

## Preface

The following paper entitled *The Existence of the Triune God* is an imaginary conversation between a Christian and an atheist. It is not meant to be a realistic dialogue. If only all conversations with non-Christians would go this smooth! A real conversion would be much different. There would be much more interaction and many more questions from the other side. This dialogue is one-sided for a reason. It is primarily aimed at teaching the Christian reader principles of defending the faith using what is called the *Transcendental Presuppositional* method. I have begun to learn this method primarily through the writings and/or lectures of Cornelius Van Til, Greg Bahnsen, Michael Butler, and Richard Pratt. I am convinced that the *Presuppositional* method, sometimes called "worldview apologetics," is a powerful method for challenging unbelief. This paper was written to help me retain some of the principles of defending the faith that I have learned from reading and listening to the above mentioned authors and teachers. In addition to that, I hope it will benefit other Christians by introducing them to this Biblical method of defending the Christian faith.

The footnotes are extensive and it might be preferable to skip over them the first time. They are meant to add additional commentary to the conversation. The footnotes are a "secret conversation" between the writer and the Christian reader explaining further what is happening in the conversation with the atheist. They are mainly quotations from Christian apologists. I suggest the reader go through the paper once ignoring the footnotes. Then go back and work through them. Many of the questions that may arise will be addressed in the footnotes.

Although this paper is primarily intended to teach Christians a method of defending the faith, and to give them ideas on how to converse with unbelievers, I would welcome and encourage those who do not believe in the Triune God of the Bible to seriously read and consider the following Christian challenge to unbelief. It is my conviction that the Christian world-and-life view is the only position that does not make nonsense out of human experience.

The following method of defending the faith is not very complicated. The main argument can be summed up in one or two sentences. However, this method requires the Christian to think through many things that we take for granted in this life. And then the Christian must patiently challenge his opponent to think about these things as well. This is not always an easy task. There are many things in this life that we simply take for granted without asking about the foundation for them. The defense of the faith necessitates asking some of the hard questions in life that unbelievers (and even Christians) normally do not want to think about. The Christian must know his Bible well so that he can understand and articulate the Christian worldview; and he must also have some knowledge of unbelieving worldviews. This is a lifetime study. An effective defense of the faith requires the Christian to be knowledgeable about important issues related to apologetics and to be a student of critical thinking.

Even more important than the method of defending the faith is the attitude of the Christian in defending the faith. Actions often speak louder than words, and even unbelievers can sense the power of a consistent Christian life. The love Christians have for their Saviour, for one another, and for those without hope in this world, is the best defense of the Christian position.

Dennis Nenadov  
January 14, 2004

## The Existence of the Triune God

You have asked me the question, "What proof do you have for the existence of God?" I am glad that you have asked this question. There is no question I can think of that is more important. It

is my conviction that there is overwhelming proof for the existence of the God. When I speak of God, I am referring exclusively to the God of Christianity who has revealed Himself in the pages of the Old and New Testaments--the Bible. I do not believe any other "God" exists. I do not argue for theism (the belief in God) in general; I argue for the existence of the Triune God of the Scripture who speaks with authority both in creation and in His Word. Christian theism teaches that God is eternal, personal, absolute, independent, self-contained, and autonomous. As the catechism answer teaches, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."<sup>1</sup> Those who believe in this God can have absolute certainty that He exists. However, the proof I will present to you will be somewhat different than what you are most likely expecting. Allow me to explain.

Since you profess not to believe in the existence of God, I cannot give you any *direct* proof for the existence of God that would be *acceptable* to you. I repeat--I cannot give you any *direct* proof that would be *acceptable* to you. The reason for this is that you are already committed to the principle of independence from God.<sup>2</sup> You believe that by your own reason you are able properly to judge the evidence for the existence of God.<sup>3</sup> I do not agree with you on this, and this is the basic difference between the Christian and the non-Christian position. The Christian position says that because God created and sustains this universe, it is impossible to reason correctly without presupposing God.<sup>4</sup> God created all facts, so to try to use some fact to disprove God is like a little child slapping his father in the face. The only reason he can slap his father in the face is because his father is holding the child up to his face.<sup>5</sup> The non-Christian position says that man himself (or mankind collectively) is able to reason properly without reference to God. If I were to attempt to give you *direct* proof for the existence of God, I would be admitting that the non-Christian position is true and that by your own reason you are able to judge such evidence in a neutral fashion.<sup>6</sup> But this is exactly what I deny. There is proof for the existence of God, and the proof is that without the existence of God, you would be unable to prove anything.<sup>7</sup>

Yes, I am making a large claim. I ask for your patience to be able to demonstrate what I have claimed. But before I do that, I need to address some objections that might come up. If you have been closely following what was said above, you might be ready to challenge me on what I have said about it being impossible to reason correctly without presupposing God. Am I saying that those who disbelieve God never reason correctly? Are unbelievers not able to say correctly that  $1 + 1 = 2$ ? No, I am not saying that.<sup>8</sup> What I am saying is that those who do not believe in

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<sup>1</sup> Answer #1, *The Shorter Catechism*, The Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 2000, pg. 143

<sup>2</sup> The unbeliever is committed to the principle of independence from God. He has set himself up as the ultimate reference point or the final reference point of interpretation. Van Til writes, "Man made for himself a false ideal of knowledge, the ideal of absolute inderivative comprehension. This he could never have done if he had continued to recognize that he was a creature. It is totally inconsistent with the idea of creatureliness that man should strive for comprehensive knowledge; if it could be attained it would wipe God out of existence; man would then be God." Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, P&R, 1976, pg. 16

<sup>3</sup> "For his own ultimacy is the most basic presupposition of his entire philosophy. It is upon this presupposition as its fulcrum that he uses the law of contradiction. If he is asked to use his reason as the judge of the credibility of the Christian revelation without at the same time being asked to renounce his view of himself as ultimate, then he is virtually asked to believe and to disbelieve in his own ultimacy at the same time and in the same sense." Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, P&R, 1976, pg. 50

<sup>4</sup> "Everything that exists came into being at his command and is therefore subject to him, finding its purpose and meaning in him. The implication is that in every topic we investigate, from ethics to economics to ecology, the truth is found only in relationship to God and his revelation." Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* Tyndale, pg. 15

<sup>5</sup> Cornelius Van Til repeatedly used this illustration in his writings.

<sup>6</sup> "The method of reasoning by presupposition may be said to be indirect rather than direct. The issue between believers and non-believers in Christian theism cannot be settled by a direct appeal to "facts" or "laws" whose nature and significance is already agreed upon by both parties to the debate. The question is rather as to what is the final reference-point required to make the "facts" and "laws" intelligible." Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, P&R, 1976, pg. 62

<sup>7</sup> "Rather the Christian offers the self-attesting Christ to the world as the only foundation upon which a man must stand in order to give any "reasons" for anything at all. The whole notion of "giving reasons" is completely destroyed by any ontology other than the Christian one. The Christian claims that only after accepting the biblical scheme of things will any man be able to understand and account for his own rationality." *My Credo*, The Works of Cornelius Van Til, (New York: Label Army Co.) 1997

<sup>8</sup> "'Do you mean to assert that non-Christians do not discover truth by the methods they employ?'" The reply is that we mean nothing so absurd as that. The implication of the method here advocated is simply that non-Christians are never able and

the Christian God *in principle* have no true knowledge. According to their commitment to independence from God, *in principle* they are wrong about everything whether it be a mathematical equation or the examination of a rose.<sup>9</sup> But unbelievers are not completely consistent with this principle, and that is why they can be, and often are, correct about things in this world.<sup>10</sup> Because God created all men, including those now in rebellion against Him, all men have the law of God inescapably impressed on their conscience.<sup>11</sup> Due to God's common grace, rebellious men and women are, in this life, restrained from carrying out their rebellion with perfect consistency. They will not become perfectly consistent until the judgment.

