurate. Quine admits that "a naturalized epistemology itself" is "fallible and corrigible" (Quine: *Pursuit of Truth*). The empirical senses are reliable, but cannot be fully trusted to solely ground our epistemic view. Boaters know that a straight oar appears bent when placed in the water. Many of us, as we drive our car in the

desert on a hot day, see mirages on the road ahead; our senses have tricked us for there is no water on the highway. If a large building is a couple of miles up the road and I put my thumb in front of my eyes, the building appears to be no larger than my thumb. Our eyes and other senses can deceive us. We cannot base our world and life view solely on them, nobody can.

Actual Infinites and God

> Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting (Psalm 93:2).
>
> Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5).
>
> It is Infinity, which, joined to our Ideas of Existence, Power, Knowledge, &c. makes that complex Idea, hereby we represent to our selves the best we can, the Supreme Being (John Locke: *Concerning Human Understanding*).

Mathematician George Cantor (originator of the Set Theory) proved, to the amazement of academia, that there are infinites greater than other infinites. The various disbelievers, who aver that they only believe in what they can see, do not and cannot follow that epistemic view consistently. To give a complete account on how one understands this world, since one requires an unchanging infinite source to account for infinites: an infinite God must be presupposed (the cosmos is finite and continually changing). If one overlooks the infinite God and His revelation in one's pursuit of that which is above humanity, one may fall into an ontic abyss. An chasm between the finite and infinite and depart the realm of sanity (several 19th and 20th century mathematicians went mad from their pursuit of ungrounded mathematics). The notion of various sizes of infinites is paradoxical and interesting, but atheism lacks a solid unyielding ontic plank for any variety of infinite entities.

> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (Colossians 1:17).
>
> One must, as in the case of Set Theory, seek better and deeper principles for the entities at hand, guided not by a "naïve" semantics

but rather by ontological insight (Palle Yourgrau, editor: *Demonstratives*).

The study of mathematics presupposes the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: One God. He is “infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, and holiness” (Westminster Shorter Catechism). In the physical world, we do not see the infinite residing in matter. However, mathematical theory demonstrates that infinite numbers exist in the realm of the abstract. Draw a line one foot in length. You can divide it in two. Then you could divide those two lines in two. You could repeat this abstract division, dividing the lines in two, and you would never have to stop. Mathematically, you could divide any size of line forever and ever, infinitely.

What is infinity minus one? If that is not enough to get your head spinning, ask yourself: How many squares can fit into a five-foot square? The answer is an infinite number of squares. The types of puzzles that employ infinites do not make sense in our finite physical universe. On the other hand, mathematics has established that there are infinites. The materialist, who claims that only the material world exists, cannot account for infinite entities in a finite, material-only world (this is the world, they assert, that actually exists). Actual infinite lines and infinite entities do not exist in a concrete, material-only world.

Infinites and God

An “actual infinite” can be deemed a set that neither increases nor decreases in size and extension because it has the same amount of members as one of its proper subsets. For example, the set {1,2,3,4...} has the same amount of members as the set {3,6,9,12...}.

This is contrasted with a “potential infinite,” which can increase to a randomly large size but will always remain finite. The difference between an actual infinite and a potential infinite is a distinction that is important in the Kalam category of arguments (i.e., the cosmos had a beginning). Either way, only an infinite God can account for all forms of infinites.

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the

> sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You (Psalm 139:17-18).

What Can One Really See?

Man's five senses are partially unreliable for the simple reason that humans are neither perfect nor infallible. Men do not have the divine ability to possess a faultless, complete knowledge of everything. Certain knowledge requires a man to depend on a being that is perfect, infallible, and has exhaustive knowledge: God. Additionally, the five senses can only provide awareness and information with reference to some attributes of an object.

Numerous people claim that they believe only what they can see. Well, in one way, under their non-Christian WV, they cannot see any object. Human eyesight cannot give direct, immediate awareness and understanding of any object. Eyesight can provide information on *some* of the aspects and attributes of any given object. Conversely, God can see all the millions of atoms, and He can fully understand the protons and electrons with exhaustive knowledge. He has exact and meticulous knowledge of the color, texture, size, weight, density, and complete physical makeup of all objects in the universe. No human can have a thorough and perfect knowledge of even one of those attributes. Yet some men trust their eyesight and senses above God. Even so, the Lord alone can understand all things.

The senses are generally reliable; to doubt this notion is to depend on it (one observes that observation is not perfectly reliable). We can know this because of God's revelation. We must have a transcendent source that "sees" everything and reveals to us that the senses are in essence, dependable.

The problem comes when one rejects God's word and constructs a WV based on sense perception alone. Our senses routinely deceive us. Chats between parents and teenagers can quickly reveal how unreliable the sense of hearing is. Many taste-test studies have demonstrated that the sense of taste is not always reliable. Surgical medical teams leave clamps, sponges, and instruments inside thousands of patients nationwide each year. These are highly trained teams with large potential lawsuits looming over them, yet their senses fail them at times.

One cannot construct a reliable WV based exclusively on the five senses. Our senses are normally reliable, but we cannot build a WV with explanatory potency on their fallible reliability.

Rationalism Cannot Ultimately Explain Knowledge

> The consistent rationalist will deny that there is anything, ultimately, except "pure thought," "pure being," etc. Everything else is illusion. But what is "pure thought" that is not a thought of something? Does that idea have any meaning at all? It is a pure blank. The knowledge of which rationalism boasts turns out to be a knowledge of … nothing! (John Frame: *The Doctrine of The Knowledge of God*).
>
> Rationalism in the form of the Intuition/Deduction thesis is also committed to epistemic foundationalism, the view that we know some truths without basing our belief in them on any others and that we then use this foundational knowledge to know more truths (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).
>
> Rationalism is the philosophical view that regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge. Holding that reality itself has an inherently logical structure, the rationalist asserts that a class of truths exists that the intellect can grasp directly. There are, according to the rationalists, certain rational principles—especially in logic and mathematics, and even in ethics and metaphysics—that are so fundamental that to deny them is to fall into contradiction. The rationalist's confidence in reason and proof tends, therefore, to detract from his respect for other ways of knowing (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

According to rationalism, only rationally demonstrated truths can be known for certain (of course they know this for certain without a rational demonstration thereof!). When more explicit content is specified, certainty disappears. Some thinkers state that they cannot believe anything unless it is based on reason; they aspire to make the world intelligible through rationalism: everything must bow down to human reason. There are many problems with this sort of notion; it begs the question: Why? Why must all men perform a full curtsy to human reason?

This problem comes to light if they assert that one *should* base his life on rationalism. This forces him to leap into ethics, which pure rationalism is silent about; one cannot get an “ought” from an “is.”

> Rationalism, which is the feeling that everything is subject to and completely explicable by Reason, consequently rejects everything not visible and calculable (Francis Parker Yockey).
>
> The very essence of rationalism is that it assumes that the reason is the highest faculty in man and the lord of all the rest (Lyman Abbott).

An added difficulty with rationalism is that the human mind functions partially untrustworthy, just like our empirical senses.

Men make mistakes in calculations, logic, and memorization. Furthermore, men do not always agree on what is logical or reasonable. Reason is largely reliable, but our rational fitness must be built on the edifice of the CWV.

Perfect Concepts and an Imperfect World

Another interesting consideration: The mind can conceive and geometrically demonstrate that perfection exists. Geometrically, one can propose a perfect circle, a perfect line, and a perfect square. Yet nowhere in our vast physical universe can one locate a perfect line, circle, or square. Thus the imperfect universe alone could not have produced the notion of perfection. Perfection is based on God’s perfect nature.

How can one fully trust the mind if it can sometimes fail? The aptitude test below makes this evident. It exposes the imperfection of human reason and the use of our senses in the following test:

> (Take the test quickly; have someone else read the questions to you and read the question one time only. Do not look over the test before you take it. Record your answers on paper.)

1. With the price of stamps raised to the price of 44 cents to mail a First Class letter, how many 32-cent stamps are in a booklet of a dozen?

2. A prisoner is offered a choice of punishment: He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of uncontrolled fires, the second is full of killers with knives and guns, and the third room is packed with lions that haven't eaten in three years. Which is the safest room?

3. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday?

(Answers are placed at the end of the chapter).

Most people get the majority of the questions incorrect. The questions are actually very straightforward, but our minds cannot always be trusted. Our minds are not perfectly dependable, and we cannot make sense out of the world using unaccompanied reason. We must rely on God and His revelation when deploying our rational faculties. God is exclusively perfect and infallible. The world is real, and our real human mind can know its own real nature. This is the case because God has given us our mind, and He has revealed to mankind that the world can be known. Our minds are not infallible and that is one of the major problems with rationalism. Hence, there is no reason to trust self-governing reason.

The Source of Wisdom

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Proverbs 9:10).

Finally consider that even the seeker after knowledge forces his spirit to recognize things against the inclination of the spirit, and often enough also against the wishes of his heart (Friedrich Nietzsche).

Philosophical apologetics is a philosophical activity which has as its

> goal (or perhaps as its result) the increasing or maintaining of the epistemic justification of a Christian worldview in whole or in part (J.P. Moreland).

The definition of the Greek word “philosophy” is a lover of wisdom. Christians are to ask God for wisdom, search the Scriptures for wisdom, and study to become wise unto salvation. God’s word reveals the true philosophy. All anti-theistic schools of thought are hopeless and unsuccessful, and we must cast down vain imaginations and take all thoughts captive. Paul instructs believers not to embrace the “vain” philosophy of non-Christian thought. Scores of people in the modern church falsely believe that Paul annuls all philosophy. The imperative is against a particular sort: *vain* philosophy. All philosophy that is not based on the CWV is empty, barren, and vain. Moreover the Bible forbids it.

The philosophy that is derived from the CWV can expose bad arguments and will bring forth light through good arguments. It should express the general equity of that which God reveals.

> Therefore he (Paul) *reasoned* in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there (Acts 17:17; italics mine).

Answers to the Test:

1. A dozen. Remember it is a booklet of a dozen.
2. The room with the lion because the lion would be dead. Lions will die if they do not eat for three years.
3. Of course you can: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.

CHAPTER THREE

Classical Proofs and the Preconception of Atheism

The Christian apologist should never put God on trial. There is no external standard that can judge God or His word. Historical, archeological, mathematical, and other evidences are not to judge the Bible's truthfulness as the word of God. God must be true for anything in this life to be intelligible. God is the requirement for evidences forasmuch as He grounds the LNC which is

unavoidably utilized in all evidential assessments. Furthermore, no external authority is to be used to verify the authenticity of the Bible as a revelation from God. Mankind cannot be the authority. Evidences cannot be the authority. Only God can be the ultimate authority. To make sense of this world, we must start with God and His revealed word. There is nothing that we can use independently of God's authority. The laws of logic, historical evidences, archeological finds, tests, and experiments all presuppose the triune God.

The Required Rational Construct for Proof

> Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, You cover Yourself with light as with a garment, You stretch out the heavens like a curtain (Psalm 104:1-2).
>
> I shall suggest, on the contrary, that all communication relies to a noticeable extent on evoking knowledge that we cannot tell, and that all our knowledge of mental processes, like feelings or conscious intellectual activities, is based on a knowledge which we cannot tell (Michael Polanyi).
>
> Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other. For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves; because it is perfectly obvious, that the endowments which we possess cannot possibly be from ourselves; nay, that our very being is nothing else than subsistence in God alone (Calvin).

Skeptic David Hume opined: "Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no being, whose existence is demonstrable" (*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion).* Hume's criticisms are consistent regarding things within an atheistic or skeptical WV (although it's self-counteracting). However he is in great error concerning God and that which

flows from His necessary attributes since God is not just sufficient but *necessary* for knowledge. Hume's analysis cannot epistemically position itself on Hume's own WV given that it must be placed on the foundation of Christian Theism (CT). Hume's skepticism necessarily utilizes immutable universals (LNC and moral law) yet it fails to furnish the ontic necessities CT provides that account for these changeless universal truths.

> The whole creation is as a garment (Psalm 104:2), wherein the Lord shows His power clothed unto men (John Owen).

Classical Proofs

> For since the creation of the world His (God's) invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened (Romans 1:18-21).
>
> To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature (Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* 1, p. 12).
>
> There is no transcendental argument that "rules out all other kinds of arguments … either in general philosophy and scholarship or particularly in apologetics" (Bahnsen: *Van Til's Apologetic*).
>
> God is not a deductive consequence of the premises of the argument, but rather the ontological and logical ground for the very possibility of the premises themselves (Don Collect: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

There have been countless forms of the classical proofs offered throughout history, from Aristotle to Aquinas and meandering toward the fine work of many erudite modern apologists. In their contentions, one finds influential arguments for the existence of God; many scholars who offer skeptical assessments of the traditional arguments, atheist or Christian, have not read the complete text of

Aquinas (or Aristotle). Furthermore, many of the skeptics have also failed to read the work of the modern advocates of Aquinas.

Various Thomistic apologists assert that a lack of reading first-hand sources is part of the misunderstanding of skeptics. Consequently, many scholars adopt the arguments of Hume and Kant against the classic proofs inspired by the ignorance of disbelievers. On the other hand, these argument forms placed within the unswerving CWV yield attestation for Christian theism.

Strawson states that Kant's "dismissive analysis of the three 'proofs' for God's existence—the only possible three, according to him—has, at least superficially, an admirable crispness and clarity. But the approach to this bright triptych of argument is shadowed in confusion" (P.F. Strawson: *The Bounds of Sense*). Furthermore, the apologetic works of Aquinas have produced fine scholars as well as many critics.

The Core Question

The chief question concerning causality is "not just the function of causality, but" what is "the ground of its intelligibility" (Don Collect: *Speaking the Truth in Love*). What is the ontic bedrock that furnishes the rational pre-essentials to make the concept of causality intelligible?

Theistic Proofs

The arguments below are not necessarily facsimiles of Aquinas' proofs nor are they essentially consistent with Thomas' Five Ways and his numerous additional expositions of theistic proofs.

- The Moral Argument: Moral absolutes are necessary, and absolutes require an absolute foundation in God.

- The Cosmological Argument (CA): All (known) effects have causes; the effect of the universe's existence (and continuation) must have a fitting cause.

- The Argument from Reason: Rational men use reason; however, a non-

rational big bang and its aftereffects fail to account for reason whilst reason necessitates God.

- The Ontological Argument (OA): The idea of God (the greatest possible being) requires that God exists forasmuch as His non-existence entails that He is not the greatest being.

- The Teleological Argument: The design observed in the cosmos entails a purpose or intention to it.

Regarding traditional arguments, I would adjoin: To make sense out of our world, the atheist still must presuppose the CWV. It alone supplies the required pre-essentials for the multi-facet operational features of human experience; including immutable universals such as laws of thought. These laws are necessary for predication, communication, and the intelligibility of theistic proofs. When the perspective of the CWV is rejected, the unbeliever is left in foolish ignorance because his philosophy does not provide the *a priori* conditions for knowledge and meaningful experience. This contravenes anti-theism. Christian theism supplies the rational prerequisites for proof, propositions, evidence, and knowledge. Van Til observed: "There can be no other facts than such as speak clearly of God and therefore of God's claims upon man. Every fact speaks of God and speaks of Him in the imperative as well as in the declarative voice."

> The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

Varieties of the Ontological Argument

> God is a … being whose greatness cannot be surpassed, or even matched (Joshua Hoffman: *The Divine Attributes*).

I. Anselm was the first to formalize the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God (*Faith Seeking Understanding*). He contended:

God is the being than which "none greater can be thought." It is greater to exist in actuality as well as in human understanding than to exist only in human

understanding. Therefore, it is contradictory to hold that God exists only in human understanding, thus God, as the being which none greater can be thought, must exist to avoid contradiction.

II. Descartes argues that an unambiguous and distinct idea of an "absolutely perfect being includes the notion of actual existence; therefore since we have the idea of an absolutely perfect being, such a being must truly exist."

III. Alvin Plantinga formed his own version of the OA:

- A being has maximal excellence in a given possible world W if, and only if, he is omnipotent, omniscient and wholly good in W; and
- A being has maximal greatness if it has maximal excellence in every possible world.
- Maximal greatness is possibly exemplified. That is, it is possible that there be a being that has maximal greatness.
- Therefore, possibly it is necessarily true that an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good being exists.
- Thus, it is necessarily true that an omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good being exists.
- Therefore, an omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly good being exists.

Plantinga appends, "Once you see how the argument works, you may think that asserting or believing the premise is tantamount to asserting or believing the conclusion; the canny atheist will say that he does not believe it is possible that there be a maximally great being. But would not a similar criticism hold of any valid argument? Take any valid argument: once you see how it works, you may think that asserting or believing the premise is tantamount to asserting or believing the conclusion."

Plantinga's version of the OA contends that one would have to believe the contrary of the possible, God exists, yet logically it's not possible to demonstrate that God's existence is impossible, thus God's existence is logically necessary inasmuch as God, by definition, is the maximally great being. Nevertheless, many modern philosophers, including Plantinga, do not believe that the OA is an airtight argument. However, the great mathematician Gödel seemed to believe that the OA demonstrated a potent truth (*Google search*).

> And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Causality Argument (CA)

> I assert that nothing ever comes to pass without a cause (Jonathan Edwards).

Thomas Aquinas' version of the CA is often miscomprehended, misrepresented, misinterpreted, and misapplied. The following is an unrefined summary: nothing that has a cause comes from nothing, thus everything that has a cause must come from something; all finite things lead back to a more original form.

Aquinas argues that there is no effect known for which a thing turned out to be the efficient cause of its own effect, forasmuch as that effect logically would have to precede itself, which is contrary to possibility.

Many atheists who lack philosophical training, like Richard Dawkins, ask: "If all things have a cause and all things are created, who created God?" Aquinas and modern Thomists stipulate that not all things have a cause, since God is uncaused.

Dr. John Lennox handles Dawkins' schoolboy riddle marvelously: "If Dawkins insists on who created God, I can ask him who created the universe. The buck will stop somewhere on both sides. You either stop with matter and energy, which has been capable through unguided processes to produce life, rationality, and the idea of God because there isn't a God or else you believe that matter and energy are not primary at all, but are derivative, and we start with in the beginning God" (Lennox: *God's Undertaker*).

Professor Lennox quotes the former atheist Anthony Flew on his way to refute

David Hume (Hume was a skeptic regarding causality, the uniformity of nature, and miracles): “Generations of Humeans have … been misled into offering analyses of causation and of natural law that have been far too weak because they had no basis for accepting the existence of either cause and effect or natural laws… Hume’s skepticism about cause and effect and his agnosticism about the external world are of course jettisoned the moment he leaves his study” (Anthony Flew). The good doctor responds: “Hume denies miracles because miracles would go against the uniform laws of nature. But elsewhere he denies the uniformity of nature!” (Lennox: *God’s Undertaker*).

The Foundation for the Analysis of Causality

> A transcendental conclusion does not depend upon the truth value of its antecedent premise, regardless of whether this premise affirms causality or any other principle, since a transcendental conclusion constitutes the very ground for the proof of that premise (Don Collect: *Revelation and Reason*).

Deny the Christian worldview and one lacks a foundation for causality and the investigation and evaluation of causality. To account for causality, all men depend on the CWV and presuppose God since the CWV supplies the obligatory functioning features of causality. Investigating causality, gathering knowledge regarding causality, and offering assertions concerning it—these actions require the use (and presupposition) of immutable universals that the mutable cosmos cannot justify.

The denial of the CA would imply there would be an infinite chain of cause and effect, an infinite regress.

Furthermore, if one rejects an ultimate cause, one would never find a specific effect since the infinite regress would never arrive at a particular effect. Therefore, it is necessarily the case that there exists a first efficient cause, a cause with a sufficient ontology such as God, but nothing within the known material universe has such ontic attributes.

> Causality is not intelligible apart from the biblical God (John Frame: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

The Kalam Argument

The Kalam Argument is part of the arsenal that Christian scholar William Lane Craig has employed to defeat countless atheists in public debates:

> The beginning of the cosmos cannot have begun from nothingness, but God must have created it in time. One, who stipulates that the

> cosmos is uncreated, lacked a beginning and had an infinite history, must face the truth that it is subsequently impossible to have arrived at the present age, in the same way as it is impossible to ride on a train traveling on infinite long train tracks and arrive at a specific destination. Without a definite starting point in time one cannot arrive anywhere, including this point in time.

The Design Argument

William Paley was one of the first to offer a form of the Design Argument. He contended that creation and all living organisms are organized; they exhibit an intricate design, which requires a designer. He proposed a watch as an example of intelligent design. If one finds a watch, he would conclude that it had been designed and had a purpose; the watch could not come into existence by chance, time, and motion acting on matter.

Many erudite ID advocates propound piles of facts, evidence, and proof for the intelligent design of living creatures discovered through testing and research. Testing utilizes a number of essential operating dynamics (induction, predication, the laws of truth, etc.) of human rationality and experience. A materialistic WV cannot justify the existence or the use of these operating dynamics.

William Craig offers the following syllogism:

1. The precise fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

Craig cogently argues that design must be the case. Additionally, he uses rigorous argumentation to try to justify the many assumptions within the premises of his syllogism (the exposition of this design argument is beyond the scope of this volume; see William Lane Craig: *God is Good: God is Great*).

The Argument from Moral Absolutes

> It is pretty hard to defend absolutist morals on ground other than religious ones (Richard Dawkins: *The God Delusion*).

If humanity lacks a morality decreed by God, then logically the strongest should exploit and take advantage of the weakest. To be a consistent atheistic evolutionist, one should close down the assistance programs and the schools for the blind and handicapped: kill off all the feeble individuals in society. Furthermore, since that type of morality is based upon anti-theistic evolution, it cannot produce unchanging moral principles. One would need unchanging moral principles to launch any absolute moral aims.

The person, who asserts a system of ethics without the God of the Bible and His law, has no foundation or justification for moral absolutes. Without God, murdering someone would just be the displacement of the murder victim's atoms to another form. The victim is just a non-survivor. There is nothing wrong with adding water to dirt and making mud, or raking leaves and tossing them into a fire, because the atoms of the dirt and the leaves just take on different forms.

The murder victim, as a person, if only made up of physical atoms, would just be changed into another form. Under a strict materialist worldview, dirt, leaves, and a human body are ultimately all the same.

Many modern atheists admonish nations and individuals to seek justice. The question I would ask is: "Why?" Why should the world or a person pursue justice? The atheist has no ultimate justification for asserting or affirming any immutable moral principles, any unchanging "oughts."

An atheist activist rode into Hyde Park, after leaning his bicycle against a railing he mounted a carton and proceeded to lecture the crowd. "If your family is hungry," he shouted, "raid a shop and steal food for them, and don't care what anyone thinks. If your wife hasn't got a coat, steal the most expensive coat you can find, and ignore the consequences!" After about 30 minutes of this type of anti-moral preachment, he dismounted his carton. His next words were, "Who are the crooks who stole my bike?" Not only are moral laws necessary for truth, they are what all men appeal to when others behave in immoral ways towards their personal property and rights.

Absolute moral laws require a self-contained being: God. CT supplies the necessary *a priori* conditions for moral absolutes. This is self-impaling. If it is true, it is false. Anytime nonbelievers assert that something is universally and immutably true, they are mistaken because their own WV cannot provide unchanging and absolute moral truth.

The Necessary Need for Absolutes

If one rejects God, it is impossible for one to supply the preexisting environment for the invariant, universal, transcendent moral laws. Only an all-knowing, omnipotent, and immutable God can supply the required environment. Hence, those who argue against Christianity presuppose it as they depend on the pre-essentials that only CT can provide. Absolutes are mandatory, and only Christianity can supply the necessary preconditions for absolutes.

The Indispensable Standard

> Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long (Psalm 119:97).
>
> This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (Ephesians 4:17-18).

The Bible is our authority and our guide. Mankind is not the standard (mankind changes) and science cannot be the standard (it also changes). The Bible provides a standard based on an all-knowing and unchanging God. The standard must be based on an unchanging source, or moral principles could change. If moral standards could change this would mean: lying and murder on one day are bad, and the next day they might be good. This is manifestly unfeasible and collapses the platform on which it stands.

A Foundation for Truth-telling Requires God

> When regard for truth has been broken down or even slightly weakened, all things will remain doubtful (Augustine).

The rulers of Italy and Bohemia each promised a safe journey and secure custody to the faithful reformer John Hus. Both lied and broke their promises, leading to Hus' martyrdom in 1415. Lies are often joined to other moral crimes. Similarly, Thomas Wentworth carried a document signed by King Charles which stated: "Upon the word of the king you shall not suffer in life, honor, or fortune." The king lied, for it was not long after that, that he signed Wentworth's death warrant. Lies have consequences; truth-telling is an essential element in human communication and justice. The demand for truth telling is an important imperative within the moral law.

Theists Have an Immutable Absolute Moral Law

> Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. (Romans 7:14).

Anti-theists have individual or collective arbitrary opinions to provide their moral goals; these opinions are built on pragmatic, utilitarian, or subjective grounds. Nonetheless, in principle, killing a little baby for an atheist is no more of a moral issue than removing a wart or chopping down an obstructing bush. If one has the power and the might, murdering babies is right under consistent atheistic standards based on Darwinism. Yet, thankfully, most atheists reject any moral system that would allow such heinous moral acts. In principle, however, if there isn't a moral law decreed by God, then logically the strongest should take advantage of frail genetic expressions of humanity.

Moral laws are nonmaterial unchanging realities that presuppose a nonmaterial unchanging personal God who has the wisdom and authority to decree and enact them. Without the personal God, as the moral lawgiver, there cannot be nonmaterial unchanging moral laws. A holy, wise, and good God is the precondition for true, eternal, nonmaterial, unchanging, and irreducible realities

called moral laws. Materialistic atheism cannot account for irreducible nonmaterial entities that are to govern human behavior. Without an omnipotent, sovereign God issuing laws that are based on His perfect character, one has no motivation to obey the law purely because obedience is morally good. Leave God out of the picture and one only obeys the law because of the fear of possible penal sanction and civil punishment from an earthly government. When the civil authorities aren't looking one can steal, lie, cheat, and rape with impunity. There must be a sovereign ever-watching God, as the sufficient and universal condition, to obey out of virtue and goodness.

One has the additional motivation for moral obedience in that God is always observing one's actions. Hence one has a strong motivation to follow laws when no one is looking if the laws are intrinsically good and come from a good, all seeing God; the God who commands humanity to love Him by obeying His commandments (Exodus 20:6; John 14:15).

General atheistic materialism is a physical-only philosophy. It asserts the belief that only the physical/material universe exists; there are no gods, angels, or spirits. Hard materialism cannot justify immaterial moral laws.

God is Necessary for Objective Morality

Since the immutable good God with universal reach exists then immutable universal objective moral values exist.

The immutable good God with universal reach exists.

Therefore immutable universal objective moral values exist.

Below is another valid but not biblically acceptable form (it does not ontologically start with God)

If immutable universal objective moral values exist the immutable God with universal reach exists.

Immutable universal objective moral values exist.

The immutable God with universal reach exists.

Similarly one could argue employing the following form:

Objective moral values exist.

Objective moral values have the attributes of being immutable and immaterial.

The mutable material cosmos and humanity within lack the attributes of being immutable, and immaterial.

The mutable material cosmos and humanity within cannot account for objective moral values.

The triune God has the attributes of being immutable and immaterial.

Therefore the existence of objective moral values furnishes grounds for knowing that the triune God exists.

These are valid and defendable formulations; nevertheless the issue of the ontology of moral values is not merely a matter of reasoning to God utilizing the existence of moral values. It understands that all reasoning *depends* and presupposes God. This includes reasoning about moral values.

Additionally, I am not asserting that non-theists do not *know* (epistemic concern) moral principles nor are they directly rejecting the second table of the Ten Commandments. In *some* ways non-theists do not have to openly affirm the first four commandments in the Decalogue to live by selected moral principles, albeit incongruously. Accordingly, I am contending that God is ontologically indispensable for the existence (ontic claim) of objective moral values. God is the ontological basis and underpinning for immutable moral values.

God is the unchanging foundation for unchanging moral values for the reason that He is the standard of good. Since He is good and perpetually the same, He is the foundation for unchanging moral values. Under non-theism mutable human beings cannot be the ground for immutable moral values. Evolving humans (evolve means change) lack the ontic capacity to provide a ground in of themselves for unchanging moral values. One cannot give what one does not have (universality and immutability).

On non-theism the best we have is a varying subjective opinion (or collection of opinions) of what some men at a particular point in time consider a moral value; possibly conjoined to a moral duty.

A Mutable Cosmos Cannot Ground Immutable Moral Values

Moral law has to be derived from us (Christopher Hitchens, *Wilson and Hitchens Debate*).

Materialistic atheism believes that only the cosmos exists; the matter and motion within the universe is all there is. Does the cosmos have the capacity to ground immutable universal moral values and duties? No. The material cosmos comes up infinitely short since it is a particular mutable (changing) thing; it lacks universal reach (it is not omnipresent) and it is always in a shifting and variable flux. Thus the material cosmos and the matter and motion within fail to ground immutable universal moral values. Since immutable universal moral values exist, strict materialistic atheism cannot be true. Mutability eats at the non-theistic ontic base like acid.

Materialistic atheism lacks the ontological ability necessary to furnish a suitable foundation for objective moral values and duties. Equally, mutable humanity embedded in the cosmos is also devoid of the ontic capacity to account for immutable moral values.

Objective Moral Values and Duties Exist

> First ... human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in certain ways... Second ... they do not in fact behave in that way. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in (C.S. Lewis).

Many actions are universally, objectively, and immutably wrong. Actions like killing babies for mere fun. Child sexual assault and torture for crowd enjoyment are universally and immutably wrong. These actions are unremittingly wrong since these prohibitions are based on God's unchanging nature. Every person with a properly functioning moral sense knows that gratuitous torture and abuse is always wrong.

> *Moral values are grounded on God and moral duties are commands revealed by a good God in man's conscience and in Scripture.*

A moral duty is obligatory of men when the good God commands it. A moral action is permitted for people when the good God commands it or the action is derived from the general equity of a biblical command. An action is prohibited when the good God commands people not to do such an action.

Accordingly, moral obligations and prohibitions are known by the commandments of God and the application of the general equity thereof.

Additionally, in a subservient manner, one's properly functioning conscience directed by the truth of Scripture morally informs a person.

God's commandments are not arbitrary inasmuch as they are based on and flow from God's essentially good unchanging nature. Since God's commands are based on His nature the truth of God's existence is invulnerable to the Euthyphro Dilemma (this is discussed in greater detail in my eBook *The Sure Existence of Moral Absolutes: Proof for the Existence of God* at the Kindle store.

Non-theism is Inadequate

The belief that only the physical world exists cannot even account for itself, since the statement itself is nonphysical. Not only is the statement inadequate, it is self-annulling. If it is true, it is false. Either way, it is not true. Thus it is self-abrogating. If only things that are unfixed, material and divisible exist, then our immaterial assertions about that subject do not exist. This is plainly absurd.

The atheistic empiricist has primary rational commitments to tautologies; this person has an epistemology based on brute sensual perception and knows this from sensual perception. This sort of non-theist is trapped by his *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy (after this, therefore because of this; e.g., a rooster crows every morning and then the sun comes up every morning, so the rooster crowing causes the sunrise). For one to have a coherent epistemology one has to rise above sheer matter and autonomy. CT has the rational endowment to bring epistemic sufficiency and coherence.

The ontological basis for discerning right from wrong persists immutably. God's moral law is irrevocably bound to His character and nature. The status and the binding authority of moral laws are not dependent on what men conjure up. The right to enact laws is not based on the ideas, tastes, judgments, and feelings of mankind; it comes from God's word.

Assertion Presupposes God

> There is no one thing whatsoever more plain and manifest, and more demonstrable, than the being of God (Jonathan Edwards).

The truth of God is implied and necessary by every act of asserting or denying anything; thus by every act of asserting, even asserting a denial of God, presupposes and requires God to exist; God is the immutable foundation with universal reach to ground the immutable universal laws of thought necessitated in all assertion. The truth of God is exemplified by every possible act of asserting even the preposterous assertion of the denial of theism. Hence every non-theistic act of denying God implies and necessitates that God is exemplified by the exercise of the laws of thought in their function within all language, rhetoric, locution, and expression.

Anti-theism lacks the epistemic credentials to account for the laws of thought, and this fatal inconsistency undercuts itself as James Anderson summarizes "the anti-theistic WV … turns out to be one of worst enemies of reason" (*Speaking the Truth in Love*).

Sufficient Ontic Attributes: Physicalism's Deficiency

> No purely physical account can tell us in principle how the world ought to be (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> According to the naturalist WV, everything can be ultimately explained in purely physical terms, and what can't be explained isn't real (Daniel Dennett's books on consciousness "are not so much a naturalistic attempt to explain consciousness as an attempt to explain it away"). Not only does it leave no room for the subjects of knowledge, in short, if the naturalistic WV were true, there could be no warranted true beliefs—there could be no knowledge (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

Shelly exposes the weakness of physicalism: "It is possible for a person to contend that a poem is nothing but black marks on white paper. And such an argument might be convincing before an audience that could not read. You can examine the print under a microscope or analyze the paper and ink but you will never find something behind this sort of analysis that you could call 'a poem.' Those who can read, however, will continue to insist that poems exist" (Bruce Shelly: *Christian Theology in Plain Language*).

> Necessarily, if God exists, then He is atemporal (Hoffman: *Divine*

Attributes).

The contention that only physical things exist, thus God doesn't exist, is ultimately unintelligible because the assertion disqualifies itself forasmuch as "propositions are markedly unlike physical entities" (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth*). Atheism ultimately implies physicalism, a type of materialism wherein it is believed all reality is composed only of physical substances. This is obviously untrue. The statement that only physical things exist is not made up of anything physical or material; thus, atheistic physicalism undercuts itself.

> Our spatio-temporal limitations are but one aspect of our finitude (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

Physicalism is a nonphysical system of thought that teaches that the nonphysical does not exist. But the physicalist's critiques of theism are not physical in and of themselves; it pops its own epistemic balloon. The undertaking of proposing any philosophy, including the concept that only the physical world exists, is a nonphysical exercise. To claim to be a physicalist, one is actually assenting to anti-physicalism.

Tea Requires Water: An Analogy

- A cup of tea is wet, quenches the thirst, spills, and freezes.
- Water is wet, quenches the thirst, spills, and freezes.
- However, water doesn't need tea to be water. The tea needs water to be tea.
- Drinkable tea presupposes and requires water.

And the laws of logic presuppose and require God:

- The laws of logic are immutable, immaterial, atemporal, and apatial.
- The cosmos is mutable, material, temporal, and spatial.
- The cosmos is not sufficient to account for the laws of logic.
- God is immutable, immaterial, atemporal, and aspatial.
- God is sufficient to account for the laws of logic.
- The cosmos presupposes and requires laws of logic.

- The cosmos presupposes and requires God.

Concepts, Ideas, and Reason are Aphysical

> On the ontic aspect of information Lennox opines: “Yet information is not only invisible: it is immaterial, is it not? You are reading this book; photons bounce off the book and are received by your eye, converted into electrical impulses and transmitted to your brain. Suppose you pass on some information from this book to a friend by word of mouth. The sound waves carry the information from your mouth to your friend’s ear from where they are converted into electrical impulses and transmitted into his brain. Your friend now has the information that originated in your mind, but nothing material has passed from you to your friend. The carriers of the information have been material, but the information itself is not material” (Lennox: *God’s Undertaker*).
>
> Jaegwon Kim has argued that strict materialism fails to resolve the mind-body problem. Kim has determined that a materialistic view that reduces consciousness to neuro-chemistry and bio-hardware would mean "that physicalism will not be able to survive intact.”

Concepts, logic, moral law, love, and mathematical formulas cannot be reduced to mere physical properties. Douglas Wilson adds this amusing yet heady illustration concerning the nonsensical notion of physicalism: “If there is no God, then all abstractions are chemical epiphenomena, like swamp gas over fetid water. This means that we have no reason for assigning truth and falsity to the chemical fizz we call reasoning or right and wrong to the irrational reaction we call morality.”

Declaring the Things to Come

> Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; Let them show the former things, what they were… Or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter… Thus says the LORD

> … “I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me, there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me...
> Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one. I have declared the former things from the beginning; they went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass... Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you... Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there (Isaiah 41:22-23, 44:6-8 and 48:3-20).

Another segment of “proof” for CT is the messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The Tenach (Old Testament) foretold the coming of the Messiah in precise detail. The text was written centuries before the coming of Jesus, and predicted more than three hundred prophecies about Him. No other founder of any religion can provide a similar prophetic record of their life written down centuries before their birth. Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, David Berg, Muhammad, and Buddha did not supply a widely transmitted, pre-existing written record that accurately predicted the specific details of their lives.

> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, *proving* that this Jesus is the Christ (Acts 9:22; italics mine).

The three hundred clear prophecies of the coming Messiah were predicted and predestined by God (Acts 2:23). The Bible foretold events and historical details about the coming of Jesus prior to His birth. All these predictions came true in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. No other spiritual leader or prophet had predictive material written about their lives recorded before they were born. Jesus Christ had more than three hundred predictions about His life that were fulfilled in exact detail.

> Then He (Jesus) said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44).

Christ’s virgin birth was predicted about seven hundred years before He was

born in Isaiah chapter seven verse fourteen: “So the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.” His place of birth was recorded in Micah 5:2, hundreds of years prior to the event: “And you, Bethlehem ... out of you He shall come forth to Me, to become Ruler in Israel, He whose goings forth have been ... from eternity.” The exact date of His entry in Jerusalem was predicted by Daniel in chapter nine. God prophesied the Palm Sunday event recorded in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly … O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Christ’s death on the cross was foretold before that form of execution had even been invented by Persia. Psalm 22:1-16 announces the crucifixion hundreds of years before it happened: “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me... But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, since He delights in him! I am poured out like water, and all my bones are spread apart; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels and You have brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have circled around me; the band of spoilers have hemmed me in, they have pierced my hands and my feet.”

This evidence for CT is overwhelming. Nevertheless, the truth is even more certain and compelling than compiling great blocks of evidence to prove the verity of Christianity. The argument for CT is assured. Without God, one cannot provide the necessary truth conditions for evidence and its analysis.

A Secure Argument

> But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3).
>
> If the real is … intelligible, God exists. But the real is … intelligible. Therefore, God exists (Lonergan: *Insight*).

A simple argument based on the CWV is that it is sufficient to account for everything. God, as the anterior truth condition for all things, has the ontic

capacity to account for logic and knowledge. The material mutable cosmos is outright ontologically undersupplied to account for the laws of thought for these laws are immaterial and immutable universals. This is an assured argument that rests on the ontic sufficiency of God.

- Atheism = a knowledge claim.
- Knowledge presupposes and requires the LNC.
- The LNC presupposes and requires theism.
- Atheism as a knowledge claim presupposes and requires theism.

Bahnsen contends that any "logical argument against the existence of God affirms the existence of God. All atheists and agnostics assume the laws of logic, but cannot account for them. A physical world cannot produce nonphysical laws of logic. If there is such a thing as proof then there is logic, thus there is a God" (Greg Bahnsen: *Bahnsen and Stein Debate*).

The great thing about employing the "argument from the impossibility of the contrary" is that it grows in power when the unbeliever attacks it. The argument grows in force because the unbeliever must use logic to make his intellectual challenge. Logic requires God. Christianity supplies the necessary pre-essentials for logic. Thus every time an unbeliever rationally attacks God he is, unwittingly, demonstrating that God lives. He is trying to dig a hole by shoveling more dirt into the opening. Without God, he cannot make a formal accounting for any rational assertion.

> Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it... Therefore let all the house of Israel *know assuredly* that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:24 & 36; italics mine).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Striking Evidence for Christianity

To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass... Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you (Isaiah 48:3-5).

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27).

There is overwhelming evidence that God exists within the truth conditions that the CWV provides. As previously noted, the bare facts of the three hundred-plus messianic prophecies of Christ are astounding and convincing to me as a Christian. I find the evidence that God has supplied irresistible. The prophecies that foretold the birth, life, and death of Jesus are found in Genesis 3:15, 49:10; Psalm 2:6-7, Psalm 22; Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25; Zechariah 9:9, 12:10; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 53:1-8; and scores of other passages. These were written down before the birth of Christ, recorded in the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the ancient Jewish Targums.

Peter Stoner calculated the odds as ten to the one hundred and fifty-seventh power that forty-eight of these predictions could be fulfilled by blind chance in the life of Jesus.

> Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts (Daniel Patrick Moynihan).

In Probability Theory, it is agreed that odds smaller than ten to the fiftieth power are the same as zero. And ten to the one hundred and fifty-seventh power is much larger than that. Hence the predicted life of Jesus must have been ordained by a power above history: God Almighty.

There are over three hundred predictions of the coming Messiah and they were all fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth; nevertheless God as the ontic foundation provides the necessary ground for the promulgation of all proof, possible proof, and the assessment thereof.

A Verdict that Provides Evidence

Josh McDowell elucidates regarding the coming of the Messiah that God “even defined the time sequence that would set His man apart. For example, Malachi 3:1 and four other Old Testament verses (Psalm 118:26; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 11:13; Haggai 2:7-9) require the Messiah to come while the Temple of Jerusalem is still standing. This is of great significance when we realize that the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 and has not since been rebuilt. The precise lineage; the place, time, and manner of birth; people’s reactions; the betrayal; the manner of death. These are just a fraction of the hundreds of details that made up the

address to identify God's Son, the Messiah, the Savior of the world" (McDowell: *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*).

The messianic prophecies are wonderful "evidence" built upon the CWV. The accuracy and specific detail of the events that the Bible foretold are astonishing to the believer. They are not vague generalities. The messianic prophecies are bold, startling, detailed, and specific. But above and beyond the particular evidential details is the necessary truth that the CWV provides the pre-essentials required for proof.

Facts Concerning Christ's Resurrection

> Today, I would say the claim concerning the resurrection is more impressive than any by the religious competition (former atheist Anthony Flew: *There is a God*).

It's worth noting that the Apostles saw the risen Christ, touched the risen Christ, and died tortuous deaths proclaiming the truth of the resurrection when all they had to do was deny it to avoid persecution and death. Yes, many people die for lies, but no collective, diverse group of people die for a lie when they have sure knowledge that it is a complete lie.

Furthermore, all known ancient documents that refer to the subject report an empty tomb. Even though the manner in which one accepts or rejects the evidence on the historicity of the ancient documents and other papyrus is controlled by one's presuppositions, the facts are mighty; the evidence is there, and it is impressive, but there is an important distinction between proof and persuasion.

Selected evidence for the resurrection of Christ:

- Hundreds of eyewitnesses testified under the threat of death that they saw the risen Jesus including 500 people at one time. All the apostles, except one, died horrible deaths knowing they personally observed Jesus alive from the dead. Thousands more were martyred because they would not retract the fact that they witnessed with their own eyes the risen Jesus. Not one Apostle recanted

to save himself from a torturous death.

- The CWV alone offers a confirmed resurrection of a Savior to demonstrate its authority. The Greek and other pseudo-resurrected gods were not historical figures, the only documents we have concerning the false gods/myths are the specific documents dated hundreds of years *after* Christianity arose.

- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ was first proclaimed in Jerusalem where the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection took place. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, his enemies only had to produce his body and this new religion that they hated would be terminated before it started.

- The conversion of Jesus' opponents to Christianity, including many Jewish Priests and Pharisees can best be explained by the resurrection of Christ. The risen Jesus converted many of those who executed Him because of the overwhelming evidence of His resurrection and His many appearances through God's grace (Acts 6:7, 15:5).

- Jesus' tomb was secured and guarded by well trained Jewish and Roman guards. The tomb had a Roman seal on it to prevent tampering with the threat of execution for breaking the seal, yet the tomb was empty. Every ancient historical source that discusses the subject verifies that the tomb was empty.

- Ancient hostile sources and extra-biblical writers record the matching facts of Christ's death and empty tomb. Additionally, the continuous defense of the resurrection in front of Roman government officials from Paul to Tertullian was unchallenged by Rome and all ancient historians.

Moreover the real fight is between presuppositions; the Christian presupposes God who raised Christ from the dead and provides all the required pre-essentials for the laws of logic that allow one to investigate anything, including the resurrection of Christ. Without God, one cannot supply the necessary anterior environment for the laws of logic. But the chief epistemic issue is that the particulars always have to be examined, including the historical or evidential particulars, by means of universals, inductive truths, and necessities that atheism fails to ground.

The Variance of Presuppositions

The historical and biblical testimony concerning the resurrection of Christ is compelling truth to believers. Those outside the faith have a different set of presuppositions and this leads to problems when one employs biblical proof outside the epistemic credentials of the CWV. The Scriptures do not instruct one to press only the brute *prima facie* evidence, but to press the *a priori* necessity of the truth of Christianity. The job of the Christian isn't to demonstrate the probability that God exists through displaying the brute evidence outside the truth of the CWV, but to demonstrate that God lives. God is the verity condition for all argument, proof, evidence, verification, reason, and knowledge itself. It is impossible for God not to exist forasmuch as He is the ontic truth condition for all intelligent exchanges.

God is the required *a priori* condition for knowledge: no God, no knowledge; however knowledge, hence God (knowledge requires the use of the laws of logic which only God has the ontology to ground).

Christianity is the only WV that provides human reason a foundation which is indispensable for knowledge. Non-Christian systems of thought cannot furnish a foundation for the laws of reason which is necessarily involved in all knowledge endeavors, thus those systems of thought can only offer worldviews that fail to underwrite the laws of logic required for knowledge.

Rational Thinking as a Cosmic Accident?

> If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of Man was an accident too. If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents—the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else's. But if their thoughts—i.e., Materialism and Astronomy—are mere accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents. It's like expecting the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milk-jug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset (C.S. Lewis).

James Anderson argued that “if naturalism were true, there could be no knowledge” (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*). Knowledge is necessary and God is required for knowledge. The truth of God’s existence is not merely feasible, it is impossible for Him not to exist. Non-Christian systems of thought cannot furnish a foundation for the LNC which is necessarily involved in all knowledge activities. Accordingly, those rational paradigms can only offer worldviews that fail to provide the continuous truth environment for the laws of logic required for knowledge. Unless one believes in the triune God, one cannot account for knowledge.

> So, the Christian apologist may begin with any fact because, no matter what the facts he wishes to discuss, the stakes are ultimately the same. In every case, Christian Theism is in question. Do the facts belong to God or do they not? The challenge for the apologist is to treat the facts in a way that calls the God of Scripture—including the Christian system—into view (Van Til).

Van Til rightly taught that you do not have to learn to marshal volumes of evidence. One should learn to demonstrate that without having the triune God as the metaphysical precommitment, the atheist cannot make sense out of anything. He cannot account for the universe, mankind, history, or science. He will be left to repent or remain speechless.

Furthermore Van Til stresses that whether “we are able to bring Christian Theism to a more full expression or only to a partial one, the goal is to express the biblical system through the facts. ... Facts should serve as manifestations of the Christian system.” Additionally he maintains that the evidences “call all men to acknowledge the triune God, the final reference point for all meaning and truth.” And Van Til adds: “Men have not done justice by the facts, by the evidence of God’s presence before their eyes, unless they burst out into praise of Him who has made all things.”

The True and Living God

> “You are My witnesses,” says the LORD, “and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand

> that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no Savior" (Isaiah 43:10-11).
>
> And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me. Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God…" (Isaiah 48:16-17).

The only true God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: one God in three persons. He is the only God who lives. It is comforting to know, not only is there incredible evidence for Christianity, but everything in existence is evidence for God. As God's word teaches, every flower is evidence for God's existence. It is not so much that we have to prove theism, but we are called to realize all proof presupposes the God of the Bible.

Atheism is impossible because it falls into absurdity. It is inconsistent and fails miserably. The primary question is: What will supply the *a priori* truth conditions that make reality intelligible? The logical actuality is, without the CWV, nothing can make formal sense. The true and living God is the truth condition for the intelligibility of reality and the understanding of all human experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

Theism: The Sure Footing for Reason

Atheism is too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning (C.S. Lewis: *The*

Quotable Lewis).

> The conception of God is necessary for the intelligible interpretation of any fact (Bahnsen: *Van Til's Apologetic*).

> That there exists in the human minds and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man being aware that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service (John Calvin: Institutes 3:1).

The Bible announces: "The fool says in his heart there is no God." It is nonsense to say God doesn't exist. If there is no God, we are all just molecules in motion, and we lack an immaterial aspect to the mind; the rational feature of man is just the random firing of chemical compounds in the brain. This would imply that men's thoughts are reduced to hard neuro-chemical reactions and unrelated to truth.

Atheists Innately Know God Exists

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since … His … divine power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God … and their foolish hearts were darkened (Romans 1:18-21).

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and

> for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:15-17).

Atheists allege that they do not believe in God; nonetheless, in reality, they know God exists (Romans Chapter One). The ungodly do not know God in a saving way, in a covenant relationship, but they do know He lives through His attributes of providence, righteousness, justice, and goodness. They just don't like Him. They really don't like Him as one can see from their frenzied protestations. Not liking someone does not prove that person does not exist.

It is not so much that one cannot prove that God does not exist or that a theist can prove that God does exist. Both these assertions are true, but the pertinent issue is ethical in character. The true God lives, and everything we think, do, or say, presupposes the truth that God lives. Without God, one cannot make sense of reality, even the very question of God's existence. He has to exist, or we could not ponder that question or any other question. Nonbelievers know that God exists, but they reject this truth in order to remain free from His ethical imperatives.

The atheist must employ the laws of reason and other immutable universal truths to pronounce that God doesn't exist. When the atheist does this, he affirms the CWV, even as he attempts to refute it because the atheist cannot furnish the necessary pre-environment for universal and changeless laws used in his pronouncement. The non-theist claims he doesn't have enough evidence to believe in the Lord. Nevertheless, there is evidence all around him—nothing but evidence. Anyone who just opens his eyes and uses his mind knows that God exists.

God is the Necessary Upoluposis

> God's revelation of Himself in the 66 books of the Bible is the only valid escape from the skepticism that would otherwise logically result from the necessary, interdependence of metaphysics with epistemology. God's revelation of Himself in Scripture provides not only ultimate epistemic grounding, but also gives the necessary metaphysical content for the foundation of all of man's intellectual and spiritual pursuits (Steve Hays).

The CWV supplies the fixed ontic platform as the sufficient truth condition that can justify induction and the uniformity of the physical world. But atheism lacks such a fixed ontic platform. Consequently, it fails to provide the sufficient ground required to justify science and the investigation of the natural world. The true and living God subsists and accounts for the intricate and distinct interconnection of the particulars in the united cosmos. That is the reason many theologians have mused, "I believe in order that I may understand." Van Til uses this illustration:

> We cannot prove the existence of the beams underneath the floor if by proof you mean that they must be ascertainable in a way that we can see the chairs and the tables of the room. But the very idea of the floor as a support for the tables and chairs requires the idea of beams underneath. But there would be no floor if no beams were underneath. Thus there is absolute certain proof for the existence of God... Even non-Christians presuppose its truth while they verbally reject it. They need to presuppose the truth of Christianity to account for their own accomplishments (Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*).

Atheism is impossible. When anyone attempts to escape the truth that God exists, he falls in a trap he cannot escape. This point is well made in Van Til's word picture of a man made of water, who is trying to climb out of the watery ocean by means of a ladder made of water. He cannot get out of the water for he has nothing to stand on. Without God, one cannot make sense of anything. The atheist has nothing to stand on and he lacks a rational apparatus to scale: an epistemic ladder that would allow him to view reality with clarity.

> Only divine revelation has the epistemic authority to "trump" our natural intuitions about what is metaphysically possible and what is not (James Anderson: *Paradox*).

Gods Made in the Image of Man

> Thus says the LORD:
> "Who created the heavens?

> Who formed the earth and made it?
> Who has established it?
> Who did not create it in vain?
> Who formed it to be inhabited? … I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:14-18).

The false gods of other religions cannot lend an epistemic hand to anyone. They do not exist for they are made in the image of man. Only the triune God of Scripture is necessary for the intelligibility of this world, and any world one could imagine. He is necessary. He is not contingent. The entire cosmos is dependent upon God. Yahweh is necessary; it would be impossible for the Lord God not to exist. The Almighty is all sufficient, all knowing, and all powerful in His sovereignty. God is not dependent on anything, in any world. The world is completely dependent on Him. All existence, all opinions, and all debate, presuppose the Lord God who spoke from the burning bush and declared to Moses and future generations: "I AM THAT I AM."

Agnosticism: Ignorance Has Its Price

> I Want To Believe (words from the famous poster in the *X-Files*).
>
> Who can possibly do justice to the intellectual brilliance displayed by philosophers and heretics in defending their errors and incorrect opinions? (Augustine).
>
> The knowledge of God is inherent in man. It is there by virtue of his creation in the image of God (Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*).
>
> Agnosticism is completely self-contradictory. And it is self-contradictory not only upon the assumption of the truth of theism, but it is self-contradictory upon its own assumptions. Agnosticism wants to hold that it is reasonable to refrain from thorough epistemological speculations because they cannot lead to anything. But, to assume this attitude, Agnosticism has itself made the most tremendous intellectual assertion that could be made about ultimate things. In the second place, agnosticism is epistemologically self-contradictory on its own assumptions because its claim to make no

> assertion about ultimate reality rests upon a most comprehensive assertion about ultimate reality (Greg Bahnsen: *Van Til's Apologetic*).

There are a few diverse categories of agnostics. Some proclaim: "Nobody can know anything about God." Of course that is wrong because they know that about God. The agnostic that proposes we cannot know anything about God says something very important about God, He is unknowable. This is an exception to their arbitrary claim. Not only do they have no philosophical or logical basis to make such a claim, the claim self-destructs and implodes from within. The agnostic, though attempting to confess ignorance of theology, has a rather complex and detailed theology. His affirmation that we can know nothing about God is to maintain a wide theological scheme. This system asserts that one cannot know that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, loving, just, and sovereign. This type of agnostic must also know that God has not revealed Himself to humanity. This implies God is either too feeble in power or too unresponsive in His concern for His creatures. This is to claim a lot about God. As you can see the agnostic has a vast theological scheme.

The Christian Has Certainty

> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13).

By revelation and God's effectual grace that actualizes my regeneration, I know that God certainly exists and He has brought me into the covenant and promises through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The name "Jesus" (Yeshua) means God (Yahweh) is my Savior (or God saves/delivers) and thus Jesus Christ's name is an ideal fit since Jesus is both God and Savior. We all sin, we all fail, all men fall short, thus we need a Savior who removes (expiates) our sins and replaces our sinful record with His perfect righteous record (imputation).

> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through

> faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed (Romans 3:23-25).

The claim that "Jesus is the only way to salvation" is not just a slogan, or a dogma tightly held due to intolerance, but it is true (Jesus is the truth), sufficient (He propitiated the wrath of an infinite God), effectual (all God calls in Christ are justified), and necessary (all men are sinners and require a Savior).

Through the word and Spirit one can know God exists and one is saved. Job announces that he "knows my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). Paul declares, "I know in whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12). It is impossible for the CWV to be false. I am saved by grace alone, and I have certainty through the Holy Spirit and His word. It is impossible for God not to exist. Calvin said that Scripture was so "clear and certain it cannot be overthrown either by men or angels."

> All men of sound Judgment will therefore hold, that a sense of Deity is indelibly engraved on the human heart. And that this belief is naturally engendered in all, and thoroughly fixed as it were in our very bones, is strikingly attested by the contumacy of the wicked, who, though they struggle furiously, are unable to extricate themselves from the fear of God (Calvin: Institutes 3:3).

Some people claim that knowledge is impossible. Nonetheless if knowledge is impossible, one could not know that knowledge is impossible because that is a knowledge claim. The intelligibility of human experience requires God. Christianity is a WV that provides human reason an unchanging foundation for knowledge. Atheism, naturalism, and skepticism all fail to furnish a foundation for the LNC; thus they cannot provide the permanent footing for knowledge. They can only offer an irrational and incongruous WV.

Unless one believes in God, one cannot account for anything in the universe. God is the underlying and infinite ground for all knowledge, proof, evidence, and logic. It is impossible for God not to exist. He is the truth condition for all knowledge because all human knowledge requires the use of unchanging universals. The omniscient, immaterial, and unchanging God alone provides the *a priori* essentials for the use of nonphysical, universal, and unchanging universals. Non-believing thought cannot supply the necessary pre-environment

for knowledge, thus they fall into futility.

Knowledge and the Law of Non-contradiction

> Knowledge is generally defined as "warranted true belief" (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> At the very least, a person's presuppositions will be implicit in the way he evaluates evidence and interprets his experience, in how he makes judgment about what is possible or plausible or valuable, and in how he actually lives daily life (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).
>
> Our knowledge of God is both earlier and easier that any attempt to give it formal expression (Lonergan: *Intellectuals Speak Out About God*).

Powerful Formulations

> Theology has made no contribution to knowledge (anti-theist Lawrence Krauss: *A Universe from Nothing*).

Learned contemporary apologists (Van Til, Anderson, etc.) have offered similar arguments to that which follows:

I.

- Knowledge requires the utilization of the LNC (the Law of Non-contradiction).
- The immutable God, who has universal reach, has the ontic capacity to ground the immutable universal LNC.
- If knowledge then the LNC.
- Knowledge.
- Hence the LNC.

- If the LNC then God.
- The LNC.
- Therefore God.

II.

- Knowledge requires the utilization of the LNC.
- Atheism is grounded on a mutable non-universal foundation (the cosmos).
- The cosmos lacks the ontic capacity to ground the immutable universal LNC.
- If knowledge then the LNC.
- Knowledge.
- Hence, the LNC.
- If the LNC then atheism is false.
- The LNC.
- Therefore, atheism is false.

A TA proceeds by establishing the premise that God is the necessary *a priori* truth condition for knowledge. It accomplishes this by demonstrating that God provides the foundation and the essential pre-environment for knowledge (LNC, LOI, universals, etc.). The negation of theism is impossible since atheism does not succeed in providing the truth conditions for knowledge and it is internally incoherent.

> If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning; just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be a word without meaning (C.S. Lewis).

Theism Avoids Absurdity

The denial of God entails absurdity for it undercuts the foundation for the Law of Non-contradiction:

- p = theism.
- Not p = atheism.

- p or not p.
- Not p is absurd since it fails to supply the truth conditions for the LNC.
- This leaves only p.

CHAPTER SIX

The Christian Worldview and Science

The scientific method has no power to resolve disputes about value or teleology. Moreover, when it is trying to describe events in the remote past, such as the origin of life, or complex matters like human behavior, science has to rely on philosophical presuppositions (Philip Johnson: *Reasoning in the Balance*).

What is being presented to the public is “First, comes the science, and then comes the worldview.” I would want to argue that that may not be the case. That it may actually be the other way around—that the worldview comes first and is influencing the interpretation of science (John Lennox: *Expelled*).

The conception of his (God’s) counsel as controlling all things in the universe is the only presupposition which can account for the uniformity of nature with which the scientist needs. But the best and only possible proof for God is that His existence is required for the uniformity of nature and for the coherence of all things in the world (Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*).

The transition from single celled life to multicellular life took 2.5 billion years. The fossil record shows that the transition moving from the non-living to the living was accomplished in one tenth of that time. Could this have happened so rapidly if random, unguided events were the creating forces? Statistically, even logically, it is so highly improbable that the likelihood is close to zero (Gerald Schroeder).

Evolution of the species is a metaphysical claim dissimulated by those who believe that they are composed of solely an assembly of atoms. But how could a mere assembly of physical atoms produce a metaphysical theory? This theory is faith-based, and it takes stone-blind faith to believe it. This blind faith reveals that anti-theistic evolutionists are, in reality, just another group of fundamentalists.

The Evolution of Worship?

Atheist Michael Shermer posted the following survey results online:

People who believe in:

- God or a universal spirit 92%
- Heaven 74%
- Hell 59%
- Scripture is the word of God 63%
- Miracles 79%.
- And pray once a day 58%

Shermer believes that the nearly universal practice of belief in God is evidence that man's desire to worship is a product of naturalistic evolution. However, it actually appears to be empirical evidence of the truth found in Romans Chapter One "that all men know God" exists.

As far as data-interpreting is concerned there seems to be a stronger argument against Darwinian evolution in the sense that religious belief should have been genetically expunged from men (like all other animals!). This would have provided a more robust creature if the human species evolved without the ability or desire to ruminate on the divine (one doesn't find a toad or a squirrel rationally praying and praising God, one only observes their actions that aim for survival).