The Christian position says that God is the absolute Creator of this universe. Not only has He created all things, but He also governs this universe.<sup>12</sup> God "works all things according to the counsel of His will."<sup>13</sup> He is the Absolute One, the final authority of all things. God is sovereign over all, and His Word is self-attesting. Therefore we cannot bring God into the courtroom so that evidence may be brought in for you to be the judge.<sup>14</sup> Man is not in the position to judge the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. God is the highest authority. We cannot go to any higher authority to verify His Word. We cannot sit in judgment of God's Word; God's Word judges us. You are not approaching the question of His existence in a neutral way. The truth is that no one approaches the question of the existence of God in a neutral way. All persons approach the question within the framework of a philosophy of life--a *worldview*. Shortly, I will expand on what is meant by "a worldview." But before I do that, I need to make it clear to you that one must approach the question of the existence of God in a different way than one would approach the existence of something that is material. Remember, the Bible teaches that God is a Spirit; He is invisible. If we were able to put God under a microscope, as a proof of His existence, then the god we would be proving would not be the Christian God of the Bible.

Let's talk about your position (or your beliefs) for a minute. You have said, "I only believe in the facts as proven by science; but you, on the other hand, believe things by faith." I will demonstrate to you, as we go along, that you also accept things by faith. What I mean by this is that you also have assumptions that are basic to your life that cannot be tested empirically. You also have presuppositions that are not verified by natural science. This I will begin to address when I consider our differing worldviews. You have told me you are an atheist, but now you are claiming to be an agnostic. For all practical purposes there is no difference. Atheists say that there is no God.<sup>15</sup> But even agnostics are not neutral on the question of the existence of the Christian God. Some of them say that nobody knows or can know if there is a God. But

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therefore never do employ their own methods consistently." Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, pg. 64

<sup>9</sup> "The natural man, who assumes that he himself and the facts about him are not created, therefore assumes what is basically false. Everything he says about himself and the universe will be colored by this assumption. It is therefore impossible to grant that he is right, basically right, in what he says about any fact. If he says what is right in detail about any fact, this is *in spite of*, not *because of* his basically false assumption." Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R, 3rd Edition: 1967, pg. 224

<sup>10</sup> "First, though unbelievers do reject God's revelation of Himself, they cannot be thoroughly consistent in that rejection. The reason for the inconsistency which is present in every fallen man to some degree is that even sinful men are in the image of God and retain many of man's original abilities (cf. Gen. 9:6; James 3:9). Man still thinks and reasons; he still perceives the world. Because God's common grace restrains the principle of sin and depravity, non-Christians are actually able to think and act according to the remaining effects of their being in God's image without acknowledging Him as their Creator." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 32

<sup>11</sup> "That fact assures us that every man, to be a man at all, must already be in contact with the truth. He is so much in contact with the truth that much of his energy is spent in the vain effort to hide this fact from himself. His efforts to hide this fact from himself are bound to be self-frustrative." Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, P&R, 1976, pg. 58

<sup>12</sup> "It is certainly not insignificant that the Bible begins with an uncompromising declaration of God as the Creator of all." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 32

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1:11 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> "There can be no court to which we take God's judgments: He is the supreme judge." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 18

<sup>15</sup> "God is clearly revealed to all (Rom. 1:18-20), so that all know him (v. 21), although they repress the truth (vv. 21ff.). In one sense, everyone is a theist, for everyone knows God. But in another sense, unbelievers are atheists, for they seek to erase, to deny, this knowledge and to live on atheistic presuppositions." John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction*, P&R, pg. 92

that itself is saying something about God.<sup>16</sup> The Christian position says that man was made in the image of God and that the entire universe was created by God and continues to be governed by Him. All of creation is a revelation of God, and this includes man himself.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the agnostic is not neutral to the claims of the Christ of Scripture. Strictly speaking, according to the Christian worldview, there is no such thing as an agnostic.<sup>18</sup> The position itself is self-refuting.<sup>19</sup> Since you believe in evolution and are a materialist, you are also an atheist. I'm glad that you now agree with me that you are indeed an atheist.

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## Worldviews in Conflict

It is time to explain why I am not offering you any *direct* proof for the existence of God. It is not that I believe there is no such proof. The created order itself is proof for the existence of God.<sup>20</sup> The very fact that you, a person made in the image of God, appeal to standards of morality, engage in reasoning, and appeal to abstract, universal laws of logic is proof of the existence of God. Your own existence, reasoning, and your psychology are all proof of the existence of God. From the leaf on every tree to the stars of the sky, all of creation testifies to the power and the wisdom of God. Even the curse that has come upon man and the creation because of man's rebellion testifies to the existence and the judgment of the living God. But, of course, this is not convincing to you. The reason I do not expect this to be convincing to you is because the very nature of the case is that all proof is evaluated within a worldview. There is no such thing as a "brute fact." There is no such thing as an "un-interpreted fact."<sup>21</sup> Because of this the discussion between us must go beyond individual facts. We must examine the underlying worldviews we have which are used to interpret all facts. To do this I need to first define what I mean by *philosophy*, what I mean by a *presupposition*, and what I mean by a *worldview*.

First, what is philosophy? The word *philosophy* is used in different ways, so I will define what I normally mean when I use it.<sup>22</sup> In broad terms, *philosophy* is the inquiring into what life is all about. It is the examining of ultimate questions about life.<sup>23</sup> Philosophical questions are conceptual in nature and do not fall into the category of any particular science.<sup>24</sup> It is important

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<sup>16</sup> "Many believers and atheists consider agnosticism to be a great intellectual cop-out, since the agnostic avoids passing judgment because (he says) there is insufficient data." R.C. Sproul, *If There is a God, Why are there Atheists: Why Atheists Believe in Unbelief*, Ligonier Ministries, pg. 20

<sup>17</sup> "But Reformed theology...holds that man's mind is derivative. As such it is naturally in contact with God's revelation. It is surrounded by nothing but revelation. It is itself inherently revelational. It cannot naturally be conscious of itself without being conscious of its creatureliness. For man self-consciousness presupposes God-consciousness." Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R, 3rd Edition: 1967, pg. 90

<sup>18</sup> "If I assert that there is a black cat in the closet, and you assert that nobody knows what is in the closet, you have virtually told me that I am wrong in my hypothesis. So when I tell Mr. Black that God exists, and he responds very graciously by saying that perhaps I am right since nobody knows what is in the "Beyond," he is virtually saying that I am wrong in my hypothesis. He is obviously thinking of such a God as could comfortably live in the realm of Chance. But the God of Scripture cannot live in the realm of Chance." Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R, 3rd Edition: 1967, pg. 244

<sup>19</sup> "If someone were genuinely agnostic, he or she would be frantically trying to find ways of hedging bets: at least giving lip service to God, who after all might one day judge him or her. But, as a matter of fact, most professing agnostics do not hedge their bets in that way. Rather, they totally ignore God's Word in their decision making. They never go to church, never seek God's will, never pray. In other words, they behave exactly like atheists, not as if they were in some halfway position between atheism and theism." John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction*, P&R, pg. 92

<sup>20</sup> "Though fallen men deny it and Christians often have difficulty seeing it, the Bible teaches plainly that all men have God clearly revealed to them through every aspect of creation, even their own personal makeup. God's disclosure is unavoidable. We cannot know one aspect of creation without being turned toward its creator. "The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory" (Ps. 97:6)." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 14

<sup>21</sup> No one holds to a belief in isolation from all other beliefs.

<sup>22</sup> Some Christians think that the Bible condemns the study of philosophy. Colossians 2:8 does not condemn the study of philosophy, but it only warns us that we are not to be taken captive by worldly philosophy that is not honouring to Christ.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Butler, *Philosophy of Science*, What is Philosophy (Part 1) – tape 2 of 22, MB101.mp3, www.cmfnow.com

<sup>24</sup> "That is to say, when you are asking a philosophical question there is no special science you can go to for our answer. You can't go to medicine, you can't go to astronomy, you can't go to agriculture, you can't go to political science...and get an answer to our

to note that everyone has a philosophy of life; and therefore, everyone is a philosopher. In order to live in this world, the basic questions of life must be answered. Some answer the ultimate questions of life explicitly and others answer them only implicitly. Some attempt to be consistent; others are not consistent. In either case everyone is a philosopher.<sup>25</sup> Now I will make a statement that we are sure to disagree on. Philosophy is inherently religious. I realize that you deny this, but you need to understand that from the Christian position, this truth is inescapable.<sup>26</sup> This, of course, makes sense if you presuppose that man is made in the image of God and that he is therefore a religious being. The questions asked by the philosopher are, for the most part, the same questions asked by the theologian.<sup>27</sup> They both ask ultimate questions about reality, knowledge, and ethics. So from the Christian point of view, it is impossible to divorce philosophy from theology.