If men take the time to build and organize religious beliefs, this process would not promote survival forasmuch as religion must have started when one ancient man was sitting pondering God. At this point the man contemplating the divine

would be open to a sneak attack from an enemy. Worship would strongly hinder the worshipper's survival-priority—the need to be constantly on the alert for enemies—it would lessen the time and energy employed that would be necessary for high-quality watchfulness of tribal enemies.

Undistracted watchfulness would promote the survival of the genetic pool over those who take the time to worship. Thus, evolution should have rinsed religion out of the genetic pool eons ago (like it has for dolphins, horses, and snails).

Therefore the facts in Shermer's posted survey appear to point to the CWV and stultify the non-theistic WV. Nonetheless facts are not known and interpreted outside one's rational precommitments. And atheism fails to furnish the rational pre-essentials to ground immutable immaterial universals.

Alvin Plantinga observes: "To show that there are natural processes that produce religious belief does nothing, so far, to discredit it; perhaps God designed us in such a way that it is by virtue of those processes that we come to have knowledge of him" (*Warranted Christian Belief*).

Creation Requires a Creator

> The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts. His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; as for all his enemies, he sneers at them. He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity" (Psalm 10:4-6).
>
> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

I rejoice when I discover that if the earth were slightly larger or smaller, life would be impossible; that the earth is tilted at just the exact angle for life to prosper; it has the exact gas mixture in its atmosphere; our planet has a moon at the perfect distance and size; and the earth is at the right distance from the sun for life to be. These are very cheerful facts. But they are not uninterrupted or brute facts; the facts do not explain themselves. So it is important to remember that the battle is not over sheer facts. It is over worldviews and foundational

assumptions that interpret facts.

> The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

A Comprehensive Understructure

> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33:6 & 9).

A presupposition that accounts for intelligibility: the CWV. With this rational prism, I can justify reality and my exploration and analysis of reality. When I base my WV on God and His word, I can justify science, induction, the evaluation of evidence, and my use of reason. The atheist cannot provide the necessary *a priori* truth conditions for the investigation of reality. Thus the nonbeliever cannot account for modern science. Some important questions for non-theists:

- How do you know that induction is true?
- How do you know, when you test something and you get the same result a thousand times, you will get the same result the next time?

I place my hand in the fire, and I will get burned. Why can I depend on that the next time? The Christian can justify inducing such because God has revealed to men that induction is dependable and we can count on it. The nonbeliever cannot justify induction. Hume noted that induction is only a customary means of interpreting reality; yet the non-theist must assume induction, he uses it, and takes it for granted, yet he cannot account for it. It just, is.

In The Beginning

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
(Genesis 1:1).

The opening verse of the Bible declares that God created the heavens and the earth. God created the universe out of nothing. Most non-Christian scientists, for many decades, did not believe that the universe had a beginning. Today, most scientists believe that the universe had a starting point. This is one of the many reasons we are not to submit God's word to modern science. All science must be submitted to God's word

The earth is always fluctuating. One cannot vest his hope, his thought, or his philosophy of life on the earthly. One cannot base his ethics, reason, and nobility on a system of thought which is built on the physical universe that remains in a constant state of flux. A changing cosmos cannot produce unchanging items like the laws of reason. Again, those entities transcend the physical universe and are necessary for science.

No God: No Meaning

. There isn't a non-theistic view of the creation that can make sense out of reasoning, science, and morality. A materialistic scientist cannot account for his use of immaterial logic in his scientific reasoning. Logic is not tangible. It is transcendent, universal, and abstract. The CWV supplies the necessary preconditions for the nonmaterial, unchanging, and universal laws of logic. The laws of logic cannot be found in a beaker or a test-tube. You cannot purchase a set of laws of logic on sale at the corner store. They are not tangible and material. The transcendent, immutable, universal, and immaterial God can provide the necessary preconditions for transcendent, immutable, universal, and immaterial laws of reason. This demonstrates that it is impossible for the atheistic scientist to be correct in declaring nothing exists except the material world. For even that declaration is nonphysical, hence it is false.

> They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep." But wisdom is justified by all her children (Luke 7:31-35).

Absolutes and Knowledge

> Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ (Colossians 2:8).
>
> Therefore let all the house of Israel know for *certain* that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; italics mine).

Some significant corners within modernity embrace relativism: the philosophy that asserts all things are relative. Another spin-off: "What is true for you isn't true for me." And: "You can't know anything for sure." These are statements that cannot be true because they invalidate themselves. If they were true, they are false. Allan Bloom, in his insightful book *The Closing of the American Mind*, bemoans the fact that "there is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative." I have to agree with Mr. Bloom. I have found (having spent much time exchanging ideas on university campuses across America) the only thinking tool most students have developed is the art of avoiding tough questions. They declare that all things are relative out of one side of their mouth. Then they defend environmentalism, as if it is always true, out of the other side of their mouth. They know that relativism is not true! Obviously, relativism is a self-voiding notion.

Opinions Can be Wrong

> Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You (Psalm 5:10).

When someone professes that all things are relative; one should ask that person whether mistreating children is wrong or if pushing up everyone's carbon expenditure is morally wrong? Almost every relativist will agree that those actions are morally wrong. Obviously at that point they are not global relativists. The Christian can objectively decry the mistreatment of humans and the environment since we know that God told us not to abuse people and misuse nature. Those who deny absolute moral values cannot live within the boundaries of their profession.

No one can consistently live out a life based on universal relativism. Men will stand for something: human rights, voting rights, or something that is of great significance to them. Once they assert that something should be done or not done, they have borrowed from the CWV. There are some absolutes, some things that are immutably true, and some things that are not subject to mere personal opinion. Absolutes are established on God's nature and His law.

Atheism is Self-annulling

> Of all the knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important (Jonathan Edwards: *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into Freedom of the Will*).

Atheism is rationally unsound. The most an atheist can logically claim about the non-existence of God is agnosticism—to profess that he doesn't know if God exists. For as soon as one asserts atheism, the atheist falls into a rational dilemma: no finite man can prove that there is no God, for outside the limits of his experience or knowledge, God may exist. To be a rationally consistent atheist, one must know everything, everywhere. Of course this requires omniscience and omnipresence; attributes that only God has. Hence, the only

means one can prove that God doesn't exist is to be God, which is rationally impossible and self-conflagrating.

A young boy traveling by airplane was sitting beside a man who happened to be a seminary professor. The boy was reading a Sunday school assignment when the professor thought he would have some fun with the young boy. "Young man," said the professor, "If you can tell me something God can do, I'll give you a big, shiny apple." The boy thought for a moment and then replied, "Sir, if you can tell me something God can't do, I'll give you a whole barrel of apples!" With men countless things are not possible; with God all things are possible.

God Must Be True

Let God be true and every man a liar (Romans 3:4).

To have a consistent and functional WV, one must have absolute standards and laws. There must be absolutes in logic and in morality, or we can coherently assert nothing and account for nothing. That is impossible.

Unchanging standards do not reside in mutable matter. They cannot be empirically quantified, examined or set into a flask. They cannot be conventions and they cannot be subjective theories made up by mutable man. The absolutes of logic transcend time, space, and matter; they cannot be tested in a lab. But all labs assume absolutes and use them in all their science. They cannot solely be the result of neuron firings in the brain because that would make them mutable and by definition they would not be immutable laws. The material-only atheist cannot explain where laws come from or justify them. If one maintains that there are no absolutes absolutely, one is utilizing absolutes to make this claim; this means the claim undermines itself.

Plantinga: The Mind Distinct from the Body

1.
p (possibly me having a distinct property that my body lacks [me possible in a beetle's body])
q (all possible properties of my body are the same as me)

p V q

~q
∴ p

2.
p (it is possible for me to have a property my body can’t have)
q (then I am not identical to my body)

p --> q
p
∴q

3.

I.

b = my body
m = me (my identity)

i (◊ m is found in a beetle’s body)
o (~◊ m is found in a beetle’s body)

i V o
~o
∴ i

II.

f (~ ◊ that b can be found outside itself)

e (◊ that b can be found outside itself)

f V e
~ e
∴ f

And this seemingly odd idea of having a beetle's body applies to all men *now* inasmuch as all men have had different bodies than they currently have through time and change. Strict materialism seems to imply that since men physically change every moment, as new physical material is added to the body through breathing and eating while losing body parts through exhaling and bowel movements, to maintain personal identity across time there must be an unchanging immaterial aspect of men: the soul. Moreover, after seven years men have exchanged almost 100% of their material atoms and replaced them with new ones, yet their identity remains the same. A man's identity is distinct from his mere physical body/brain (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOTn_wRwDE0).

Unaided Reason

Mankind has demonstrated throughout history its propensity to attempt to rely on self-ruling reason. We desire to govern ourselves, without God's revelation, by depending on reason alone. Yes, we should think and behave "rationally." We are logically obligated to be rational. As soon as you attempt to deny reason, you must use reason to assert that denial. A man cannot deny his rational nature without refuting himself. He must resort to employing reason, even in the vain attempt to resist rationality. One, no matter how much philosophical ingenuity he employs in denying reason, must always use reason to do so. And the only keystone for reason is God and His revelation.

Calvin said of Scripture, "The beauties of scholars and philosophers will almost entirely disappear; so that it is easy to perceive something divine in sacred Scripture, which far surpasses the highest attainments and ornaments of human industry." That is true, but the complete truth is even loftier than that. All philosophy, even errant philosophy, presupposes God and His revelation. Without God, one cannot justify the laws of reason and predication that

philosophers assemble in their formulations and theories.

One needs God when one attempts to refute God! Chesterton said, “To disbelieve in God would be like waking up in the morning, looking in the mirror and seeing nothing.” To see and to understand anything, one must stand on the CWV. God must be or we cannot make sense of any fundamental phenomenon. The non-theist cannot coherently contend against God in view of the fact that he has fighting instruments that come only from the Christian arsenal. He has to unsheathe God’s logic, morality, and induction to battle God. He needs God to propose anything that opposes God. Deny God and in principle all is unintelligible.

Certainty is Necessary

The only way to avert skepticism is to have an unchanging, infinite, infallible, and exhaustive authority. The God of CT has these traits. The statement: “I am certain that knowledge is impossible” is a knowledge claim, in fact a claim of certain knowledge, hence it is false.

Christianity supplies the permanent underpinning that is necessary for knowledge. Systems of thought which lack an immutable ontic foundation cannot furnish the necessary underpinning for the Law of Non-contradiction. Consequently, those systems of thought can only offer self-nullifying worldviews. The true God is the elemental requirement for the entire knowledge enterprise. Atheistic thought cannot supply the necessary pre-essentials for the indispensable operational facets of human experience which includes the laws of logic. Hence it fails to provide a base for knowledge.

Starter Questions

Below are a few straightforward questions (use these at the start of an online dialogue) for anti-theists:

1. Is there certain truth?
2. Are there absolute unchanging moral laws?
3. Is there anything immaterial that exists?
4. What is the foundation for the laws of logic?

The answers that your interlocutor provides will allow you to discern how you

approach them with Christian truth.

> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Sufficiency of the True and Living God

> The god an atheist does not believe in is usually not the God of the Bible (Gerald Schroeder: Earth and Planetary Sciences, M.I.T.).
>
> For, in the name of God, the Father and the Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they receive the washing with water (Justin Martyr's First Apology, LXI).
>
> We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God... being of one substance with the Father... And in the Holy Spirit (The Nicene Creed).

History documents that logician Frege was felled by it (Mathematics erected upon pure logic). Russell's Magnus Opus was made obsolete almost before it was printed (set theory). Modern Quantum Mechanics was struck by it (light simultaneously as wave and particle). Theologians have tried to rationally circumvent it. By what? Paradox! And some biblical doctrines may come into finite view as paradoxical, but retain epistemic warrant (see James Anderson's book: *Paradox*). The Trinity is one such doctrine.

God is three persons in one being. One cannot wrap one's finite mind around this marvelous truth; moreover it makes perfect sense that a finite man cannot completely comprehend an infinite God.

The Scriptural Support

There are numerous Scriptures that reveal to man that God is three persons in one God. This is important since there are many cults and false religions that appeal to the Bible in their attempt to deny the Trinity. The following Scriptures are some of the key passages on the doctrine of the Trinity. I will offer a very incomplete list. I recommend that you read some apologetic books on the Trinity and some volumes on the cults (see books by Ron Rhodes, Dr. Robert Morey,

James White as well as a sound Systematic Theology text: Berkof, Reymond, and Douglas Kelly. Kelly's volume has a potent Trinitarian focus).

Some of the tri-unity Scripture verses:

Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:6; Psalm 45:6-7;
Isaiah 6:8, 48:11-17; Hosea 1:7;
Zechariah 10:12, 12:10;
Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Bible verses that reveal that God is one:

Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 45:5-6, 48:3-16.

The Scriptures that reveal that the Father is God:

Matthew 6:8; John 4:23, 17:3; 1 John 2:23.

The verses of Holy Writ that teach that Jesus is God:

John 1:1, 8:58, 10:30; Hebrews 1; Isaiah 9:6, 7:14;
Colossians 1:15; Acts 20:28.

> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16).
>
> And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
>
> Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him… I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and

> the ending, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:7-8).

The Bible verses on the Holy Spirit's divinity:

Acts 10:19-20, 13:2, 21:11; 1 Corinthians 12:11;
Galatians 4:6; John 15:26, 16:7; Micah 2:7; Isaiah 61:1,
63:10-11; Psalm 55:11, 139:7.

Most of the cults teach that Jesus is *heter-ousia*: a different substance or essence from the Father. But the Bible declares that Jesus is one with the Father (John 10:30). The Trinity is not anti-reasonable. However, I do not fully understand God's nature due to the fact that there will always remain some mystery loftier than my meager intellect concerning the being of God. Mysteries are not contradictions. The one true God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

> We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Spirit. But the godhead of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal (Excerpt from the Athanasian Creed).

God is a self-complete and self-contained unity. There is but one God. God is an absolute personality. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Within the being of God, diversity is no more fundamental than unity. God is a tri-unity. The persons of the one God are mutually eternal and exhaustive of one another. The Holy Spirit and the Son are ontologically equal with God the Father. This is the uppermost solution to the problem of the "one and the many." The imperative is to baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (plurality). The unity of the particulars is grounded in the being of God.

> God said, "Let us (plural) make man in our (plural) image (singular) and our (plural) likeness (singular)" (Genesis 1:26).

There is a unity and a diversity in God and there is a unity and diversity in the cosmos. The cosmos is called the uni-verse. It is a unity and a diversity. A unity and a diversity make up the physical reality. The cosmos has unity that is on par with the diversity.

No aspect of the universe is more ultimate than the other. The unity in the universe is equal with the diversity in the universe. They are equal because the triune God created and sustains them. Non-Christian worldviews sacrifice the unity for the diversity or the diversity for the unity. Only the Trinity resolves the problem of "the one and the many."

Fristianity, False gods, and the Flying Spaghetti Monster

TATG:

- The personal triune God is the necessary truth condition for knowledge.
- There is knowledge.
- The triune God exists.

Some conveyers of error attempt to refute CT by introducing a god that is said to be similar to the God of the Bible. Allah, the Flying Spaghetti Monster (FSM), or the theoretical god of Fristianity (FA). FA, as a mere theoretical notion, is projected to be indistinguishable from Christianity in every manner except its god is projected as a quadrinity rather than a Trinity. Nonetheless the CWV affirms that the Trinity is the necessary pre-essential for knowledge and intelligibility. If one attempts to deny the first premise of the TATG (Transcendental Argument for the Existence of the Triune God), asserting that the triune God is not the necessary pre-essential for knowledge, one stumbles into error before one can get one's argument off the ground. Obviously if something is almost identical to A, then it is not indistinguishable from A and is not in fact A: it's non-A.

Zeus, Mars, Shiva, Krishna, Allah, Brahma, Vishnu, FSM, and the Giant Pink Unicorn all lack evidence that Christ offers in abundance: Over 300 predictions that foretold the details of the life and death of Jesus Christ. These prophecies were realized in Christ in precise detail, many of which He couldn't self-fulfill unless He was the Sovereign God (His birth place, soldiers gambling for His

clothes, His pierced side, etc.). Moreover false gods do not have the ontological stature to supply the compulsory truth conditions for knowledge. Nevertheless, some atheists argue for the theoretical existence of gods in order to contend against CT. The affirmation of false gods by atheists is reminiscent of Captain Ahab trying to kill a great white whale and his pursuit ended in his ruin. The atheist who proposes an argument for a false god falls into self-ruination inasmuch as he is advocating a form of theism.

> The skeptic must do more than just point to the bare possibility of error here; he must also give us real grounds for doubting the transcendental claim that p is the necessary condition for the possibility of q. (Robert Stern: *Transcendental Arguments and Skepticism*).

Since there are many variations of FA, if it is to be posited as a worldview, this possible worldview must be clearly defined.

- Is Fristianity a genuine worldview?
- Is positing Fristianity a genuine argument?
- If yes, is it a deductive, inductive, evidential argument or a TA?
- Is the Fristianity advocate asserting that a theistic worldview similar to the CWV provides the truth conditions for knowledge and thus is true?

The famed atheist Denis Diderot was asked to visit the Russian Court by Catherine the Great. Upon his arrival he quickly launched into a passionate defense of atheism. Catherine, a professed Christian, organized a shrewd plan. Diderot was informed that a brilliant mathematician had discovered an algebraic demonstration for God's existence and would deliver it before the Court. The mathematician Leonard Euler then appeared and stated: "Sir, $(a + bn)/n = x$, therefore God exists!" Diderot, unschooled in algebra, flabbergasted, was rendered silent as laughter erupted around the room; Diderot, deeply embarrassed, asked for permission to return to France. And if the non-believer is attempting to bluff his way to atheism from a version of theism, his bluff must be called and to his horror he will be exposed as an avowed theist.

God in Trinity as the only Coherent Starting Point

> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).
>
> Question 4: What is God?
> Answer: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.
>
> Question 5: Are there more Gods than one?
> Answer: There is but one only, the living and true God.
>
> Question 6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?
> Answer: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory (Westminster Shorter Catechism).

The Trinity is the starting point for epistemology, apologetics, and philosophy. The triune God is reflected and revealed everywhere in the material and immaterial worlds. The Trinity "confronts" humanity and all creation everywhere at all times. You cannot look into a microscope or a telescope or a mathematical table and fail to be confronted by the God alone who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the triune God is the foundation and the solution to the problem of the one and the many. God is the solution and not the problem. Within the being of the triune God: unity and diversity, the one and the many are equally ultimate and infinite (for additional material on the Trinity see my books: *One Way to God; Presuppositional Apologetics Examines Mormonism;* and *Presuppositional Apologetics Examines the Jehovah's Witnesses* at Amazon or www.TheLordGodExists.com).

> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (2 Corinthians 13:14).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Justification, Expiation, and Imputation

> And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6).
>
> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1; italics mine).
>
> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3).
>
> But one day, as I was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, Thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought withal, I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at the right hand; there, I say, as my righteousness; ... I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever (John Bunyan: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*).

God the Father sent His Son, who is sinless and perfect in character, to live a perfect life in accordance with God’s Law and sacrifice Him for the sins of

mankind. The sins of the repentant sinner are cast onto Christ: the perfect sacrifice. Furthermore, salvation includes the gift of the "righteousness of God" (Romans 3:21-22, 10:3; Philippians 3:9). This is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:30). His life of sinlessness and perfect obedience to God's Law on this earth was required to give believers a perfect record in regard to the positive aspect of justification (Christ's active obedience).

The Kindness of God

> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7).
>
> The cross is the standard of victorious grace. It is the light-house whose cheering ray gleams across the dark waters of despair and cheers the dense midnight of our fallen race, saving from eternal shipwreck, and piloting into everlasting peace (Spurgeon).

The Law of God requires justice. All men have broken God's Law. All unbelievers are sinners in need of grace. This truth should send the unbeliever to Christ for pardon from sin's penalty; a penalty that has been paid by Jesus on the cross. No one's good works can pay the penalty for past sins, only Christ can; the believer's good works cannot erase past transgressions. If I receive a speeding ticket, and I go to court and the judge asks, "What do you plead?" I say, "Guilty, but I promise I will never speed again. Judge, please forgive my ticket on account of my future obedience." The judge would say, "It is good that you will not speed again. That is your lawful duty. But you still have to pay the fine for your past mistake of speeding." The good news is Jesus Christ, as judge, came down, took off His robe and paid the fine Himself for all who trust in Him.

The atonement of Christ expiates the sins of the Christian and rinses his transgressions from his spiritual record. Then God graciously imputes Christ's

righteousness to the believer's account. We enter heaven free from past sins and clothed in the righteousness of Christ through faith alone and by grace alone.

> The cross is the focus of all human history—I was almost going to say it is the centre of the life of God, if such a thing can be. All the ages meet in Calvary. Jesus is the central Sun of all events (Spurgeon).

> To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities (Acts 3:26).

Finding Peace with God

> For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, "Peace, peace!" When there is no peace (Jeremiah 8:11).

> The believer in Christ must say that without Christ there is no truth and goodness anywhere that will finally stand before God. Modern thought, like the prodigal son, is at the swine trough. The believer does not do his duty to men unless he calls them to repentance, and therewith back to the Father's house (Van Til).

The need for a righteous human life, one lived in perfect obedience to God's Law, is one of the most important reasons that Jesus, as God, had to become man (incarnate) born of a virgin. Romans 4:6 declares that God "imputes righteousness apart from works," hence this righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer's account. God forensically (legally) credits (imputes) the believer with the righteous acts of Christ: the flawless works He performed as a perfect man on the earth. This is the great exchange: Christ gives His perfect righteousness in exchange for the believer's sin. This is great news for sinners who by God's grace turn in faith to God's Son.

> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

God credits believers with the righteousness of Christ solely through faith by

grace alone. Justification forensically renders the believer righteous and gives him peace with heaven. Without justification, the unbeliever has no peace with God. We must never assert that there is peace, when there is no peace between the ungodly and God. Without justification by grace alone, there can be no real peace (Romans 5:1). Imputation is the biblical term for the positive element of justification. One is forgiven and saved through God's grace by faith: The believer is judicially constituted as righteous. He is declared righteous.

> In my preaching of the word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely that the Lord did lead me to begin where his word begins with sinners; that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and allege that the curse of God, by the law, doth belong to, and lay hold on all men as they come into the world, because of sin (John Bunyan: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*).

Christ preached in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." The law demands perfect obedience. This is a perfection analogous to the Father's perfection. Nobody except Christ has pulled that off, consequently we need a perfect righteousness that is not our own. We need to be justified by the works and righteousness of another. Justification is a forensic term which speaks of the Christian's legal position before God. The believer is declared righteous despite his unrighteous deeds.

The justified are given an alien righteousness. A righteousness that is not their own, but is imputed to the believer by faith alone. Not having a righteousness of our own insures that God gets all the glory.

> For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6).

The Tragedy of Unbelief and the Hope of Faith in Christ

Pugnacious skeptic and libertine George Bernard Shaw wrote, near the end of his life: "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, led, instead, directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look

at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith." Yes it seems that nobody talks so persistently about God as those who maintain that there is no God. Nonetheless, they need Christ for epistemic coherence, but most of all for pardon and forgiveness.

> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

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CHAPTER NINE

God Solves the Problem of Evil

Many atheists frame the argument of evil against theism like this:

1. If God is all good and all powerful He would defeat evil.
2. Evil is not defeated.
3. Therefore God does not exist.

The above syllogism is not biblically legitimate. A Christian should never accept the syllogism as it is written above. The Christian should pose the formula:

1. If God is all good and all powerful, He can defeat evil.
2. Evil is not yet defeated.
3. Therefore, God will defeat evil in the future.

Ultimately a human does not know why suffering is allowed by God. We just

don’t know, and that’s okay. God is God and we are not. But no argument using evil/suffering/pain can defeat theism. The discussion of this difficult problem actually requires God to be intelligible. Ultimately, a changeless, omniscient, omnipotent rational underpinning and infrastructure is required to understand and account for human experience (including suffering): God.

What the Problem of Evil Presupposes

The argument: If God were all good and all powerful, He would defeat evil and not allow suffering; evil exists, thus God does not exist. This is a fallacious argument since it presupposes God while it attempts to refute His existence. The argument itself depends on God for the required truth conditions to propose it. The atheistic argument from evil is a knowledge claim, and knowledge requires God. Furthermore, the argument utilizes the laws of logic, morality, and a distinction between good and evil. God is the essential personal verity vital for the laws of logic and morality. He is the basis for making a distinction between good and evil. Without God, everything just “is.” There can be no good or evil, suffering or real joy, no objective moral truths. There can be no truths. When a man acknowledges good and evil, he presupposes that God lives.

The Revelation of Scripture

The Bible testifies that one day, God will rinse the world of evil and suffering. Evil will be defeated. When one makes an argument, one has God as the ultimate ground for the laws of logic that are employed in all argumentation, including an argument from evil.

The Christian is to examine the argument and only accept the premises if it is consistent with the teaching of truth and Scripture. The atheist has no way of knowing, in the future, that God will not defeat evil. The believer has God’s word on it. The atheist is left holding an empty bag, a bag that God made. The grounds, from which an atheist attacks God, are based on God’s revelation. The atheist has to borrow from the CWV to attempt to disprove God. Only in the context of the CWV is good and evil intelligible. The existence of God is well beyond just a reasonable proof. God is the foundation for knowing anything at all.

Near the conclusion of his life, Jean-Paul Sartre confessed to Pierre Victor: “I do not feel that I am the product of chance, a speck of dust in the universe, but someone who was expected, prepared, prefigured. In short, a being that only a Creator could put here. This idea of a creating hand refers to God.” On hearing this confession, fellow atheist philosopher and long-time cohort Simone de Beauvoir protested: “How should one explain the senile act of a turncoat?” (*His Magazine*, 4/1983). And many nonbelievers come to reject their unbelief in the face of trial or death.

Evil Presupposes God’s Law

> From a naturalist standpoint the objection from evil is incoherent. This is because naturalists have no grounds to call anything evil (Spiegel: *The Making of an Atheist*).
>
> To know that nothing hurts the godly, is a matter of comfort; but to be assured that all things which fall out shall co-operate for their good, that their crosses shall be turned into blessings, that showers of affliction water the withering root of their grace and make it flourish more; this may fill their hearts with joy till they run over (Thomas Watson).

Various apologists confess that the argument from evil is the most difficult challenge to CT. Nonetheless, the epistemic and ethical platform from which an atheist attacks CT is based on the truth conditions supplied by the CWV. The atheist has to borrow from the CWV in his effort to disprove God. Only in the context of the CWV are good and evil intelligible. The existence of God is well beyond just a reasonable proof. God is the necessary underpinning for knowledge, including knowledge regarding good and evil.

Give Answers with Meekness and Respect

> One must never respond to questions about evil in a nonchalant, callous or detached way. One must have compassion for those who struggle with this paradox. Many of those, who focus on this

> question, have lost loved ones through criminal actions, disease, or natural disasters (Source unknown).

Truth can transform and it is beautiful. Love rejoices in the truth, but truth is more than this. There are real, hard hitting, and unpleasant issues we must tackle with love and humility. We must care. Jesus Christ's ministry was known for its compassionate thrust. Truth should always be joined with love and humility. Often, people will have stern intellectual problems with Christianity, yet, when you answer them with love and truth, they will quickly soften and put away their anger.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter; He comes when we minister to the hurting and He touches them in the depth of their souls. Let all remember, the individual's problem with evil is usually a spiritual and emotional problem instead of an intellectual one.

Joy and Peace in Believing

Puritan Christopher Love before his unjust execution said: "Blessed be God that Thou hast filled the soul of Thy servant with joy and peace in believing." Love added: "Most Glorious and eternal Majesty, Thou art righteous and holy in all thou dost to the sons of men, though Thou hast suffered men to condemn Thy servant, Thy servant will not condemn Thee."

Thomas Manton (Manton provided spiritual counsel to Christopher Love before Love's execution in 1652; he was with Love when he was beheaded and preached his funeral sermon) declared: "Works before conversion cannot engage God, and works after conversion cannot satisfy God—all the endeavor and labor of the creature will never procure it."

The one and only John Bunyan counseled: "Do not even such things as are most bitter to the flesh, tend to awaken Christians to faith and prayer, to a sight of the emptiness of this world, and the fadingness of the best it yield? Doth not God by these things (often times) call our sins to remembrance, and provoke us to amendment of life? How then can we be offended at things by which we reap so much good?"

Additionally Bunyan gave this wise advice to those who suffer at the hands of men:

1. We must see the good in that which other men can see none.
2. We must pass by those injuries that other men would revenge.
3. We must show that we have grace and that we are made to bear that which other men are not acquainted.
4. Many of our graces are kept alive by those very things that are the death of other men's souls.

Suffering Promotes Dependence of God

> A hot iron, though blunt, will pierce sooner than a cold one, though sharper (John Flavel).
>
> When we grow careless of keeping our souls, then God recovers our taste of good things again by sharp crosses (Richard Sibbes).

Suffering is hard. It is more than unpleasant. It can be brutal. It produces multi-layered pain that may never recede while one is on the earth. Yet Jesus cares; He intercedes for the believer, and He is our ever-present help. Trust Him and depend upon Him in good times and in bad for He is a merciful Savior.

Death finds everyone and one should be prepared to face a righteous God. John Mason commented: "We need not be ashamed of that now, which we are sure we shall not repent of when we come to die." No Christian laments that he trusted Jesus Christ on his deathbed.

And Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

CHAPTER TEN

Nothing Cannot Create Everything

Nothing: A strict universal negation. Take anything, and it is not anywhere. Take anything, and it does not exist in anyway. Nothing at all.

Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we

> exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going (Stephen Hawking: *The Grand Design*).
>
> I never quite understood the conviction that creation requires a creator (cosmologist and spontaneous creation advocate Lawrence M. Krauss).
>
> Something can only create if it already exists (where "already" indicates logical rather than temporal priority). Nothing does not have the power to create, or to do anything else for that matter, because nothing is quite literally no thing. So the universe could only create itself if it already existed; but if it already existed, it would have no need to create itself! (James Anderson: proginosko.wordpress.com).

Hawking's notion of calling upon gravity as a purposeful force with causal agency is absurd and would leave the world unintelligible.

> God didn't create the universe; it was created spontaneously (Lawrence Krauss).
>
> He who does not believe in God will believe in anything (attributed to G.K. Chesterton).

Anderson goes on to ask: "How could there be laws of nature without nature itself? Surely the laws of nature—the law of gravity included—presuppose the existence of the natural universe. If there were no universe, to what would the laws of nature refer? This is one reason why I find it *prima facie* implausible that the law of gravity or any other physical law could even in principle explain the existence of the universe. The laws of nature presuppose the existence of nature, just as the laws of Scotland presuppose the existence of Scotland."

> There are remarkable, testable arguments that provide firmer empirical evidence that our universe arose from nothing (Lawrence Krauss).
>
> Philosophy is dead (Hawking: *The Grand Design*).
>
> The "laws of nature" are mere abstractions and cannot explain

> anything. What exists in the natural order are concrete material substances with certain essences, and talk of "laws of nature" is merely shorthand for the patterns of behavior they tend to exhibit given those essences (Edward Feser: *The Last Superstition*).

Anderson exposes Hawking's *philosophical* practice of ditching philosophy when he asserts that if "Hawking thinks there is some law or principle that explains the very existence of the universe, he must have in mind a metaphysical law rather than a physical law. Unless I'm much mistaken, the law of gravity is a physical law. It appears that Hawking intends to leave behind physics (a subject on which he is eminently qualified to speak) and enter the realm of metaphysics (a subject on which he has no particular expertise, so far as I know). It's more than a little ironic therefore to find Hawking declaring on the very first page of his new book that 'philosophy is dead.' If philosophy is dead, why is Hawking now turning his hand to philosophy? No, philosophy is in very good health, despite its frequent mistreatment at the hands of scientists."

That Which Doesn't Exist Cannot Cause the Cosmos

No lie is of the truth (1John 2:21).

The universe could not create itself no matter how small or large it becomes; it is not possible to make itself. For the universe to make itself it would have to be and not be at the same time in the same manner, which contravenes the Law of Non-contradiction and necessitates a dive into the illogical.

> The cosmos is composed of the entire realm that is natural.
> When the cosmos is not present, there is nothing natural.
> The universe was once not present.
> The non-presence of that which is natural is not a natural cause.
> Hence, the creation of the cosmos was not natural.
> Therefore, the creation of the cosmos was anatural (supernatural).

The anatural cause of the cosmos is not wholly reliant on matter, light, space, gravity, and energy: the natural. An anatural creation excludes the possibility of a creation by nature forasmuch as nature did not yet exist before its creation. Something rather than nothing created the cosmos (God). The cosmos does not

subsist as a consequence of mere natural design, but the grand designer is God, an anatural (supernatural) cause.

Choose God and Account for Rationality

> Contrary to what Hawking claims, physical laws can never provide a complete explanation of the universe. Laws themselves do not create anything; they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions. What Hawking appears to have done is to confuse law with agency. His call on us to choose between God and physics is a bit like someone demanding that we choose between aeronautical engineer Sir Frank Whittle and the laws of physics to explain the jet engine. That is a confusion of category. The laws of physics can explain how the jet engine works, but someone had to build the thing, put in the fuel and start it up. The jet could not have been created without the laws of physics on their own—but the task of development and creation needed the genius of Whittle as its agent. Similarly, the laws of physics could never have actually built the universe. Some agency must have been involved (John Lennox).

Dr. Lennox adds: “Hawking’s argument appears to me even more illogical when he says the existence of gravity means the creation of the universe was inevitable. But how did gravity exist in the first place? Who put it there? And what was the creative force behind its birth? Similarly, when Hawking argues, in support of his theory of spontaneous creation, that it was only necessary for ‘the blue touch paper’ to be lit to ‘set the universe going’, the question must be: where did this blue touch paper come from? And who lit it, if not God? Despite this, Hawking, like so many other critics of religion, wants us to believe we are nothing but a random collection of molecules, the end product of a mindless process.”

Precommitments Direct One’s Worldview

> We take the side of science … because we have *a prior* commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and

> institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door (Richard Lewontin).
>
> This [materialism], if true, would undermine the very rationality we need to study science. If the brain were really the result of an unguided process, then there is no reason to believe in its capacity to tell us the truth (John Lennox).

Everyone has presuppositions—primary belief patterns that color all one's thought and rational viewpoint. Reason is only consistent with Christian presuppositions. Hence, the real battle is between presuppositions. Hawking and spontaneous creation activists presuppose and advocate the absurd notion that nothing created everything. The Christian presupposes the Creator God who raised Christ from the dead and provides all the required *a priori* truth conditions for the laws of logic that allow one to investigate anything, including cosmology.

APPENDIX I

Book Review: ***More Than Matter?: Is There More to Life Than Molecules?*** (Paperback)

An immaterial mind, distinct from the brain, destroys strict materialism. Materialists do not believe mankind has a spirit. His soul is only "a little wind and smoke." When the materialistic atheist backs up in a conversation and says,

"Hold on, I'm searching for a word," point out the inconsistency. One can ask them: "Who is searching?" Those who claim that only the physical world exists, and that their mind is just a block of flesh, cannot really answer that question. Frequently, they will quickly see their dilemma. Non-theist Thomas Huxley, in one of his moments of weakness, asked, "How is it that anything so remarkable as the state of consciousness comes about as a result of irritating nervous tissue, is it just as unaccountable as the appearance of the Djinn, when Aladdin rubbed his lamp?" And in *More Than Matter? Is There More to Life Than Molecules* Keith Ward answers Huxley's inquiry as he offers philosophical reasons, with fine care and precision, for the contention that there is an immaterial mind that maneuvers the brain.

Keith Ward[1] (fellow of the British Academy, Anglican priest, author of 30+ books) skillfully advances dual-aspect idealism that argues that the human mind is distinct from hard neurophysiology. Furthermore, Ward contends that the immaterial mind serves as the center of material reality and its comprehension. Ward defends the notion that human cognizance cannot be adequately reduced to matter alone. Even though Ward covers some difficult philosophical concepts, he takes great care in making these ideas assessable to non-specialists; he defines the terms as he goes employing language that most students will easily understand.

In his introduction Ward states that extreme materialism provides a "picture of human life that is both scientifically questionable and philosophically naïve. Moreover, it undermines the belief that human beings ... have intrinsic worth, and that their worth lies in their mental lives, not in the behavior of their nerve-cells, however complicated" (p. 1). Much of Ward's exposition involves the contrast between the brain-mind concepts of Gilbert Ryle (corresponding to Wittgenstein: the author doesn't focus on him because of there are countless views of early/later Wittgenstein) and A.J. Ayer, while he arbitrates this contrast using some Cartesian and Kantian views. Both Ryle and Ayer were professors of Ward during his philosophical training. Ward's chief thesis is that human "persons are not accidental mistakes in a pointless perambulation of fundamental particles." They are a window into the "inner reality, value, and purpose" (p. 8). He adds that "the mind and consciousness are different from, something over and above, molecules and matter..." (p. 10). This is the case since unlike "many physical objects, we perceive, think, feel, and act to achieve goals. We have a

mental life" (p. 13).

Ward discusses a wide range of philosophical problems; especially in revealing the problems of exacting materialism: the Matrix problem (equally: Descartes' deceiving demon, the brain in the vat, etc.), intention, morality, goodness, language, and more. He often accomplishes this using witty illustrations; this helps make the demanding philosophical lessons enjoyable and simple to apprehend. The materialistic worldview proposes that mankind, with all his skyscrapers, opera's, supersonic jets, art, and literature, is merely a more complex block of whirling subatomic particles than rocks, carrots, and squirrels. The materialistic atheist asserts that the mind is the physical brain. There are not any nonphysical actions taking place in the human brain. But if the human mind consisted only of hard chemicals and neurons bouncing around in the skull, human thoughts would be no more true or valued than a hiccup. Both, under stringent materialism, are just chemical reactions. This of course is self-voiding. If one's thoughts and words are meaningless, then they are not true since they lack meaning. Hence one's thoughts cannot be meaningless. Men's thoughts are not just concrete chemical reactions.

Ward defines Dualism as "the view that mind or spirit is different from body and brain" (p. 21) while he argues "that on purely philosophical grounds materialism is less plausible than dualism" (p. 22).

Ward goes on to offer commanding critiques of materialistic theories that are based on brute science. Suggesting "that everything that exists must have a location and extension is space-time, seems to be scientifically questionable" (p. 32). Owing to the many innovative findings of Quantum Physics, many "modern physicists have left ordinary space and time behind" (p. 32). Thus severe materialism falls short.

A criticism: Ward did not provide sufficient definitions of the diverse forms of materialism and physicalism that are held in academia (p. 33). Many theists are unaware that there is a denominational diversity of materialists that exist with more arriving new every morning. This lack of knowledge can quickly derail an apologetic encounter between a believer and a stripe of materialist the Christian

doesn't know exists. Additional classifications and explanations would be helpful to the reader.

Ward argues that some things are not located in space-time including:

Dreams

Illusions

Personal intentions

Philosophical reflection

Consideration that results in a change of mind

Unconfessed lies (no one observed you stealing the cookie, so no one else knows you lied about stealing the cookie; the secretly held lie is not material)

The comprehension of the process of time

Ward expends several pages to discuss Kant's idealism as he defines idealism as a "major philosophical view ... that reality is mind or mind-like, and that material things are appearances of this reality to consciousness" (pp. 38-63). The author seems to overstate the autonomy of human reason by way of Kant conjoined with the notion that humans are "thinking substances" (p. 63) because of the "priority of the mental" (p. 78).

"Dualism, the original sin of Descartes, is not yet dead" (p. 112).

Arguments Ward posits for Dualism include:

Research found that subjective experiences or thoughts "cause changes in the physical structure of the brain" (p. 119).

Dualism retains "belief in the moral primacy of personal experience and morally responsible action" (pp. 120-123).

The recollection of past events (p. 112).

The existence of qualia (private experiences: p. 124).

The truth that people are genuinely moral agents (pp. 124-125, 155-168).

The ability to understand and appreciate a state of affairs (p. 131).

The aptitude to evaluate and plan for the future activities with inbuilt contingencies. "The evaluation of a possible future good or bad, desirable or undesirable, is ... a mental property" (pp. 132-133).

The perception and appreciation of beauty (pp. 134-135).

The aim of improving an activity one performs by concentrating (pp. 145-148).

The continuous volition of intending and attending (pp. 148-150).