There are three main fields of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. You already are familiar with these terms because you have taken philosophy courses in the past. But let me refresh our memories. The field of *metaphysics* deals with the study of reality. The field of *epistemology* deals with the study of knowledge. The field of *ethics* deals with the study of values. Most philosophy books break things down into these three fields. We can simply state them as “(1) reality, (2) knowledge, and (3) value.”<sup>28</sup> In broad terms, philosophy is a study of these three fields, and these fields are interrelated. Although we make distinctions between them, you cannot isolate one to the exclusion of the other two. And then finally, the word *philosophy* can more specifically be used to speak of 2<sup>nd</sup> order disciplines such as “the philosophy of science,” “the philosophy of logic,” or “the philosophy of fact.” These are called 2<sup>nd</sup> order disciplines because they study something that studies something else. Let’s move on to define what is meant by a *presupposition*.

What is a presupposition? A *presupposition* is simply something you assume beforehand. It is an assumption. It is a belief you take for granted in advance that is not verified by natural science. Presuppositions may be true or false; they may be held consistently or inconsistently; and they may be held at different levels of consciousness. They are foundational beliefs that are basic to life.<sup>29</sup> There are some presuppositions that are more precious than others are. When contrary evidence is provided, a person will often seek to interpret the evidence in such a way as to retain the cherished belief. Everybody has presuppositions, and they affect how one interprets evidence. It is impossible to interpret evidence or facts without them. Some presuppositions are so precious that they will not be given up no matter what the evidence.

What is a worldview? A *worldview* is simply the collection of one's presuppositions. It has been described as a set, a web, a network, a framework, a cluster, or a collection of presuppositions or assumptions about the basic reality of life.<sup>30</sup> It includes philosophical assumptions in the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. A worldview is an ultimate set of philosophical assumptions, which gives one a point of reference to interpreting human experience. Evidence is always evaluated in light of a worldview.<sup>31</sup> Everybody has a worldview. Some people are more conscious about their worldview and attempt to keep it consistent; others never think deeply

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question." Greg Bahnsen, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, tape 1 of 3, [www.cfmnow.com](http://www.cfmnow.com)

<sup>25</sup> Some are good philosophers and some are bad philosophers. But either way, everyone is a philosopher. Some take time to reflect on their philosophy, but most make philosophical decisions by default without adequate awareness. Every teaching and every statement about ultimate issues communicates philosophy either directly or indirectly.

<sup>26</sup> "Of course, every system of philosophy is religious, not in the sense that it advocates certain rites of worship, but in the more important sense that (1) it is committed at some point to faith-presuppositions, just as religions are, and (2) it offers a comprehensive worldview and comprehensive solution for the troubles of human beings." John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction*, P&R, Footnote #2, pg. 32

<sup>27</sup> "Philosophers look for explanation that explains the world in which we live, in terms of its basic reality, how we know what we know about it, and how we should live in it. Philosophers look for ultimate principles of explanation." Greg Bahnsen, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, tape 1 of 3, [www.cfmnow.com](http://www.cfmnow.com)

<sup>28</sup> Dan Dodds, *World View I*, Afternoon Apologetics Series, *Apologetics1.mp3*, [www.woodruffroad.com/apologetics.htm](http://www.woodruffroad.com/apologetics.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Our presuppositions determine how we make inferences when we encounter evidence.

<sup>30</sup> It can also be referred to as a “conceptual scheme.”

<sup>31</sup> Whole systems of thought come into play whenever we make existential claims.

about their assumptions and commitments, and therefore they make no attempt to be consistent.<sup>32</sup> As we will see, any discussion of ultimate questions must include an analysis of worldviews. Each worldview must be examined to see if it can be consistent with itself and to see if it can give the preconditions for intelligible human experience.

In order to illustrate how a person's presuppositions operate as a reference point to interpreting experience, allow me to give a simple example. Suppose a good friend of mine, a person who I consider to be trustworthy and reliable, comes to my house and says, "On the way to work this morning, I saw a terrible accident on the Expressway." Although I did not hear or see this particular accident, I take it as true on the word of my friend. Later on in the day, when I speak to others, I operate as if I know that the accident really happened. Although I did not see the accident myself, I accept it to be a true fact. Now, suppose the same friend comes to my house the next day and says in a serious voice, "On the way to work this morning, I saw three aliens." Immediately I begin to look into the eyes of my friend to see if there are any signs of drunkenness or drug use. I ask my friend if he has been getting enough sleep. When my friend continues to insist that he saw aliens, I assure him that he must have been dreaming or having some kind of hallucination. Do you see how my presuppositions, my previously held assumptions, affected how I interpreted the evidence that came to me? Since I already did not believe that aliens exist, I immediately began to look for other ways to explain what he said.

When it comes to the question of the existence of God, we have the same problem. For example a materialist, one who believes that the universe only consists of matter and its motions, has a worldview that does not allow for any supernatural explanation. Such an explanation is not allowed from the start! Those who are humanists often ridicule the Bible because in the Old Testament God commanded His people to kill women and children when they were conquering the land of Canaan.<sup>33</sup> They claim that the God of the Bible must be immoral if He commanded such a thing. This only makes sense if one has *already* adopted the humanistic worldview.<sup>34</sup> If man is the measure of all things, and if God does anything against man, then of course the God of the Bible appears to be immoral. The God of the Bible does not live up to the humanist's basic, false assumption about reality. But consider it from the Christian worldview. God is the measure of all things. God by His very nature is holy, righteous, and good. Morality has no meaning apart from God. Man is the creature of God who is morally obligated to obey his Creator. God has created this world in such a way that rebellion would bring curse and death. Man has rebelled against God and is under a just penalty. Man is already under a just death sentence, and when God allows any sinful person to continue to live, it is only by His grace. Now if you adopt the Christian worldview, the problem is solved. There is no immorality in God.

I hope you are beginning to see that an examination of the underlying worldviews is absolutely necessary for any fruitful discussion between us. The humanist and the Christian have diametrically opposed presuppositions about the nature of man. And that is why they can look at the same Old Testament story and come to two completely different conclusions. It is easy for the humanist to ridicule the Christian God if he does so on humanistic assumptions. The Christian also can easily ridicule the atheist if he does so on Christian assumptions. But how do we move on from here? There are two ways to critique a worldview: the first is an external critique, and the second is an internal critique.<sup>35</sup> The external method is what I have already described. It involves criticizing an opposing worldview on the basis of your own assumptions. This is a fallacious method. An internal critique, on the other hand, would include showing that even on its own assumptions, the opposing worldview cannot be consistent. This is the only sound way to critique a worldview. In different areas of life, I will attempt to show you that the non-Christian worldview cannot account, it cannot provide a basis, for human experience.

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<sup>32</sup> Van Til often called these people "epistemological loafers."

<sup>33</sup> 1 Samuel 15:3 (ESV) "Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

<sup>34</sup> This is simply begging the question. Attacking Christianity on the basis of a humanistic ethic is to assume what you are trying to prove. See the debate *Does God Exist?* Michael Butler vs. Dan Barker, tape 1 of 2, MB150.mp3, [www.cmfnow.com](http://www.cmfnow.com)

<sup>35</sup> See the debate *Does God Exist?* Michael Butler vs. Dan Barker, tape 1 of 2, MB150.mp3, [www.cmfnow.com](http://www.cmfnow.com)

With a basic understanding of presuppositions and worldviews in mind, I will proceed to show you that all non-Christian worldviews cannot account for the things we take for granted in human experience. First, I will discuss the irreconcilable tension that all atheistic worldviews have. Then I will show you that the atheistic worldview cannot account for morality, science, and logic. Things that we must take for granted, even for us to have this discussion, have no basis in the atheistic worldview. The Christian worldview can account for these things. So, let us look at these problems from both the atheistic and theistic worldviews.<sup>36</sup> To do this you must be willing to join with me in asking some of the tough, fundamental questions.