Ward offers this remarkable personal anecdote: Atheist philosopher Ayer was "one of the most vociferous philosophical atheists of his day, was extremely surprised to find that he continued to have experiences after he had died. He came back to life after being clinically dead, and his experiences ... were momentous enough for him to accept the possibility of life after death. This he found very disappointing personally, as it conflicted with most of his previous philosophy" (p. 123).

Ward's volume is philosophical in nature so he doesn't discuss a lot of medical research[2] and neuro-computer studies.[3] Nonetheless in *More Than Matter*, Ward delivers a superbly clear, stimulating, and thoughtful volume that serves as a fine entry-level resource for those who desire to contend for mind-body dualism using a moderate Cartesian outlook. Ward concludes with a fine essay on the

views of the mind-body concept in the work of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and the Bible. Many Thomists, Aristotelians, and Platonists will not endorse some of his arguments inasmuch as he rejects selected features of essentialism, forms, and final causality (pp. 200-202). Various other Christians will affirm with great delight Ward's philosophical contentions. He employs philosophical and metaphysical insights to argue that human cognizance transcends our material bodies. The concept that men are more than material bags of water, minerals, and protein, yields deep implications concerning morality, purpose, and human value and this impacts the whole cosmos.

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1. Keith Ward holds some unorthodox views regarding God's ontology, Christ's exclusivity, and additional doctrines. Ward, in past works and lectures, deviates from Evangelical as well as Historical orthodoxy (perhaps from his modest preference of Descartes over Aquinas) so the reader must be discerning when reading several of the interesting works by this philosopher ([...]).

2. Research on BCIs began in the 1970s at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) under a grant from the National Science Foundation followed by a contract from DARPA. The study, conducted by U.C.L.A. had doctors give depressed patients two sets of pills. One was an antidepressant medicine and the other was a placebo pill. Both groups said they experienced relief of symptoms: 52% of those who received the medication and 38% of those who received the sugar pill. The interesting thing was the discovery that the brainwaves, of the placebo-taking patients, acutely changed after taking the fake pill. Their brain chemistry and brainwaves were altered without any medication, merely from their own "minds." The mind controls the gray matter and can change it; the mind is distinct from the brain. The researchers reported that they were "stunned" because there were actual "hardware" changes in the brain, by the power of suggestion. The power of suggestion comes from the mind working the brain. The mind can change and "alter" how the brain works. This is clear evidence that the mind moved the brain and is distinct from the brain tissue. Additional research appears to demonstrate the reality of an immaterial aspect of the mind.

3. The research of Brain-Computer Interface is interesting too. The BCI is a direct communication pathway between a mind and an external device. BCIs are aimed at assisting, augmenting or repairing human cognitive or sensory-motor functions. The TV show *60 Minutes* reported that people with ALS can move a computer key board with just their thoughts using this devise: they can "select letters by just thinking about them." The will of the person attached to the devise is the controlling power used to communicate words, sentences, and language. This seems to strongly suggest that the mind is distinct form the hard neurophysiology and that the immaterial mind works the brain (CBS: *60's Minutes*, August 9, 2010).

APPENDIX II

Logic, Reason, and the Laws of Logic
Definitions and A Christian Theistic Exposition

Definitions are important in communication; perhaps the fallen nature and finiteness of men make understanding many philosophical issues difficult to fully grasp or defend. It may surprise the reader that very few apologetic works provide clear and explicit definitions of the terms: logic, the laws of logic, and reason; including many classical and presuppositional apologetic books. Furthermore, regarding some doctrines (the Trinity; Sovereignty; the Incarnation; etc.) conceivably one might have to utilize philosophical and theological distinctions that are so minutely exact and fine that a fallible finite man could under no circumstance, in principle, comprehend them entirely. Thus one must study essential classifications and delineations as one communicates eternal truths with humility.

I. Distinctions I Maintain Between Logic and the Laws of Logic

Logic: "The study of argument [not a quarrel]; a piece of reasoning in which one or more statements are offered as support for some other statement" (S. Morris Engel: *With Good Reason*).

> Logic is: (1) The Science of Argument. (2) A Hermeneutical Tool. (3) A Science of Commitment (John Frame: *DKG*, p. xi).

> Logic is the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish correct from incorrect reasoning (Irving Copi: *Introduction to Logic*).

The Laws of Logic: Laws of thought and reason that are immaterial, aspatial, atemporal, universal, obligatory, necessary, immutable, and absolute. Some academics identify them as the laws of thought, the laws of truth, or the laws of reason. Various scholars strongly prefer to name them the laws of logic because they are independent of human minds and are ubiquitous throughout all experience. All rational thinking (and communication) presupposes and uses the laws of logic.

The Law of Identity (LOI) is A=A. The most well-known law is the Law of Non-contradiction (LNC): A cannot be A and Non-A at the same time in the same way (A~~A). A man cannot be his own father.

The laws of logic "are basic principles of reasoning" (Frame: *CVT*).

The laws of logic reflect the nature and mind of the God of the Bible; thus, they have ontological grounding—that is, they are grounded in the very nature of truth itself and cannot be reduced to human convention, opinion or psychology. Without these laws, knowledge and rational thinking are impossible. To deny the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one's attempt to deny them. Those who deny the laws of logic are participating in a self-sabotaging endeavor. The Law of Non-contradiction (LNC), the Principle of Contradiction (or the Law of Contradiction) is perpetually necessary and in the words of Aristotle: "One cannot say of something that it is and that it is not in the same respect and at the same time."

Various scholars assert that the Law of Excluded Middle may have real exceptions.

Allan Bloom stated that "The earliest-known explicit statement of the principle of contradiction, the premise of philosophy, and the foundation of rational discourse" is given in Plato's *Politeia*. Therein is where the character Socrates states, "It's plain that the same thing won't be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing" (all the above are excerpts from my Apologetic Book: *God and Logic at:* www.the LordGodExists.com).

"The law of contradiction [LNC] cannot be thought of as operating anywhere except against the background of the nature of God" (Van Til: *IST*).

II. Definitions of Logic

Logic: enables us to think in a rational, systematic and orderly way.
Etymological definition: *logike* is the Greek term that means thought; a treatise pertaining to thought.
Logic real definition: commonly defined as the art and science of correct inferential thinking deals with the laws, methods and principles of correct thinking. Through Logic, we acquire the techniques and skill of thinking correctly whereby our mind is able to proceed with order, ease and without error, when we master the techniques and acquire the skill of correct thinking then we are able to expound our thought orderly, clearly and systematically.

"Logic as the study of the methods and principles used to distinguish correct

reasoning from incorrect reasoning. Thus it provides us with the techniques for testing the correctness (and also the incorrectness) of arguments" (Copi).

Logic real definition as a Science: It is a systematized body of knowledge about the principles and laws of correct inferential thinking. It follows certain rules and laws in arriving at valid conclusions.
Logic real definition as an Art: The art of reasoning. It requires mastery of the laws and principles of correct inferential thinking. Reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity.
Aristotelian logic: A particular system or codification of the principles of proof and inference. (http://www.slideshare.net/ulrick04/1a-logic-intro).

III. Additional Definitions of the Terms Logic and Reason

Logic: Removing or preventing contradictions in one's thoughts or ideas.

Logic is the art of conforming one's thoughts to the Law of Identity. In one respect, thoughts have to conform to the Law of Identity, as does everything else. This has to do with the nature of thoughts. Ideas have a different nature than memories, which are different from emotions. In this respect, all thoughts conform to the Law of Identity.

In a different respect, though, it requires focused action to conform to the Law of Identity. Ideas have content. This content is generated by the thinker from perceptual data. However, it may be generated incorrectly. Logic requires the content to be clear and identifiable. It requires that no contradiction exist within the idea.

Logic is used in integrating ideas as well. Again, it is the process of conforming to the Law of Identity. What this means in practice is combining information clearly, and without contradiction. It must be combined into a specific, identifiable package, that doesn't contradict itself.

Logic is the art of non-contradictory identification. It is the mental tool that sets the standard for proper thought. It is the foundation of knowledge. It is the means of understanding and clarity. Without logic, we could not distinguish between the true and the false. We could not throw out bad ideas because we could not judge them as bad. Without logic, our minds would be cluttered with

so many absurdities and falsehoods that if there was some truth, it would be lost in the garbage of contradictions, fuzzy thoughts, and non-integrated mental images (ImportanceofPhilosphy.com).

Reason: Rational capacity, and the ability and proclivity to follow the same in a logical manner. To reason or to use one's reasons in an orderly manner. The concept of reason is closely related to the concepts of language and logic, as reflected in the multiple meanings of the Greek word *logos*, the root of logic, which translated into Latin became *ratio* and then in French *raison*, from which the English word reason was derived. In contrast to reason more generally, language refers not to the thinking as such, but to the communication or potential communication of rational thoughts.

Reason: (1) The ability to understand and explain cogently, based on evidence and according to logical principles; (2) the ability to treat others fairly and decently, unless one is harmed by them.

A. This is a fundamental human capacity, and based on the capacity to represent things symbolically. A cogent explanation is one that is based on true or probable premises and deductively entails what it explains. Science is based on reason, and the test that something is a real science is that it has produced a real technology that works independent of belief in or understanding of the science that produced it.

There are three basic kinds of reasoning, where reasoning involves argumentation of any kind using assumptions and inferences of conclusions:

1. Deductions: To find conclusions that follow from given assumptions
2. Abductions: To find assumptions from which given conclusions follows
3. Inductions: To confirm or infirm assumptions by showing their conclusions do (not) conform to the observable facts.

Normally in reasoning all three kinds are involved: We explain supposed facts by abductions; we check the abduced assumptions by deductions of the facts they were to explain; and we test the assumptions arrived by deducing consequences and then revising by inductions the probabilities of the assumptions by probabilistic reasoning when these consequences are verified or falsified.

B. The term "reason" is used in another sense, that is more related to morals and ethics than to science. In this sense, one is reasonable if one treats others fairly, does not harm them unless attacked, does not deceive them without provocation, and in general behaves towards them according to some schema of values that chart what it is to be virtuous (PhilosophicalDicitonary.com).

> I do not believe Van Til defines reason anywhere, but it is clear that he views it primarily as a human capacity or faulty. Specially, reason is the capacity of a person to think and act according to logical norms, including the capacity to form beliefs, draw inferences, and formulate arguments (Frame: *CVT*).
>
> Reason is the power or capacity whereby we see or detect logical relationships among propositions (Alvin Plantinga: *Warranted Christian Belief*).

Supporting Material on The Laws of Logic

And a Modal Argument for the Laws of Logic

Laws of logic are also known as the laws of truth, thought, and reason (they are ubiquitous throughout human experience). These laws are immaterial, aspatial, atemporal, universal, obligatory, necessary, immutable, and absolute. Some academics identify them as the laws of thought, the laws of truth, or the laws of reason.

The Law of Identity (LOI) is A=A. The most well-known law is the Law of Non-contradiction (LNC): A cannot be A and Non-A at the same time in the same way (A~~A). A man cannot be his own father.

The laws of logic reflect the nature and mind of the Triune God; thus, they are grounded in the very nature of God and cannot be reduced to human psychology. Without these laws, knowledge and rational thinking are impossible. To reject the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one’s attempt to reject them.

Modal Argument that Maintains the Universality of the Laws of Logic

- A law of logic is universal in a given possible world W if, and only if, it has complete ubiquity in W; and
- A law of logic is universal if it has complete ubiquity in every possible world.
- Universality is possibly exemplified. That is, it is possible that there be a law of logic that has complete ubiquity.
- Therefore, possibly it is necessarily true that a universal law of logic exists.
- Thus, it is necessarily true that a universal law of logic exists.
- Therefore, a universal law of logic exists.

When one perceives how the argument works, you might think that asserting or affirming the premise is tantamount to asserting or affirming the conclusion; the astute physicalist advocate (or anti-universalist) may assert that he does not believe it is possible that there be a universal law. But could not a parallel criticism hold of every valid argument? Take any valid argument: after you perceive how it works, you may think that asserting or affirming the premise is tantamount to asserting or affirming the conclusion.

> The ultimate norms for human knowledge are found not in any human mind or minds, or anywhere else in creation, but in the mind of God (James Anderson: *Speaking the Truth in Love*).

There are things that transcend the material realm, including the laws of logic. A = A (Law of Identity) and A~~A (Law of Non-contradiction) universally; an immutable universal (something that is always true) cannot be grounded by a mutable particular (non-universal) cosmos, which non-theism rests upon. Therefore non-theism lacks the necessary endowment to underwrite the laws of logic.

I employ the expression “a particular” as an individual thing, a specific entity that may be material, abstract, or spiritual. It lacks universal reach forasmuch as it is one finite thing. A material particular cosmos that is mutable lacks

universality and immutability required to account for the universal immutable laws of logic. Yahweh possesses these attributes, thus He sufficiently accounts for the laws of logic. The laws of logic must be utilized in everything one does: in all one's actions and in all knowledge claims. They are inescapable; hence Yahweh is inescapable.

This argument contends that one would have to believe the contrary of the possible, a universal law of logic exists, yet logically it's not possible to demonstrate that a law of logic's existence is impossible, thus the law of logic's existence is logically necessary inasmuch as a law of logic, by definition, is a ubiquitous universal (For more see my eBook: *Aristotle, Frege, the Laws of Logic, and God).*

This contention is not a gap dependent argument since it does not ascribe to divine work something which may possibly, in principle, be explained through mutable natural causes. The whole of the natural world is in a state of flux, all natural things change. Thus one cannot argue for a mutable ground to account for the immutable laws of logic. One cannot appeal to individual mutable natural causes to account for immutable universals such as the laws of logic.

In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was with God and the Word was God (John 1:1).

In *Aristotle, Frege, the Laws of Logic*, and Theism, Mike Robinson demonstrates that God is the true foundation for the Laws of Logic and that atheism lacks the necessary substructure to ground these laws of thought. *Aristotle, Frege, the Laws of Logic, and Theism* is not the typical criticism of atheism; it utilizes new ground proclaimed by numerous and diverse apologetic advancements.
E-Book or the paperback at: http://theLordGodExists.com/books/

Logic is a Christian Actuality

In the beginning was the Logos … (John 1:1).

The eternal Logos is a necessary condition of human knowledge about anything.

Jesus' ontology (His being and essence) is a substantial element of Christianity, for He is the great Logos (John 1:1), and logic is an attribute of His being and nature. Christians are a community that can account for reason; as reason comes from the nature of God. The true God is the God of reason. Reason cannot be held over His head in a type of Eurythro Dilemma, but is a reflection of His nature; additionally we must espouse it in submission to His revelation in the Bible. Christians should base their worldview on God's word and His character. The Laws of Reason (Laws of Logic) have no material content. One cannot put the laws of reason (A = A; A~~A) in a bowl and pour milk over them. The abstract application of reason also has no material content.

The laws of logic are essential (they are immutable universals) and an *a priori* truth condition for any communication. Logic is the foundational instrument necessary for all utterance, debate, science, mathematics, and learning. Without using the laws of logic, one could not deny that logic is mandatory for communication. The precondition for the laws of logic is God. Without the transcendent and immutable God with universal reach, one cannot justify or account for the transcendent, immutable and universal rules of logic. God is the truth condition for laws of reason.

Also known as the laws of truth (Frege), these laws are an *a priori* truth condition for knowledge, discourse, and argument. Logic is absolutely necessary for the intelligibility of life and God is absolutely necessary for logic. Thus, God is, and has to be.

Comments

Jarvis says:

Hi Mike,

Do you recall the bit you wrote using the symbols A~~A? Basically you were showing how to know anything one must presuppose the laws of logic. The idea seemed to be that to know some thing A, one must know that A is itself and is not its negation, or that A is A and that A is not ~A. Is this right?

I'm having a hard time seeing how logic is the precondition for thinking and knowledge. Would you mind showing me how that is true. I know I think, and I know I know; but I don't see how exactly that means the basic rules of logic (LOI, LEM, LNC) are true. You said that one must use them to deny their necessity for thinking and knowledge. I don't see exactly how that is true. I would appreciate your help!

The heart of my question is how do we show or prove what you wrote:

"Without these laws [the laws of logic], knowledge and rational thinking are impossible. To deny the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one's attempt to deny them. Those who deny the laws of logic are participating in a self-defeating endeavor."
I see these as three closely-related conclusions:

1. *"Without these laws [the laws of logic], knowledge and rational thinking are impossible."*
2. *"To deny the laws of logic, one must use these laws in one's attempt to deny them."*
3. *"Those who deny the laws of logic are participating in a self-defeating endeavor."*

What you (Mike) were getting at in this bit:
All thought must assert that A~~A.
Whenever one thinks of something, it is not another thing at the same time/way.
The thought that a something is not another thing is knowledge.
All knowledge must distinguish one thing from another
All knowledge presupposes A~~A.
All thought and knowledge presuppose and utilize A~~A.

Is there any more where this came from? In other words, could you elaborate on this? Also, I do not know what A~~A means. Is it a reference to the law of non-contradiction? I am actually a Christian, so yes I affirm all those things. But like Anselm, I am pursing the certainty of what I believe.

Thanks, again, Mike!

Comments

Jarvis says:

Hi Mike,
I hope it is okay if I ask another question. It has to do with paraconsistent logic. As you undoubtedly know, advocates of paraconsistent logic hold there is some proposition P that is compatible with not-P, even if most propositions are not compatible with their negations. In other words, most of reality is rational (not contradictory) but some is irrational (contradictory). But if presupposing the classic law of non-contradiction (that for any proposition P, P is not compatible with not-P) is necessary for any knowledge, as we have been discussing, then that would mean presupposing paraconsistent logic would make knowledge impossible. But how do we show that? It seems the advocate of paraconsistent logic could simply say that the knowledge they do have, for example of paraconsistent logic, their existence, etc., are cases where P is not non-P, but still there are propositions that are consistent with their negations. So they know the things they know because those things are not compatible with their negations, but still the contend there are some things that are compatible with their negations. How can we refute this position and show that no knowledge is possible if paraconsistent logic is substituted for the classic law of non-contradiction? As always, thanks for your help!

Advocates of paraconsistent logic hold there is some proposition(s) P that is compatible with ~P (in exactly the same sense and same way), even if most propositions are incompatible with their negations. Now the typical response to anyone denying the classical law of noncontradiction is to assert that one must presuppose the law to deny it, making the law undeniable. But this does not seem to work against the advocate of paraconsistent logic. If asked if their very statement, or proposition, affirming paraconsistent logic is true or false, they would say it is true, that in the case of this statement, it is a proposition that is not compatible with its negation. Thus it seems they could say the assertion that paraconsistent logic is true does not presuppose the classical law of non-contradiction (that for any proposition P, P is incompatible with ~P in exactly the same sense and same way); rather, the statement simply presupposes the truth of paraconsistent logic: that most propositions are incompatible with their

negations, including this very statement or proposition affirming paraconsistent logic, while nevertheless there are some propositions that are compatible with their negations. How would you refute this?

Mike Robinson says:

^ There seems to be many problems with the notion of the paraconsistency of logic in relation to the LNC.

1. The asserter must supply and account for the concept of contradiction within his paraconsistent logical (PL) method. I don't see how this can succeed. It appears impossible, so the system collapses. One can make an assertion, but is there a consistent foundation that has the ontic resources to account for the LNC (or even the principles of PL) that underwrites the assertion? Not with PL.
2. The PL advocates that I have read seem to confuse negation with contradiction; there's a clear distinction (Liars Paradox, etc.)

3. It appears that PL examples do in fact utilize P in a different manner; so it fails (A cannot be A and ~A in the *same manner*).

4. Logicians differ on PL and other topics, yet in their sundry arguments and systems, the LNC must be utilized: Is PL in fact PL? or is PL its contradiction?

I hope that helps,
Mike.

Reply
Jarvis says:

Dear Mike, I am struggling to see how we can show that all reality must be rational, that it, that it is not even possible that there is some irrational reality. How can we refute the idea that there may be contradictory realities, even if most reality is not contradictory? I can see that with respect to anything I know

(e.g. my own present existence), I must think that thing is what it is (law of identity) and not its negation (law of non-contradiction), but what about the many things that I do not know. What shows that there cannot be something, even one thing, that violates the laws of logic, and so is non-rational and unknowable? In other words, it seems we must show that to know anything one must presuppose not simply that that thing is what it is and not its negation, but that all things must be what they are and not their negation. But it only seems the former, and not the latter, stronger law must be presupposed to know something. So, again, I don't see how to prove that all reality is rational. Your expert advice on this would be very appreciated. Once again, can you specifically show that to know something we must presuppose that all things are /must be identical to their respective selves and not identical to their respective negations? Thanks, Mike! I hope to hear from you soon! I'm sorry if I am just slow-witted! Jarvis
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Reply
^Mike Robinson says:

Jarvis:

The foremost notion one should remember is that to affirm anything, including the demise or limitation of the LNC, one must utilize the law in that assertion.