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### All Unbelieving Thought Suffers From a Dialectical Tension<sup>37</sup>

In all non-Christian thought there is an interaction of two conflicting ideas—a dialectical tension. There are two things going on at the same time that are in opposition to one another. There are two things going on at the same time that are antithetical to one another. All non-Christian philosophy has the problem of a rational/irrational tension. "What do I mean by this?" you ask. First, let's define what is meant by *rationalism*. What I mean by *rationalism* is the belief that the world is ultimately knowable to the human mind. The human mind can obtain truth, and human language can describe the world. Reason is accepted as the ultimate authority in matters of opinion, belief, or conduct.<sup>38</sup> Science assumes that nature is rational. On the other hand, *irrationalism* is the belief that the world is fundamentally unknowable. It is a system in which attitude or belief may have a non-rational basis.<sup>39</sup>

The tension in unbelieving thought lies in the fact that the atheist tells us, and operates as if, the world is rational. He wants evidence for the existence of God that will appeal to his reason.<sup>40</sup> He wants to enter into the cause of scientific study. But how does he know that the universe is ultimately rational? In order to engage in scientific study, the atheist must assume that nature is rational. Again, how does he know that it is rational? He assumes it. There is no rational way to prove that the universe is ultimately rational. The rationalist realizes that he is finite and that there is mystery in this universe.<sup>41</sup> His scheme cannot account for everything.<sup>42</sup> But he continues to operate as if the world is fundamentally rational. Scientific inquiry must assume the rationality of the universe in order to investigate anything. In doing this, the unbeliever is irrational.<sup>43</sup> He must assume, or presuppose, that the universe is ultimately

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<sup>36</sup> Both worldviews need to be internally tested for consistency, arbitrariness, and coherency.

<sup>37</sup> The following material is primarily based on a lecture by Michael Butler, *Philosophy of Science*, What is Philosophy (Part 2) – 3 of 22, MB102.mp3, and a lecture by Greg Bahnsen, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Part 2 of 3, GB896.mp3 (42:00-51:00), Covenant Media Foundation, cmfnw.com

<sup>38</sup> Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

<sup>39</sup> "It has been intimated that fallen man is both irrationalist and rationalist at the same time. His irrationalism rests upon his metaphysical assumption that reality is controlled by or is an expression of pure Chance. His rationalism is based upon the assumption that reality is wholly determined by laws with which his thought is ultimately identical." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, 1969, pg. 56

<sup>40</sup> "By 'reason' is meant the reason of man as the determiner of the possible and the impossible by means of 'logic.'...Secondly, Christianity must be shown to be 'in accord with the facts.' These facts are the facts as reason, the determiner of the possible and impossible has 'discovered' or observed them." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, 1969, pg. 17, 18

<sup>41</sup> "No one man can know all things. Thus there are authorities in this field and in that field. The doctor is expert in the field of medicine. The physicist is expert in his own field, and so on. Such expert authority men will of course readily own. It is quite consistent with their principle to admit that they are finite." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 59

<sup>42</sup> "There are certain philosophies that look at the world and say, 'The world is capable of rational description. Everything that is real can be described. Everything that is real can be ultimately known. Everything is knowable.' Well, the problem with that approach...if you are a non-Christian is if it is knowable, who knows it? If everything that is real is knowable, who is the one that knows that everything? You see even if you took all the computers you have in the world and hooked up all the discrete things individuals know so that they could pump it into the computer, you still wouldn't have everything. And so sooner or later it becomes evident that whatever scheme of reality and knowledge that is proposed by the unbeliever doesn't account for everything." Greg Bahnsen, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, tape 2 of 3, GB896.mp3 (45:05 - 46:15), www.cmfnw.com

<sup>43</sup> "For the non-Christian if you have a rational scheme to understand the world and human knowledge, and it doesn't take into account everything, you are either going to say, 'What my philosophy doesn't take account of isn't true or real...' or you are going to say, 'everything in this world is knowable but there is another principle that has to be brought into account and that is that no

rational. He is unable to prove it rationally because the belief that the universe is rational must be presupposed first in order for him to be able to prove anything scientifically. There is no foundation for rationality in an atheistic universe. That's just the way it is.

"How does Christian theism solve the problem?" you ask. The Christian position says that God is personal and that He exists eternally, immutably, and independently. God has full knowledge of Himself. His knowledge is not dependent on ideas of truth that are above and beyond Him. There is nothing hidden to God, so there is nothing in His being that is unknown to Him. God's knowledge of Himself is absolute. It becomes obvious, as we go along, that for this type of God to be known to a finite creature, He must reveal Himself. God created this universe according to His eternal plan. Since all facts of the universe are what they are because of the eternal plan of God, the universe is fully knowable to Him. This means the universe is ultimately rational.<sup>44</sup> Since God has created man in His image, we are able to receive the revelation of God and therefore the world is also knowable to us on a finite level. We can know something truly without knowing it exhaustively because God is behind our knowledge.<sup>45</sup> The Christian agrees with the rationalist and also disagrees with him. The Christian says that the world is knowable only because it is fully known to God and we are able to receive revelation from God and reflect His thinking on a finite level as His creatures. At the same time, the Christian agrees with the irrationalist as well.<sup>46</sup> With the irrationalist, the Christian agrees that there is mystery. Only God fully knows the universe, and there are things He has not revealed.

So, you see only the Christian worldview can resolve this rational/irrational tension. There is no foundation for rationality in an atheistic universe. The atheist cannot account for his most basic assumption. He must proceed on ultimate issues unable to give a rational basis for them. He must simply say, "That's just the way it is." The Christian, on the other hand, has a foundation for rationality. He has a basis for the assumptions he makes. He has an answer. Now, the atheist might not like or accept the Christian answer, but it is an answer. The atheist cannot even begin to give an answer to this question.<sup>47</sup> Because the atheist rejects the Triune God of the Bible, and the Creator-creature distinction, his worldview is reduced to foolishness. The Bible says, "For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness,"<sup>48</sup> The unbeliever cannot account for his basic assumptions. He cannot account for the use of reason. The Christian worldview gives a basis for assuming that the universe is rational, and it also explains why there is still mystery to man. As we move on to another topic, keep this problem in mind. It is a basic problem and is destructive to all non-believing worldviews.<sup>49</sup>

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### The Basis for Morality

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one ever ultimately knows the truth." And that is what we call the irrational tendency in philosophy. The irrational tendency, or orientation, in philosophy has to admit that the human mind is limited, and it can't therefore be the ultimate authority, because the human mind doesn't take everything into account." Greg Bahnsen, GB896.mp3 (46:25 - 47:18)

<sup>44</sup> "All that can be properly called truth, not just so-called "religious truth" resides first in God and men know truly only as they come to God's revelation of Himself as the source of truth, for it is God who teaches man knowledge (Ps. 94:10)...Men do actually think, yet, true knowledge is dependent on and derived from God's knowledge as it has been revealed to man." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 17

<sup>45</sup> "God knows all and it is upon His knowledge that we must depend if we ourselves are to know. Any true understanding which men have is derived either intentionally or unintentionally from God." Richard L. Pratt, *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Faith*, P&R, pg. 17

<sup>46</sup> The Christian agrees with the irrationalist in that the human mind cannot fully comprehend the facts of the universe. He disagrees with the irrationalist in that he believes that the universe is rational. It is fully known to God.

<sup>47</sup> It is not that the Christian worldview can give a better account of rationality than other worldviews. No other worldview can even begin to give an account of rationality.

<sup>48</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:19 (ESV)

<sup>49</sup> "That we claim, therefore, that Christianity alone is reasonable for men to hold. It is wholly irrational to hold any other position than that of Christianity. Christianity alone does not slay reason on the altar of "chance."" *My Credo*, The Works of Cornelius Van Til, (New York: Label Army Co.) 1997

Another important topic that must be considered when comparing the Christian and atheistic worldviews is *morality*. If you spend any time at all observing people, you will notice that they often make moral judgments. They often appeal to moral standards as they call certain actions good or virtuous and other actions bad or evil. If you observe both atheists and Christians, you will see that both of them assume that certain conduct on the part of human beings is morally reprehensible. They also assume that certain conduct on the part of human beings is virtuous. Now, they may not agree on all that specifically should be considered virtuous and all that should specifically be considered reprehensible; but both the atheist and the Christian act as if others should also be held to the same standard. Otherwise it would be absurd for either the atheist or the Christian to criticize anyone else's conduct.

Since all humans make these moral judgments, we need to ask where they come from and what is the standard. Is there an objective standard?<sup>50</sup> If you, as an atheist, claim that all people should be loving and caring toward one another, on what basis can you expect that others should also be held to this rule? Some would argue that morals are based on the consequences that arise from conduct.<sup>51</sup> But this fails to see that consequences in this life are not always uniform. We would agree that in some cases doing the "right" thing would mean suffering bad consequences.<sup>52</sup> Other times doing the "wrong" thing would bring prosperity. There are others who would argue that what we call "morals" are subjective. Because you are repulsed by cold-blooded murder, for instance, that is why you consider it to be wrong. It is simply your subjective feelings that give you the sense of morality. But the very fact that we criticize others for morally reprehensible actions shows that we believe they have indeed violated basic principles that bind all people.

Some would say that morals are simply human conventions. In other words, they are subjective feelings that are shared by entire cultures or humanity in general. These conventions are passed down through the generations and are part of the evolution of man. But the problem with this view is that it does not comport with the way we normally react to morally repulsive behaviour. When an entire culture engages in behaviour we consider to be evil, we do not simply say, "Well, that was the convention of the time, so for them it was not wrong."<sup>53</sup> No, we hold them blameworthy. Our very reaction to conduct we consider to be wicked demonstrates that morals are not simply human conventions. Both the atheist and the Christian believe that there are certain things people *ought* not to do. The speaking of truth has ethical value as well. If I were to lie to you and attempt to deceive you in this conversation, you would say what I am doing is wrong. You are holding me to an objective standard--something that we did not have to agree on beforehand. We assumed it. This standard is something that I cannot change because of subjective feelings. Just as an ultimate standard of truth is implied in any statement of truth, so an ultimate moral standard is implied in any ethical statement.

Now, how does the atheistic worldview account for morality? The atheist who is a materialist says that everything in this universe is matter in motion, and he says that personal elements can be explained by the impersonal. His presupposition is that the universe is fundamentally

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<sup>50</sup> "Are the values we treasure mere social conventions like driving on the left versus the right side of the road? Or are they simply expressions of our personal likes, such as having a taste for certain foods or not? Do moral laws exist whether we recognise them or not, and if so, what is their foundation? Moreover, if morality is nothing more than a purely human idea, then why should we act morally especially when it conflicts with self-interest? Or, are we in some way held accountable for our moral decisions and actions? William Lane Craig, *No good without God*, Australian Presbyterian, August 2003, No. 551, *God: Our Moral Gravity*, pg. 09

<sup>51</sup> "Right" behaviour tends to be rewarded, but "wrong" behaviour tends to lead to bad consequences. Thus, we form the concepts of right and wrong on the basis of consequences." John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, P&R, 94

<sup>52</sup> "Somebody might say that it is in our best self-interest to adopt a moral lifestyle. But clearly, that is not always true: we all know situations in which self-interest runs smack in the face of morality." William Lane Craig, *No good without God*, Australian Presbyterian, August 2003, No. 551, *God: Our Moral Gravity*, pg. 10

<sup>53</sup> "When we hear of cannibalism in a far-off tribe, our response is not "Well, that's their particular taste (!)" but rather, "That is wicked." So, if these values are culturally subjective, we must try very hard to change our reactions to things." John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, P&R, 95

impersonal. Is it possible to imagine that an impersonal law would be able to give us ethical principles?<sup>54</sup> On what basis can an impersonal law create obligation? If everything in this universe is matter in motion, then it is absurd to even speak of morality.<sup>55</sup> The only answer to this problem is to say that the source of morality is personal. Since the atheist does not believe in the absolute personal God of the Bible, he must ground ethics in non-absolute persons. Atheist Eddie Tabash said that, "My foundation for moral judgments is my empirical understanding of the common moral decencies which I believe are inherent in human beings... It is the accumulated wisdom of human learning, empirically throughout the ages, that helps us evolve and develop our sense of morality."<sup>56</sup> This does not answer the question. He simply tells us that according to his opinion moral standards exist; they are inherent in human beings. We already know that. But, the question has not been answered. What is the objective basis for moral standards?

The atheistic worldview cannot give a foundation for morality. In order for the atheist to make moral judgments he must irrationally borrow from the Christian worldview. Atheists often say that ethical standards are derived from observing the way people normally behave. The problem with this is that just because people behave in a certain way does not mean it is morally acceptable for them to behave in that way. For the atheist to be consistent with his assumptions, he must give up any moral judgments whatsoever. Since he believes that the universe is only matter in motion, and since impersonal matter is non-moral, then it is irrational for him to hold anyone morally responsible for any action. Michael Butler writes, "The atheist has no way out. If he wishes to uphold morality he must give up his atheism. If he wants to keep his atheism he must give up on morality. So for an atheist to accuse a Christian of bad behaviour, he must presuppose the Christian worldview. But since he claims not to presuppose the truth of Christianity he should be consistent and not be concerned over moral matters."<sup>57</sup>

The Christian worldview, on the other hand, has a basis for morality. Since God is an absolute Person, holy and righteous, His very nature is the objective basis for morality. The foundation of morality flows from the eternal, personal God of the universe. God has created man in His image, so man is morally obligated to obey the law of the Creator.<sup>58</sup> There are no impersonal laws. God's law is fixed by His unchangeable nature. Christian apologist John Frame put it this way, "So the choice is this: either accept the God of the Bible or deny objective morality, objective truth, the rationality of man, and the rational knowability of the universe."<sup>59</sup>

## The Basis for Science

Earlier in our conversation you have told me that you only believe in the facts as proven by science. Many people are under the false impression that science is a completely neutral field

<sup>54</sup> "Certainly if the laws of the universe reduce to chance, nothing of ethical significance could emerge from it. What of ethical significance can we learn from the random collisions of subatomic particles? What loyalty do we owe to pure chance?" John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, P&R, 98

<sup>55</sup> "The notion that there could be an impersonal ethical standard is absurd. Ethics are necessarily personal...It is the atheist's worldview that cannot account for ethics. As I stated above, material processes are non-moral in nature. It makes no sense to say that the orbit of the moon is morally commendable or reprehensible and neither does it make sense to say that human actions are commendable or reprehensible since humans are merely material." Michael Butler, *TAG vs. TANG*, The August 1996 Penpoint, [www.reformed.org/apologetics/martin/pen896.html](http://www.reformed.org/apologetics/martin/pen896.html)

<sup>56</sup> Does God Exist? The Debate, Gene Cook Jr. vs. Ed Tabash, [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com), 32802125241 (95:00 - 101:30)

<sup>57</sup> Michael Butler, *TAG vs. TANG*, The August 1996 Penpoint, [www.reformed.org/apologetics/martin/pen896.html](http://www.reformed.org/apologetics/martin/pen896.html)

<sup>58</sup> "Moreover, on the atheistic view there is no divine lawgiver. But then what source is there for moral obligation? Richard Taylor, an eminent ethicist, writes, "The modern age, more or less repudiating the idea of a divine lawgiver, has nevertheless tried to retain the ideas of moral right and wrong, not noticing that, in casting God aside, they have also abolished the conditions of meaningfulness for moral right and wrong as well. Thus, even educated persons sometimes declare that such things as war, or abortion, or the violation of certain human rights, are "morally wrong", and they imagine that they have said something true and significant." William Lane Craig, *No good without God*, Australian Presbyterian, August 2003, No. 551, *God: Our Moral Gravity*, pg. 09

<sup>59</sup> John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, P&R, pg. 102

of study and that it is the final arbiter of truth. They simply assume that science and Christianity are incompatible. Anyone who would disagree with this assumption is ridiculed. The prejudice of these people becomes obvious in how they treat those who disagree with them. Rather than thinking through the issues they often use mockery to dismiss those who disagree with them. Before we go any further, it would be beneficial to have a working definition of science. What is science? Science is the investigation of this physical world through observation and experimentation.<sup>60</sup> It is erroneous, however, to suppose that scientific study can be completely neutral. When we talked about worldviews, I stressed that all facts are interpreted through the grid of a worldview. This is important to remember. A fact cannot be investigated in complete isolation from previously held beliefs. Yes, even scientists have their presuppositions.<sup>61</sup>