1. Ask the universal LNC-denier to supply one sentence that fails to be bound to the LNC.

2. Ask them to give you a deductive argument that proves the non-universality of the LNC.

And what are you attempting to achieve in your pursuit; so few of the upper few will ever get to this level of LNC skepticism? If you engage such a skeptic, just give them a cogent answer, agree to disagree and then press the moral law on their hearts and share the grace of the gospel.

I hope this might assist you a bit, keep up the good work.
Blessings,
Mike

Jarvis says:

Hey Mike,
Thanks for your reply. I especially appreciate you sharing your new modal argument with me. It is really fascinating; I will have to mull it over some more. Again, thanks!

At the beginning of your reply you wrote, "to affirm anything, including the demise or limitation of a law of logic, one must utilize the law in that assertion." Can you demonstrate this, because I am still having a hard time seeing that it must be true. Specifically, I do not see how it is true of this assertion:

"There may be some proposition(s) P that is compatible with ~P (in exactly the same sense and same way), even if most propositions are incompatible with their negations."

It seems that if the holder of this position were asked whether the position is true or false, they could say it is true, that in the case of this statement affirming their position, it is a proposition that is not compatible with its negation. In other words, it seem like the person could say the assertion of the truth of their position does not presuppose the law of non-contradiction (that for any proposition P, P is incompatible with ~P in exactly the same sense and same way); rather, the statement simply presupposes its own truth: that most propositions are incompatible with their negations, including this very statement or proposition affirming the position, while nevertheless there are some propositions that are compatible with their negations. Do you see what I'm saying? As always, thanks for your help!
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^Mike Robinson says:
Jarvis:
It appears that you may be into some possible unnecessary speculation. If I am gathering what you are trying to communicate correctly, I would say that if:

i = an irrational aspect of some reality somewhere at some time; then i = i;
Thus the Law of Identity is still in force; I don't see how one can escape it.
Perhaps I do not fully understand that which you are asserting.
Best wishes,

Mike

Jarvis says:

Mike, it's so funny that you posted this message today. I actually woke up this morning thinking exactly the same thing you wrote!! I realized that it really comes down to the law of identity: that for something to exist, it must be SOME THING. And then the law of non-contradiction follows: to be some thing is to not be the negation of that thing. And all of this means that no reality can be irrational, for then that reality would not be some specific, or determinate, thing; which is to say it would be nothing, or NO THING. Fantastic!

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^Mike Robinson says:

Jarvis: excellent point. Also there is so much wrangling within and without paraconsistent schools that one can take a peek from above and see that all the diverse types of PL have to affirm their own perspective while presupposing A=A and deny aspects of other PL types so they must presuppose the LNC in order to do so.

Blessings to you, and stay in touch,

Mike

APPENDIX III

The War of Truth

January 11, 1857, by C. H. Spurgeon

> "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek; to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."—Exodus 17:9.

HE CHILDREN of Israel were led out of Egypt with a strong hand and an out-stretched arm. They were conducted into the vast howling wilderness, where there were few, if any, permanent abodes of men. For some time they pursued their march in solitude, discovering wells and other traces of a nomadic population, but not meeting with any to disturb their loneliness. But it appears that then, as now, there were wandering tribes who, like the Bedouin Arabs, wandered to and fro through that very country which the people of Israel were now treading with their feet. These people, excited by the hope of spoil, fell suddenly upon the rear of the children of Israel, smote the hindmost of them in a most cowardly manner, took their spoil, and then swiftly decamped. Gathering

strength and courage from this successful foray, they then dared to attack the whole host of Israel, which at that time must have amounted to two or three millions of souls, who had been brought out of Egypt and fed by miracle in the wilderness. This time Israel was not to be surprised; for Moses had said unto Joshua—"Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand;" pleading with God, in order that every blow struck with the sword might be made doubly powerful by the mighty assistance of God.

We are told that a great victory was achieved; the Amalekites were put to the rout, and because of their unprovoked attack upon the children of Israel, they were condemned to extermination; for we find it written thus:—"Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Now, beloved, this scene of warfare is not recorded in Scripture as in interesting circumstance to amuse the lover of history, but it is written for our edification; for we remember the text which says—"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our profit." There is some profit to be derived from this—and we believe a peculiar profit, too, since God was pleased to make this the first writing commanded by Divine authority as a record for generations to come. We think that the journeys of the children of Israel furnish us with many emblems of the journey of God's church through the world; and we believe, that this fight with Amalek is a metaphor and an emblem of that constant and daily fight which all God's people must carry on with sins without and sins within.

This morning I shall more particularly confine myself to sin without; I shall speak of the great battle which at the present moment is being waged for God and for his truth, against the enemies of the Cross of Christ. I shall endeavour, first, to make a few remarks upon the war itself, then to review the authorised method of warfare, which is twofold—hard blows and hard prayers, and then I shall finish by stirring up God's church to great and earnest diligence in the warfare for God and for his truth.

I. First, then, we shall make some remarks upon THE GREAT WARFARE which we think is typified by the content between the children of Israel and Amalek.

First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is not with men, but with Satan and with error. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood." Christian men are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for; we are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics; we are opposed to, and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and his truth: but towards every man we would still endeavour to carry out the holy maxim, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." The Christian soldier hath no gun and no sword, for he fighteth not with men. It is with "spiritual wickedness in high places" that he fights, and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold sceptres in their hands. I have marked, however, that some Christian men—and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone—are very apt to make Christ's war a war of flesh and blood, instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness.

Have you never noticed in religious controversies how men will fall foul of each other, and make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ's war is? We are not fighting against men; we are fighting for men rather than against them. We are fighting for God and his truth against error and against sin; but not against men. Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare. Touch not the persons of men, but smite their sin with a stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great; let nothing be spared that is against God and his truth; but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men. Rome we hate even as we abhor hell, yet for her votaries we ever pray. Idolatry and infidelity we fiercely denounce, but the men who debase themselves by either of them are the objects not of wrath, but pity.

We fight not against the men, but against the things which we consider in God's sight to be wrong. Let us always make that distinction, otherwise the conflict with Christ's church will be degraded into a mere battle of brute force and garments rolled in blood; and so the world will again be an Aceldama—a field of blood. It is this mistake which has nailed martyrs to the stake and cast confessors into prison, because their opponents could not distinguish between the imaginary error and the man. While they spoke stoutly against the seeming error; in their ignorant bigotry they felt that they must also persecute the man, which they need not and ought not to have done.

I will never be afraid to speak out my mind with all the Saxon words I can get together, and I am not afraid of saying hard things against the devil, and against what the devil teaches; but with every man in the wide world I am friends, nor is there one living with whom I am at enmity for a moment any more than with the babe that has just been brought into the world. We must hate error, we must abhor falsehood; but we must not hate men, for God's warfare is against sin. May God help us always to make that distinction.

But now let us observe that the warfare which the Christian carries on, may be said for his encouragement, to be a most righteous warfare. In every other conflict in which men have engaged, there have been two opinions, some have said the war was right, and some have said it was wrong; but in regard to the sacred war in which all believers have been engaged, there has been only one opinion among right-minded men. When the ancient priest stirred up the Crusaders to the fight, he made them shout Deus vult—God wills it. And we may far more truly say the same. A war against falsehood, a war against sin, is God's war; it is a war which commends itself to every Christian man, seeing he is quite certain that he has the seal of God's approval when he goes to wage war against God's enemies. Beloved, we have no doubt whatever, when we lift up our voices like a trumpet against sin, that our warfare is justified by the eternal laws of justice. Would to God that every war had so just and true an excuse as the war which God wages with Amalek—with sin in the world!

Let us recollect again, that it is a war of the greatest importance. In other wars it is sometimes said—"Britons! fight for your hearths and your homes, for your wives and for your children—fight and repel the foe!" But in this war it is not merely for our hearths and for our homes, for our wives and for our children, but it is for something more than this. It is not against them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but it is a fight for souls, for eternity, against those who would plunge man into eternal perdition, a fight for God, for the deliverance of men's souls from wrath to come.

It is a war which ought, indeed, to be commenced, to be followed up, and carried out in spirit, by the whole army of God's elect, seeing that no war can be more important. The instrumental salvation of men is above all things the highest object to which we can attain, and the routing of the foes of truth is a victory beyond all things to be desired. Religion must be the foundation of every blessing which society can hope to enjoy. Little as men think it, religion has much to do with our liberty, our happiness, and our comfort. England would not

have been what it now is, if it had not been for her religion; and in that hour when she shall forsake her God, her glory shall have fallen, and "Ichabod" shall be written upon her banners.

In that day when the Gospel shall be silenced, when our ministers shall cease to preach; when the Bible shall be chained; in that day—God forbid it should ever come to pass—in that day, England may write herself among the dead, for she hath fallen, since God hath forsaken her, seeing she hath cast off her allegiance to him. Christian men, in this fight for right, ye are fighting for your nation, for your liberties, your happiness and your peace; for unless religion, the religion of heaven be maintained, these will most certainly be destroyed.

Let us reflect, in the next place, that we are fighting with insidious and very powerful foes, in this great warfare for God and Christ. Let me again make the remark, that whilst speaking of certain characters, I am not speaking of the men, but of their errors. At this time we have peculiar difficulties in the great content for truth—peculiar, because very few appreciate them. We have enemies of all classes, and all of them far wider awake than we are. The infidel hath his eyes wide open, he is spreading his doctrines everywhere; and while we think—good easy men—that full surely our greatness is ripening, that frost is nipping many of our fair shoots, and unless we awaken, God help us! In almost every place infidelity seems to have a great away; not the bold bragging infidelity of Tom Payne, but a more polite and moderate infidelity; not that which slayeth religion with a bludgeon, but that which seeks to poison it with a small dose of poison, and goeth its way, and saith still it hath not hurt public morals. Everywhere this is increasing; I fear that the great mass of our population are imbued with an infidel spirit.

Then we have more to fear than some of us suppose from Rome; not from Rome openly; from that we have little to fear; God hath given to the people of England such a bold Protestant spirit, that any open innovation from the Pope of Rome would be instantly repelled; but I mean the Romanism that has crept into the Church of England under the name of Puseyism. Everywhere that has increased; they are beginning to light candles on the altar, which is only a prelude to those greater lights with which they would consume our Protestantism.

Oh! that there were men who would unmask them! We have much to fear from them; but I would not care one whit for that if it were not for something which is even worse. We have to deal with a spirit, I know not how to denominate it,

unless I call it a spirit of moderatism in the pulpits of protestant churches. Men have begun to rub off the rough edges of truth, to give up the doctrines of Luther and Zwingle, and Calvin, and to endeavour to accommodate them to polished tastes. You might go into a Roman Catholic chapel now-a-days, and hear as good a sermon from a Popish priest as you hear in many cases from a Protestant minister, because he does not touch disputed points, or bring out the angular parts of our Protestant religion. Mark, too, in the great majority of our books what a dislike there is to sound doctrine! the writers seem to fancy that truth is of no more value than error; that as for the doctrines we preach, it cannot matter what they are; still holding that

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

There is creeping into the pulpits of Baptists and every other denomination, a lethargy and coldness, and with that a sort of nullification of all truth. While they for the most part preach but little notable error, yet the truth itself is uttered in so minute a form that no one detects it, and in so ambiguous a style, that no one is struck with it. So far as man can do it, God's arrows are blunted, and the edge of his sword is turned in the day of battle. Men do not hear the truth as they used to. The velvet mouth is succeeding to the velvet cushion, and the organ is the only thing in the building which giveth forth a certain sound. From all such things, "good Lord deliver us!"

May heaven put an end to all this moderatism; we want out-and-out truth in these perilous days; we want a man just now to speak as God tells him, and care for nobody. Oh! if we had some of the old Scotch preachers! Those Scotch preachers made kings tremble; they were no men's servants; they were very lords, wherever they went, because each of them said, "God has given me a message; my brow is like adamant against men; I will speak what God bids me." Like Micah, they said, "As the Lord my God liveth, whatsoever my God saith unto me, that will I speak." Heroes of the truth, soldiers of Christ awake! Even now there are enemies. Think not that the fight is over; the great warfare of truth waxes more hot and fierce than ever. Oh! soldiers of Christ! take your swords from your scabbards! stand up for God and for his truth again, lest a free grace gospel should be forgotten.

Let me just say, once more, concerning this war, that it is one that is to be of perpetual duration. Let us recollect, my beloved, that this war between right and

wrong must be continued, and never must cease until truth has the victory. If you suppose that our forefathers did enough for truth and for God, and that you may be idle, you have made a great mistake. Until that day when the might with the right, and the right with the might shall be, we must never sheathe our swords; until that happy hour when Christ shall reign, when he shall be Master of all lands, when "swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks," and men shall not learn way any more; until that day the conflict is to be kept up. Let no man think we are in such a position that we have no need for watchfulness: terrible as the war has been before, it is as terrible now, though in another manner. We have not now to resist unto blood, striving against sin, but we have need of as stern a power of resistance as ever was possessed by martyrs and confessors in days gone by. Brethren, we must awake; the army must be aroused, the soldiers of the Lord must be quickened to a consciousness of their position. Now, now, we blow the trumpet; rush to the fight ye slumbering soldiers! Up, up, up! Let your banners wave, and let your swords be taken from your scabbards; it is a day of fight—a day of war and contention.

I cannot, however, conclude this section of my discourse without remarking that it is not merely error in religion with which we have to fight, but error in practice. Oh! beloved this world is a wicked world still, and London is an abominable city still. We have a fine gloss everywhere—a fair exterior, but, alas, within the hidden parts sin is still dominant. This is the great city of pretence, the gaudy house of sham, the foul home of pollution. Our streets are lined with fair houses; but what have we behind them? what have we there, in the very vitals of our city? This city is a colossal culprit, it is a behemoth sinner, and everywhere there are those who live in the vilest of vices, and yet go unchecked and unreproved, for it is unfashionable to tell men of their sins and there are few who have the spirit to speak out plainly of men's sins. When we consider the mass of female profligacy which numbers it votaries by tens of thousands, are we not driven to conclude that the same sin must be rife enough with men. And ah! that there should be need to utter it. Are not the men who ensnare and seduce the poor unfortunates, allowed to enter society as respectable and moral.

What is this but abominable hypocrisy. We are greater sinners in London than many suppose. Everything is painted over. But think not that you can deceive God in this way? Sin is stalking through the land at a horrid pace; iniquity still runs down our streets, covered up, it is true, not open sin, but still offensive alike to God and to good men. Oh! my brethren, the world is not good yet; it is filmed over, but all the while the loathsome disease lurks within. Up, again, I say,

soldiers of Christ; the war against sin is not finished, it is scarce begun.

II. But now, secondly, we have to notice, briefly the APPOINTED MEANS OF WARFARE.

When Amalek came out against Israel, God appointed two means of combating them. If he had chosen, he could have sent a wind and driven them away, or have cut off their hosts by the blast of the pestilence; but it did not so please him; for he would put honor upon human effort, and, therefore, he said to Joshua, "Choose out your men, and go fight with Amalek." It is true Joshua might, by God's strength, have overcome the foe; but says God, "While I honor human effort, I will still make men see that God doeth all. Moses! go up to yonder hill; stand there in prayer, hold up thy rod, and whilst the soldiers of Joshua rush into the fight, Moses shall plead, and you shall be unitedly successful. Your prayer, O Moses, without the sword of Joshua, shall not prosper; and the sword of Joshua, without the rod of Moses, shall not be effectual." The two ways of fighting sin are these—hard blows and hard prayers.

First, the church must employ hard blows and hard fighting against sin. It is of no use for you to shut yourselves up in your houses, and pray to God to stay sin, unless you go and do something yourselves. If you pray away till you are dumb, you shall never have a blessing unless you exert yourselves. Let the farmer pray for a harvest; will he ever have it, unless he ploughs the field and then sows his seed? Let the warrior pray for victory, and let his soldiers stand peacefully to be shot at, will he gain a triumph? No, there must be an active exercise of the power given by God, or else prayer without it will be of no avail. Let us, then, brethren and sisters, each in our spheres, deal hard blows at the enemy. This is a fight in which all can do something who are the Lord's people. Those who halt upon there crutches can use them for weapons of war, as well as the mighty men can wield their swords! We have each an allotted work to do, if we are the Lord's elect; let us take care that we do it.

You are a tract distributor; go on with your work, do it earnestly. You are a Sunday-school teacher; go on, do not stay in that blessed work, do it as unto God, and not as unto man. You are a preacher; preach as God giveth you ability, remembering that he requireth of no man more than he hath given to him; therefore, be not discouraged if you have little success, still go on. Are you like Zebulon, one that can handle the pen? Handle it wisely; and you shall smite through the loins of kings therewith. And if you can do but little, at least furnish

the shot for others, that so you may help them in their works of faith and their labours of love. But let us all do something for Christ.

I will never believe there is a Christian in the world who cannot do something. There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but hath its errand; there is not a nettle that groweth in the corner of the churchyard but hath its purpose; there is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplisheth some divine decree; and I will never have it that God created any man, especially any Christian man, to be a blank, and to be a nothing. He made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find our your niche, and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth. Joshua must go out and take his men. I think I see him; he appears to have been a man of war from his youth; but what a motley host he had to choose from! Why, they were a set of slaves; they had never seen a sword in their lives, except in the hands of the Egyptians; they were poor, miserable creatures; they were cowards when they saw their old enemies at the Red Sea, and now their weapons were those which were washed up from the Red Sea, and their regimentals were of all descriptions upon earth.

Joshua, however, chooses out the strongest of them, and says, "Come with me." It was indeed, as one called it, a "ragged regiment" with which he went to fight: and yet the ragged regiment was the victorious one. Joshua won the day against the Amalekites, who had been trained to a predatory life. So, ye children of God, ye may know little of the tactics of warfare, your enemies may overthrow you in arguments, and annihilate you in logic; but, if you are God's children, they that are with you are more than a match for your foes; you shall live to see them yet dead upon the field; only fight on with faith in God, and you shall be victorious.

But this is not all. Joshua might have fought; but he would have been routed, had it not been for Moses on the brow of the hill. They were both necessary. Do you not see the battle! It is not on a very large scale, but it is still worthy of your earnest attention. There is Amalek, rushing to the war with discordant cries; see, Israel is repulsing them, and Amalek flees! But what is it that I notice? Now Israel turns back and flees; now again they rally and Amalek is put to the flight! Lo! they are cut to pieces by the sword of Joshua, and mighty Amalek wavers like the corn beneath the mower's scythe. The crowd of Amalek are dropping. But again! again the battle wavers; Joshua flees; but once again he rallies his troops! And have you not observed the wonderous phenomenon?

There, on the brow of the hill stands Moses. You will notice that when his hands were outstretched, Israel routed Amalek; but the moment when from weariness he dropped his hands, then Amalek had a temporary victory; and when again he held up his rod, Israel routed the foe. Each time the hand of prayer fell down, victory wavered between the combatants.

Do you see the venerable intercessor? Moses, being an aged man, becomes weary from standing so many hours, they seat him upon a stone; still, arms are not iron, and the hands are drooping; but see! his eyes are flashing fire, and his hands are lifted up to heaven; tears are beginning to flow down his cheeks and his ejaculatory prayers are going to heaven like so many darts, which shall find their target in the ear of God. Do you see him, He is the hinge of victory; as he falters Amalek prevails; and as he is strong the chosen people gain the victory. See! Aaron is holding his hand for a moment; and anon Hur is supporting it, and the good old man changes his hands, for the battle lasts all day long, and in the hot sun it is wearisome work to hold them in one position. But see how manfully he holds them; stiff, as though they were cut out of stone; weary and worn, still his hands are out-stretched, as if he were a statue, and his friends assist his zeal.

And see now, the ranks of Amalek are broken like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They fly! they fly! Still his hands are motionless; still they fight; still the Amalekites fly; still Joshua prevails, until at last all the foes lie dead on the plain, and Joshua returns with the shout of joy.