That scientists investigate the facts with previously held assumptions can be seen if you consider the fact that there are many different competing scientific methods.<sup>62</sup> There is induction, logical positivism, verificationism, falsificationism, etc. Also, there is debate over how we are to take the theories of science.<sup>63</sup> Even among unbelieving scientists, there is disagreement over many basic issues. For example, there is disagreement whether or not all science is reducible to physics. Some scientists believe that everything will reduce to physics. Many scientists who are also materialists hold this view. Although it is not so now, they believe that in the future physical laws will explain everything. Notice the faith-commitments! Notice the presuppositions. Others disagree. They say that biology, for example, is different from physics and always will be. All of this disagreement, even among scientists who are atheists, should alert us to the reality that it is impossible to investigate the phenomena of this world without a basic, presupposed philosophy of life. Because scientist themselves do not come to the same conclusions, it is obvious that scientific study is not neutral and is not the final arbiter of truth. This does not mean that I believe scientific study is unimportant or unnecessary. As a Christian, I believe God has called us to engage in science.<sup>64</sup> The study of the world we live in is part of our task and is an important way of learning about our world.<sup>65</sup>

Now we must ask, What is the most basic assumption that must be made in order to do science? The answer is that we must assume the *uniformity of nature*. That is to say, we must assume nature acts in a predictable manner. All scientific investigation must assume the uniformity of nature. It is fundamental to science. Without this basic assumption it would be impossible to conduct experiments and to learn from observation. This assumption goes much further than what we would normally call "science." It includes any observation that is made in our daily lives. Think about it. Every time you drive a car, tie your shoelaces, or play a game of tennis, you are assuming the uniformity of nature.<sup>66</sup> Now we need to ask a tough question. Why do we assume the uniformity of nature? "Because it has always been that way," you say. But

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<sup>60</sup> Science is "systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation." Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

<sup>61</sup> "The scientist must presuppose a regulated universe, and in so doing he presupposes an ordered creation. Every scientist makes certain basic assumptions about reality and knowledge, consciously or otherwise; and these thoughts are religiously motivated." Greg Bahnsen, *Revelation, Speculation and Science*, [www.cmfnow.com/articles/pa001.htm](http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pa001.htm)

<sup>62</sup> This entire paragraph is based on the following lecture: Michael Butler, *Philosophy of Science*, What is Philosophy (Part 2) – 3 of 22, MB102.mp3

<sup>63</sup> Are the theories of science to be taken as literally true? Are they only used because they happen to work at this time in history? Do they correspond with reality or not? These points are debated among scientists.

<sup>64</sup> Adam was the first scientist. He was given the task of observing and naming the animals. Genesis 2:19-20 (ESV) "So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."

<sup>65</sup> However, we should not attempt to do this independently from God's revelation. We should not attempt to study God's world in rebellion against Him. It is a mistake to practice science autonomously. Bahnsen writes, "Adam and Eve took the "modern" approach; they wanted to interpret the world apart from supernatural revelation. The question of what were the qualities and nature of a particular fruit and what effects from eating it might result, were "scientific" questions to be answered by independent research apart from the Word of an authoritative Lord. Why should we repeat their error?" Greg Bahnsen, *Revelation, Speculation and Science*

I'm not asking you how it has been in the past. I am asking you why you assume nature will act predictably in the future. As a matter of fact, you put your life on the line every day making this assumption. Your answer is "If it has always been that way, it is very probable that it will continue to be that way in the future." This answer might satisfy you, but I will show you there is a serious problem with it. It is circular reasoning. It is simply to beg the question.

The philosopher David Hume showed that to say the future will be like the past is to beg the question. This has been called the traditional problem of induction.<sup>67</sup> The inductive principle in logic is "any form of reasoning in which the conclusion, though supported by the premises, does not follow from them necessarily."<sup>68</sup> Bertrand Russell, the atheist philosopher, said that any number of cases of a law being fulfilled in the past does not prove it will be fulfilled in the future. "All arguments which, on the basis of experience, argue as to the future, assume the inductive principle. Hence, we can never use experience to prove the inductive principle without begging the question."<sup>69</sup> Remember, the atheist says that the universe came into existence by *chance*. If this world started by *chance*, there is no way we can know for sure that the future will be like the past.<sup>70</sup> So the atheist, who wants only to believe things that can be demonstrated by empirical investigation, must hold a basic assumption that cannot be demonstrated by empirical investigation. Science is built up on the foundation of the uniformity of nature, but science itself has no way of demonstrating the uniformity of nature.<sup>71</sup>

The Christian worldview, on the other hand, has a basis for the inductive principle. It can give a foundation for the uniformity of nature. The eternal, personal God of the Bible has created this universe and governs it according to His plan. He providentially controls whatsoever comes to pass. Because of this, and because He has told us in His Word that we can expect regularity in nature, the Christian worldview has a foundation for the uniformity of nature. There is a personal, absolute God who governs this universe in such a way that makes it possible for man to assume the uniformity of nature.<sup>72</sup> The atheist cannot account for the inductive principle. In

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<sup>66</sup> Everything you know assumes the uniformity of nature. The use of language assumes the uniformity of nature. The laws of mathematics assume the uniformity of nature. See Greg Bahnsen's lectures titled *Practical Apologetics*, Tape 3 of 5, GB1358.mp3 (28:00-45:00), cmfnw.com

<sup>67</sup> "Hume's discussion of this problem (often called the traditional problem of induction) is found in his *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, section VI" Michael Butler, *TAG vs. TANG*, The August 1996 Penpoint, Footnote #9; "Years ago, David Hume noted that the scientists proceed on a scientifically unfounded, yet critically essential belief in the uniformity of observable nature. Yet, he pointed out, there is no reason (beyond psychological habit) for the naturalistic scientist to expect the sun to come up tomorrow. Science as an autonomous self-contained discipline has no honest answer to Hume. But if science, properly conceived, subordinates itself to God's revelation, then it knows why the sun will come up for it knows that God providentially controls all the operations of his created universe in a regular and dependable fashion." Greg Bahnsen, *Revelation, Speculation and Science*, [www.cmfnw.com/articles/pa001.htm](http://www.cmfnw.com/articles/pa001.htm)

<sup>68</sup> Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

<sup>69</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*

<sup>70</sup> "To assume the ultimacy of chance is to deny the possibility of science and of meaning. As Pei has observed, "Unless we choose to accept the doctrine of predestination, it is chance that makes history. Van Til has summarized the matter clearly: Sinners use the principle of Chance back of all things and the idea of exhaustive rationalization as the legitimate aim of science. If the universe were actually what these men assume it to be according to their principle, there would be no science. Science is possible and actual only because the non-believer's principle is not true and the believer's principle is true. Only because God has created the universe and does control it by His providence, is there such a thing as science at all...Van Til: *A Christian Theory of Knowledge...*" Rousas John Rushdoony, *The One and the Many*, Thoburn Press, pg. 14, 15

<sup>71</sup> "In other words, the consistent naturalistic scientist seems to hold to an irrational set of beliefs about the state of affairs simply in order that his "rational" scientific endeavor may get off the ground. It is rather obvious that prior to any scientific endeavor we must begin either from speculation (about "chance" hypotheses) or from revelation. The Scriptures (of the one Person who knows) reveal how it is that this world, and man in it, are such as to make scientific endeavor meaningful. The state of affairs that exists is due to the creation and providence of the sovereign God. If science (so-called) could actually refute the truths of Scripture, then there would be no actual basis for science at all. The desire of the scientific community to pit its enterprise and conclusions against Christian revelation is ultimately suicidal." Greg Bahnsen, *Revelation, Speculation and Science*, [www.cmfnw.com/articles/pa001.htm](http://www.cmfnw.com/articles/pa001.htm)

<sup>72</sup> The only exception to this would be when God works a miracle. In that case God temporarily suspends the regular way He governs the universe. But this does not change the fact that we can still count on the regularity of nature. When the miraculous event is over, God always goes back to His normal way of governing all things. All things are under His control. There are no impersonal laws.

a universe that is ultimately controlled by chance it is irrational to assume the uniformity of nature. Because the atheist is made in the image of God, and because the universe it not what he says it is, even the atheist can count. But the atheist cannot *account* for his counting. Greg Bahnsen wrote, "It is one of those embarrassing historical ironies that modern science could not have arisen except in the atmosphere of a Christian world-and-life view. Nevertheless, the scientific community today persists in playing the prodigal by assuming an antagonistic stance against the Christianity of divine revelation. Hypnotized by Darwin's evolutionary scheme and enchanted with the products of scientific technology, modern man has granted science a secularized godship and bows before it in fetish idolatry."<sup>73</sup>

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### The Basis for Logic

We have looked at both morality and science, and we have seen that the atheistic worldview cannot provide a foundation for them. Now we will look at logic. As we examine these different areas of human experience, you should begin to see that the problems are very similar to one another. If you remember the rationalism/irrationalism tension we discussed earlier, plus what we said in the discussion about morality and science, you can almost guess what I will have to say about logic. The atheistic worldview cannot account for the use of logic.

As we discuss and debate the question of the existence of God, we are both assuming that the laws of logic exist and that they are abstract, universal and invariant.<sup>74</sup> By *abstract* I mean that the laws of logic express "a quality or characteristic apart from any specific object or instance," such as, "*justice, poverty, and speed.*"<sup>75</sup> By *universal* I mean that the laws of logic are applicable everywhere or in all cases. And by *invariant* I mean that the laws of logic are constant. They do not change. We are both assuming this to be the case. If this were not the case, then either one of us could engage in self-contradiction. But, because we both assume that the laws of logic are universal and invariant, you expect me to give good arguments for the existence of God. If I were to give you a fallacious argument, you would immediately call me to account. I will do the same to your argument for the non-existence of God. If your argument can be demonstrated to be fallacious, I will immediately call you to account. If this were not true, if we were not both assuming the laws of logic to be abstract, universal, and invariant, then our discussion would be useless. Without presupposing these things, reason itself would have no foundation.

Now, how does the atheist account for laws of logic? As I have said before, the materialistic atheist says that everything is matter in motion. This is a random universe, not subject to personal order, that came into existence by chance. All that exists in the universe can be reduced to matter in motion. The world is constituted solely of material substances. In this view, how can one account for laws of logic? How can the atheist account for any abstract, universal law? This is a major problem for your worldview because laws are not physical. They cannot be physically examined. That is to say, the belief that laws can be reduced to matter is an assumption that cannot be demonstrated empirically. For now, the atheist must accept it on faith. He has no rational reason to believe that abstract, universal laws can be reduced to matter. The atheist holds his belief, that laws are ultimately reducible to matter, without being able to prove it. Notice the faith-presuppositions!<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Greg Bahnsen, *Revelation, Speculation and Science*, [www.cmfnow.com/articles/pa001.htm](http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pa001.htm)

<sup>74</sup> *The Great Debate: Does God Exist?* Greg Bahnsen vs. Gordon Stein, [www.cmfnow.com](http://www.cmfnow.com)

<sup>75</sup> Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

<sup>76</sup> "Finally, because the principles of logic are abstract and universal, they cannot be experienced to be true. Thus such things as the law of non-contradiction are just highly confirmed inductions. Not only are there some laws of logic that are too complex to be observed, but this view would make logic contingent because there is always the possibility of a future observation disconfirming that law. But if logic is contingent then, as Dr. Martin has pointed out, absurdities become possible. To borrow his example, New Zealand could be both south of China and not south of China." Michael Butler, *TAG vs. TANG*

Some atheists say that the laws of logic are simply human conventions.<sup>77</sup> However, this would lead to the possibility of absurdities. If the laws of logic were simply human conventions and if I would be able to get a majority of people to accept self-contradictions as valid, then absurdities would necessarily be possible. Is this really how we regard the laws of logic? Would discarding the law of non-contradiction be warranted if we could simply get enough people to disagree with it? Even if the majority of people in this world would disagree with it, the disagreement would presuppose the law of non-contradiction itself. The problem with the view that says laws of logic are merely conventions is that in real life neither the Christian nor the atheist operates as if this were possible. Just as we do not act as if morality is conventional, we also do not act as if the laws of logic are merely conventional. When we look at history, why do we impose the laws of logic and morality on it? If they were conventional, we could not make judgments about historical events because people might have agreed on a different convention. Moreover, when did the human race come together to decide on the laws of logic? When was it that the human race sat down and agreed on these conventions? The answer is, they never did.<sup>78</sup>

There are serious problems with saying that the laws of logic are simply conventions.<sup>79</sup> So, the atheist must say that the laws of logic are self-verifying and inherent in the physical universe itself.<sup>80</sup> The problem with this is that it is only an assumption. Where is the proof of this? This universe came into existence by chance according to the atheist. Why should we assume that the universe will continue to behave in a uniform manner? Even if a law of logic could be observed to be true in one instance, why is it applied to other instances that have not already been tested? Since there is no personal control in an atheist universe, it is irrational to assume that there will be repeatability. If this is a chance universe, why do we generalize these experiences or observations?<sup>81</sup> Just to say it has been that way in the past is to beg the question. I am asking why the atheist assumes it will be the same in the future. Abstract laws are not reducible to matter because they cannot be physically examined. An abstract law is something that expresses a quality or characteristic apart from any specific object or instances.

Once again, the atheistic worldview cannot account for the basic assumptions of human experience. This is the basic internal problem inherent within unbelieving philosophy. The atheistic worldview cannot account for the existence of the laws of logic. What are the laws of logic and how are they justified? These questions cannot be answered consistently from a materialistic, atheistic worldview.<sup>82</sup> The atheist must abandon his rationality in order to

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<sup>77</sup> "They are agreed upon by human beings. They aren't laws that exist out in nature...They are conventions; but they are conventions that are self-verifying...They are laws of thought which are interpreted by men and promulgated by men." Dr. Gordon Stein, *The Great Debate: Does God Exist?* Greg Bahnsen vs. Gordon Stein, GB433.mp3 (38:16-41:20), [www.cmfnow.com](http://www.cmfnow.com)

<sup>78</sup> "If evolution is true that means that there is no God. And since Mr. Tabash believes that evolution is true, what you have is the human race, and everything you see in this world, evolving over a long period of time. Now let's see, when was it that they all, that all men, decided they were going to sit down and figure out how we should reason? When was it when society sat down and decided what was going to be morally acceptable and not morally acceptable? The answer is never." Gene Cook Jr., *The Debate*, Gene Cook Jr. vs. Ed Tabash, [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com), 32802125241

<sup>79</sup> "Dr. Stein has mentioned logical binds and logical self-contradictions. He says that he holds that the laws of logic are universal; but, however, they are conventional in nature. That is not at all acceptable philosophically. If the laws of logic are conventional in nature then you might have different societies that use different laws of logic. It might be appropriate in some society to say both, My car is in the parking lot; and it's not the case that my car is in the parking lot. That is, certain societies that have a convention that says, Go ahead and contradict yourself." Greg Bahnsen, *The Great Debate: Does God Exist?* Greg Bahnsen vs. Gordon Stein, GB433.mp3 (48:50-53:30), [www.cmfnow.com](http://www.cmfnow.com)

<sup>80</sup> "The laws of logic come from the physical laws of the universe, and they come from our own evolved sense...They are here by the very development of the physical universe itself." Ed Tabash, *Does God Exist? The Debate*, Gene Cook Jr. vs. Ed Tabash, [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com), 32802125241

<sup>81</sup> "On the assumptions of the natural man logic is a timeless impersonal principle, and facts are controlled by chance. It is by means of universal timeless principles of logic that the natural man must, on his assumptions, seek to make intelligible assertions about the world of reality or chance. But this cannot be done without falling into self-contradiction. About chance no manner of assertion can be made. In its very idea it is the irrational." Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R, pg. 126, 127

<sup>82</sup> "Thus the atheistic worldview does not comport with the principles of logic. If atheists were consistent with their worldview, they would give up on logic and rationality altogether. But since they do behave rationally (at least some of the time) this shows that they are borrowing capital from another worldview." Michael Butler, *TAG vs. TANG*

account for laws of logic. He must do what he does not allow for. The Christian worldview, on the other hand, has an answer.<sup>83</sup> The Christian philosophy of life is internally consistent. The Christian position allows for abstract, universal laws because it teaches that there is more to this universe than matter in motion. The laws of logic can be abstract, universal, and invariant because they are grounded in the character of God who is eternal, infinite and unchangeable. God created this world, and the laws of logic reflect His thinking.<sup>84</sup> The laws of logic are not above God. God is logical by nature, and He cannot deny Himself. His thinking is the absolute standard.