Now this teaches that there must be prayer as well as effort. Minister! preach on; you shall have no success unless you pray. If you do not know how to wrestle with God on your knees, you will find it hard work to wrestle with men on your feet in the pulpit. You may make efforts to do so, but you shall not be successful, unless you back up your efforts with prayer. You are not so likely to fail in your efforts as in your prayers. We never read that Joshua's hand was weary with wielding the sword, but Moses' hand was weary with holding the rod. The more spiritual the duty, the more apt we are to tire of it. We could stand and preach all day, but we could not be in our closets all day one-half so easily. To spend a night with God in prayer would be far more difficult than to spend a night with men in preaching.

Oh! take care, take care, church of Christ, that thou dost not cease thy prayers! Above all, I speak to my own much loved church, my own people. You have loved me, and I have loved you, and God has given us great success, and blessed

us. But, mark, I trace all of it to your prayers. You have assembled together in multitudes, perfectly unparalleled, to pray for me on each Monday evening, and I know I am mentioned at your family altars, as one who is very dear to your hearts; but I am afraid lest you should cease your prayers. Let the world say, "Down with him;" I will stand against them all, if you will pray for me; but if you cease your prayers it is all up with me and all over with you.

Your prayers make us mighty; the praying legion is the thundering legion. If I might compare myself to a military commander, I should say, that when I see my men rise to pray in such large numbers, I feel like Napoleon, when he sent out his old guards. The battle had wavered; "There," said he, "they go; now the victory is sure." Or, like our own guards, the black caps, who, wherever they went carried victory with them. The praying legion is a thundering legion everywhere. Men can stand against anything but prayer. We would pray the very gates of hell off their hinges, if we could pray as some men have done. Oh! that we had might in prayer. Do not, I beseech you, I entreat you, do not cease to pray; cease what you please, but do not give up that; down on your knees, wrestle with God, and verily the Lord our God will bless us, "and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

III. And now I am to close up with just a few remarks, in the third place, TO STIR YOU UP TO THE WARFARE.

Remember, O children of God, that there are many things that should make you valiant for God and for his truth. The first thing I will bring to your remembrance is the fact, that this warfare in which you are engaged is an hereditary warfare; it is not one which you began, but it is one which has been handed to you from the moment when the blood of Abel cried aloud for vengeance. Each martyr that has died has passed the blood-red flag to the next, and he in his turn has passed it on to another. Every confessor who has been nailed to the stake to burn, has lit his candle, and handed it to another, and said, "Take care of that!" And now here is the old "sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Remember what hands have handled the hilt; remember what arms have wielded it; remember how often it has "pierced to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow."

Will you disgrace it. Will you disgrace it? There is the great banner: it has waved in many a breeze; long ere the flag of this our land was made, this flag of Christ was born aloft, Will you stain it? Will you stain it? Will you not hand it to your

children, still unsullied, and say, "Go on, go on; we leave you the heritage of war; go on, go on, and conquer. What your fathers did, do you again; still keep up the war, till time shall end." I love my Bible because it is a Bible baptized with blood; I love it all the better, because it has the blood of Tyndal on it; I love it, because it has on it the blood of John Bradford, and Rowland Taylor, and Hooper; I love it, because it is stained with blood.

I sometimes think I like the baptismal pool because that has been stained with blood, and is now upon the continent, forbidden by law. I love it, because I see in it the blood of men and of women who had been martyred, because they loved the truth. Will you not, then, stand by the banner of truth, after such an illustrious pedigree of warriors have held it in their hands?

I would that I could have addressed you as I desired, but my voice fails me; I cannot, therefore, urge you, except by one consideration, and that is, the prospect of ultimate victory. It is certain that ere long we shall triumph; therefore let us not give up the fight. I have been much gratified of late to hear that there is a revival in the ranks of Christ's church; here and there I hear of great evangelists who are starting up. Some have said to me, when they have mentioned their names, "What say you to them?" My answer is, "Would God that all the Lord's servants were prophets!" Oh! that God might send thousands and thousands of men, who would gather multitudes together to hear his word. I would that the day were come, when every church and every chapel in England were as full of souls as this, and as large as this. I do think the churches are reviving; but if they are not, still victory is certain—God will still get the victory; Jehovah will triumph. Satan may dream he will, but he will not.

Therefore, men and brethren, on to victory; let the crown that is before you, nerve you to the fight; to victory; to victory; and on, on, on! for God is with you. Remember the great intercessor; Christ is on the hill, and whilst you are in the valley he pleads, and must prevail, therefore, go on, and conquer, for Christ's sake!

I can no longer address you, but must finish up by repeating the words with which I always like to conclude my sermons: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!" Oh! that ye would believe in Christ; oh! that God would give you faith to put your trust in him; this is the only way of salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

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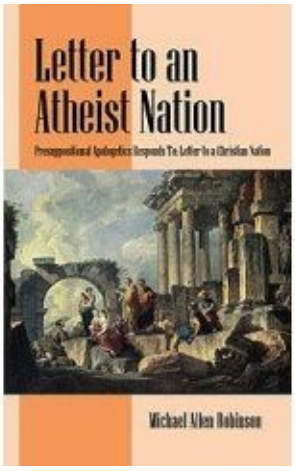

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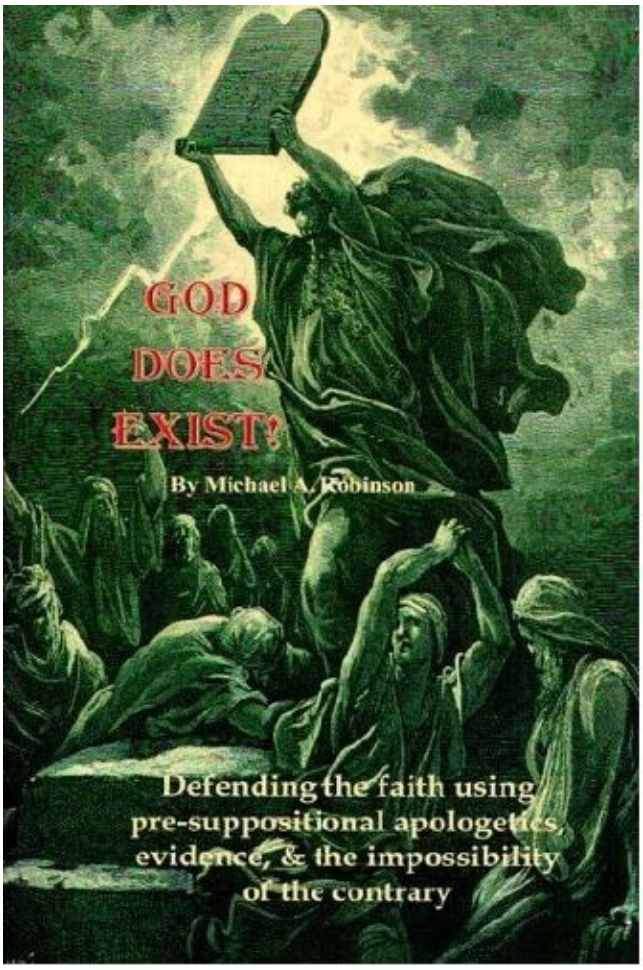

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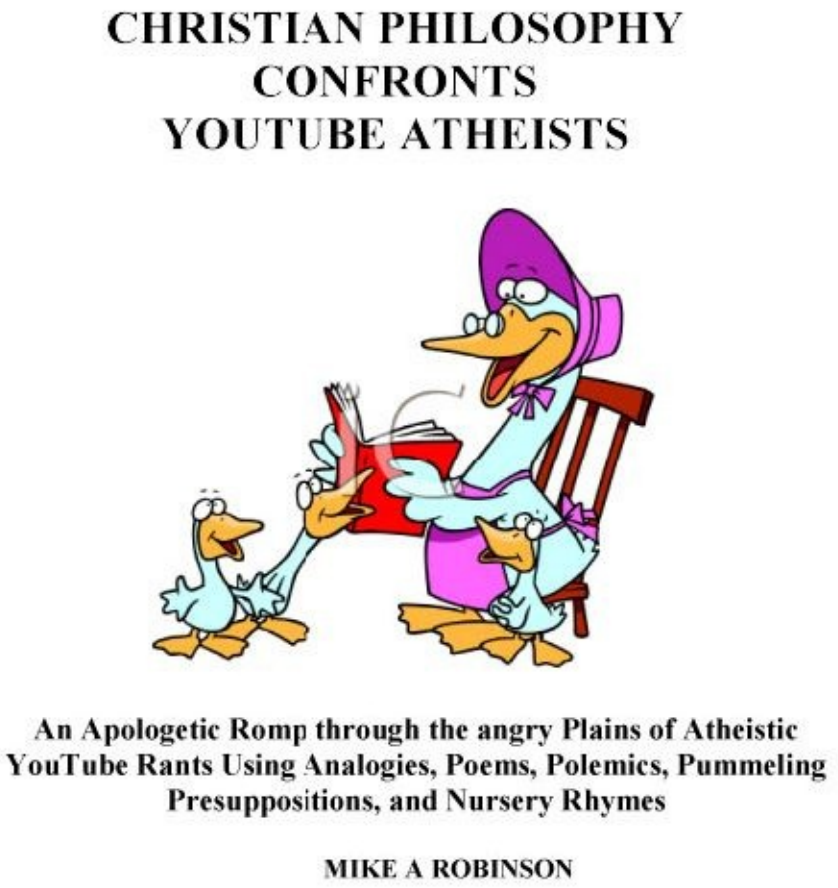

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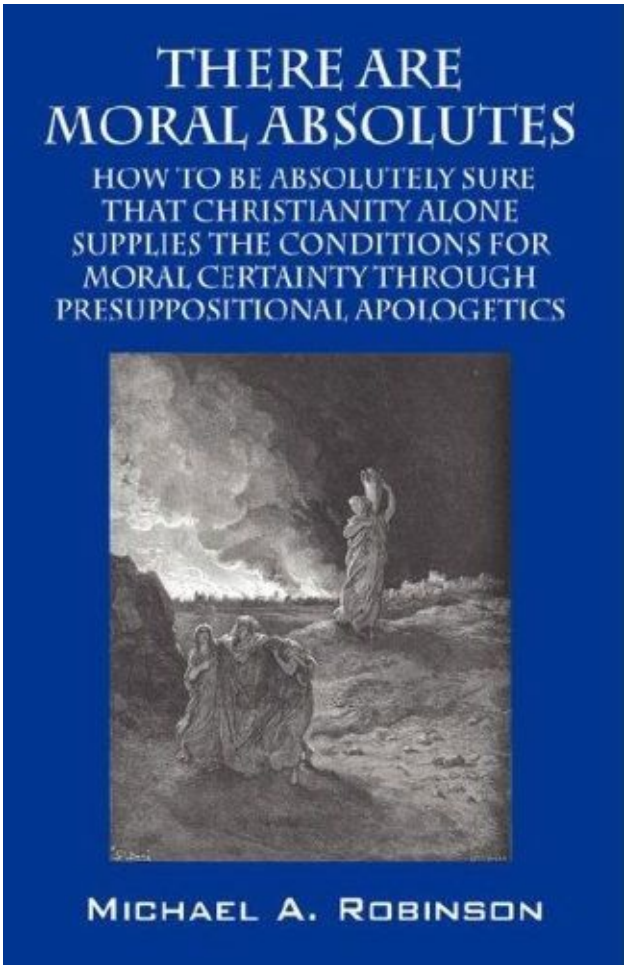
There Are Moral Absolutes
by Michael A Robinson



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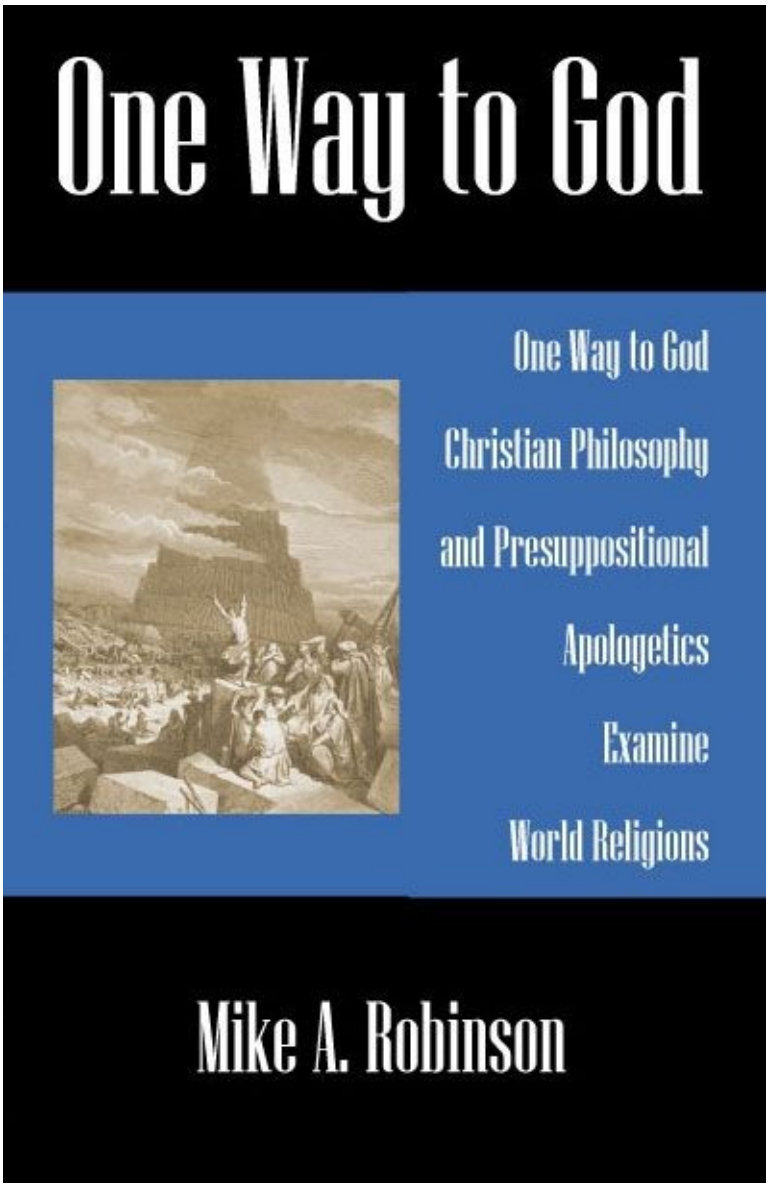

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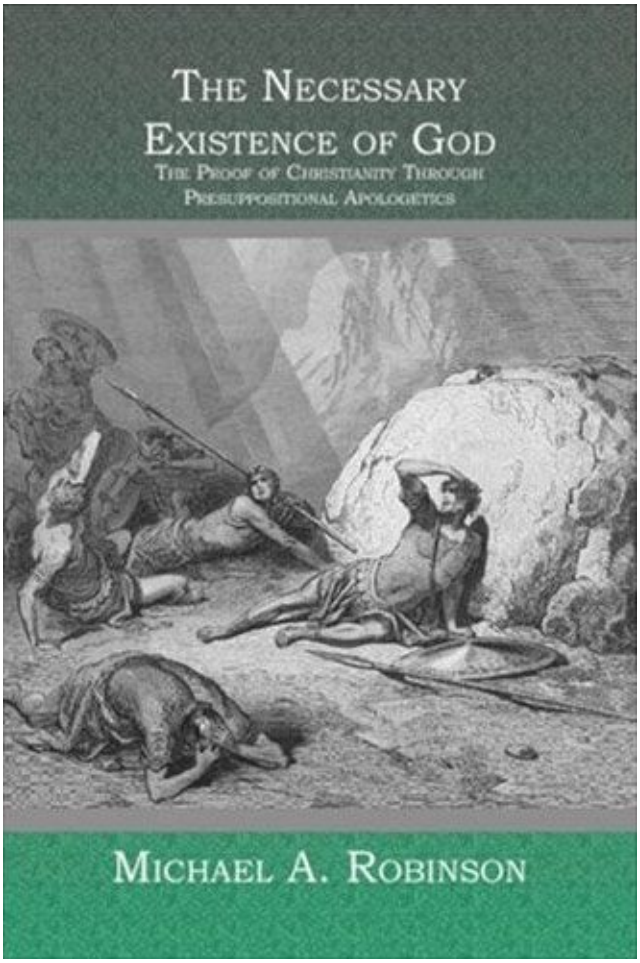

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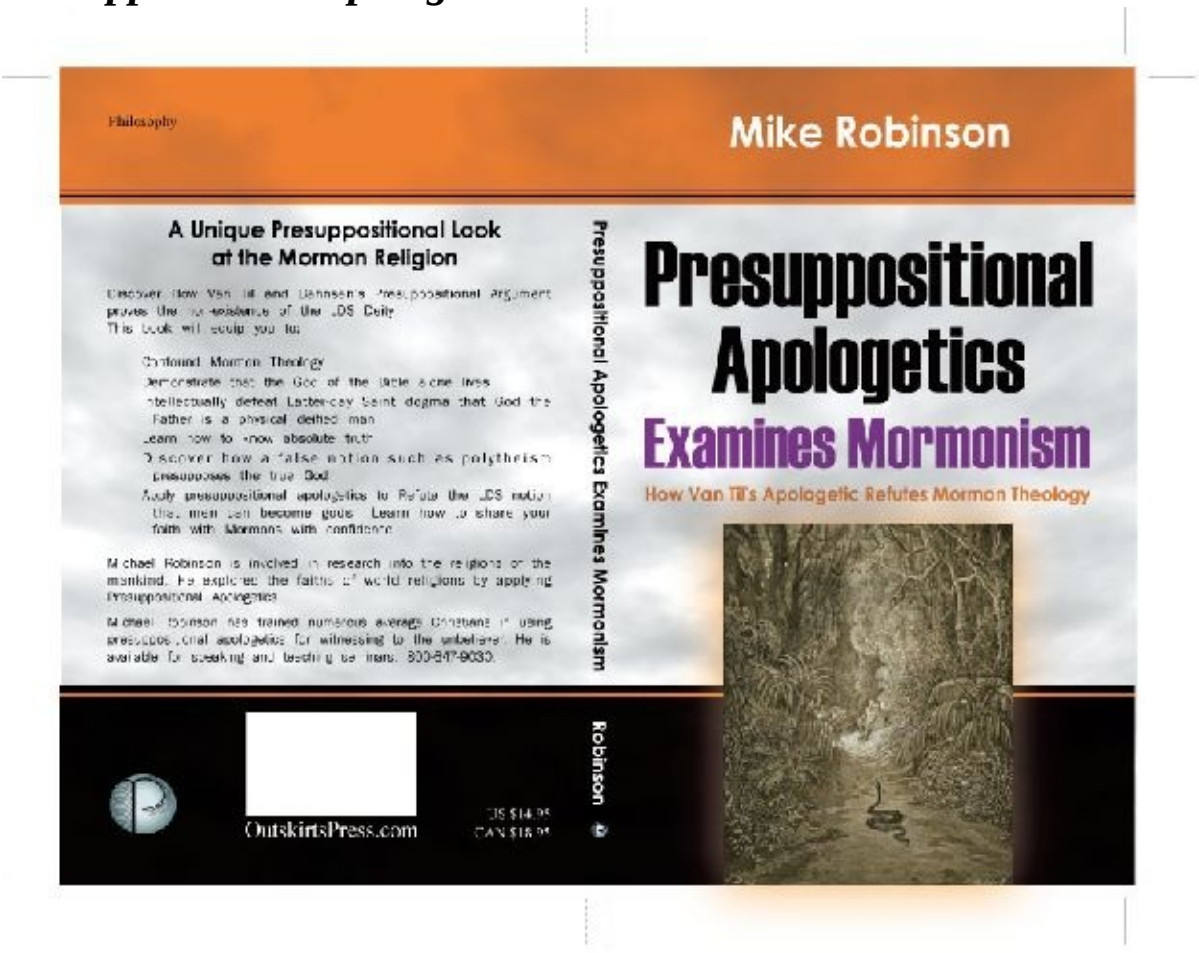

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Mike A Robinson, a pastor and teacher at Christ Covenant Bible School, Las Vegas, Nevada, has equipped numerous Christians in utilizing Applied Apologetics. He is available for speaking and teaching seminars: www.theLordGodExists.com

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