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## Conclusion

The atheistic universe fails to give a foundation for three of the most important philosophical issues: morality, science, and logic. Because of this I can repeat what was said earlier in our discussion. *There is proof for the existence of God, and the proof is that without the existence of God, you would be unable to prove anything.* I am not saying that atheists are unable to prove anything. What I am saying is that if atheists were to be consistent with their worldview, with their basic principle of independence from God, they would be unable to prove anything. I am *not* saying that atheists do not appeal to moral standards; I am *not* saying that they do not engage in science; and I am not saying that they do not use logic. They do these things *all* of the time. It is precisely because the world is not what atheists say it is that they can do these things. Because atheists are made in the image of God and actually live in God's world they must do these things. Because God has created the world and continues to govern it, we can have objective morality, engage in scientific study, and use laws of logic.

There are other issues I would like to discuss with you. I would like to talk about a basic philosophical question that has been called the problem of *the one and the many*.<sup>85</sup> I would like to show you that all non-Christian worldviews have no answer to this basic philosophical question.<sup>86</sup> In addition to what has already been said about all non-Christian worldviews, I would like to discuss some of the problems with the philosophical theory of evolution. There are serious problems with evolution that are ignored by those who tenaciously (by faith) hold to it. Even when serious problems are shown with the theory of evolution, many refuse to abandon this philosophical theory.<sup>87</sup> Some of the things I have already said about morality, science, and logic need to be discussed in greater detail. Other non-Christian versions of theism need to be addressed and refuted. There is much more we could discuss. But, because we are running out of time, perhaps we can continue to discuss these things next time we get together. For now, you have asked me to give a summary explanation of the message contained in the Bible. I am happy to do this. Let us start at the beginning.

The Bible starts with the story of creation. It gives a simple, non-technical account of God creating the universe that even a young child is capable of understanding. What is assumed in the first verse of the Bible is that God is eternal. He is not subject to time.<sup>88</sup> As a matter of fact

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<sup>83</sup> "Christianity can be shown to be, not "just as good as" or even "better than" the non-Christian position, but the *only* position that does not make nonsense of human experience." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 19

<sup>84</sup> "There are no laws of logic above him according to which he must measure his own internal consistency. This God of the Bible is, therefore, the final reference point for predication of his rational creatures." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 41

<sup>85</sup> "The *one and many* is perhaps the basic question of philosophy. Is unity or plurality, the one or the many, the basic fact of life, the ultimate truth about being? If unity is the reality, and the basic nature of reality, then oneness and unity must gain priority over individualism, particulars, or the many. If the many, or plurality, best describes ultimate reality, then the unit cannot gain priority over the many; then state, church, or society are subordinate to the will of the citizen, the believer, and of man in particular. If the *one* is ultimate, then individuals are sacrificed to the group." Rousas John Rushdoony, *The One and the Many*, Thoburn, pg. 02

<sup>86</sup> "In orthodox trinitarian Christianity, the problem of the one and the many is resolved. Unity and plurality are equally ultimate in the Godhead. The temporal unity and plurality is on a basis of equal validity. There is thus no basic conflict between individual and community." Rousas John Rushdoony, *The One and the Many*, Thoburn, pg. 16

<sup>87</sup> See Lecture by Greg Bahnsen, *Is Evolution Scientific?* Tape 1 of 2, GB1049.mp3, cmfnow.com

time itself is part of the creation.<sup>89</sup> This God created everything that exists in the universe out of nothing. He did not work with pre-existing matter. By the speaking of His Word, He brought all matter into existence.<sup>90</sup> The story of creation teaches us that only God is independent. The creation is dependent on its Creator both for its existence and for its sustenance.<sup>91</sup> The Bible teaches that this God, the Creator of the universe, is Triune--three in one, constituting a trinity in unity. This means that although there is only one God, there are three Persons who are fully God. There are not three gods but one Triune God. Theologians have slightly different ways of explaining this, but none of these explanations fully removes the mystery involved with such a doctrine. They usually say that God is one in Nature and three in Person. This does not fully resolve all the questions one might have. Right away we have a problem because we have no direct analogy of this in human experience. How are we to test this claim? Surely, if this kind of God exists, the only way finite creatures are to know Him is through His revelation to them.<sup>92</sup> He must reveal Himself to us if we are to know Him at all. And His revelation must be self-attesting because there is no higher authority. God is the absolute authority.

I am not saying that God is three and also one in the same sense, but what the Bible teaches is that in God *unity* and *plurality* are equally ultimate. This is not fully penetrable by human logic because God has not exhaustively revealed it to us.<sup>93</sup> What is paradoxical to us is not to God. It is impossible for finite creatures to fully comprehend the infinite God.<sup>94</sup> Because God fully understands His own nature, and because God has revealed true facts to us about His nature, we can know them truly even if we are unable to exhaustively comprehend them. So the claim that God is Triune must be taken on the authority of His Word.

God created man as the pinnacle of His creation. Man was made in the image of God to rule over the creation under God's authority. Man was made as a volitional, responsible, dependent creature of God who was to live in a covenantal relationship with God.<sup>95</sup> This relationship was to pattern, on a finite level, the eternal Trinitarian relationship between the Persons of the Godhead.<sup>96</sup> Because man was made in the image of God, man was like God in some way

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<sup>88</sup> "As we come to the attribute of eternity we are confronted with a very deep and profound mystery. Our difficulty here lies in the fact that we who are finite, temporal creatures simply cannot think in terms of eternity. We are called upon to recognize God's eternity, and yet we are not able to comprehend its significance, because all of our categories are temporal. We can state some things that eternity is not, and thus guard against certain errors that men have made in defining it." M.H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pg. 133 (electronic ed.) Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press: Greenville SC

<sup>89</sup> "Both Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 speak of creation as occurring in the beginning. Time was not in existence when God created the world. Time began with creation." *ibid.*, pg. 192

<sup>90</sup> "Scripture does not lack passages, which explicitly teach, that God produced the whole Universe out of nothing by His almighty power; i. e., that His first work of creation did not consist merely of fashioning materials already existent, but of bringing all substance, except His own, out of non-existence into existence." R.L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 280 (electronic ed. based on the Banner of Truth 1985 ed.) Christian Classics Foundation: Simpsonville SC, pg. 280

<sup>91</sup> "The Biblical view of providence is that God has not left his creation alone, but continues to preserve and sustain it, and also to govern and control all that takes place in it." M.H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pg. 209

<sup>92</sup> "It is impossible to attain to the idea of such a God by speculation independently of Scripture. It has never been done and is inherently impossible. Such a God *must* identify himself. Such a God, and only such a God, identifies all the facts of the universe." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 28

<sup>93</sup> "We freely admit that it is an inscrutable mystery as to how these things can be true. If they also involved a necessary self-contradiction, we should also admit that the understanding would be incapable of receiving them at all. But we do not hold that the persons are three in the same sense in which they are one. If it be asked what is the precise meaning of the phrase, person in the Godhead? We very freely answer, that we know only in part." R.L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 210

<sup>94</sup> "The point is further that man as finite cannot understand God his Maker in an exhaustive manner. As he cannot understand God exhaustively, so he cannot understand anything related to God in an exhaustive way, for to understand it we would have to penetrate its relation to God and to penetrate that relation we would have to understand God exhaustively." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 36

<sup>95</sup> "Since man is the image of the Personal, Living God, who is in his essence a moral being, so man must be a moral, personal creature. Personality implies rationality and free agency, or the power of self-determination. As a rational creature with this power of self-determination, man is responsible to his Maker for all of his actions. Thus, he is a moral agent." M.H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pg. 240

<sup>96</sup> "God is a God of love because He is a covenantal God in whom three persons are committed to one another in absolute love. When God creates man as His own image, He does not create a single man whose definition is to be found through self-contemplation, He creates a man and a woman who are to love one another. Their marital love is intended to reflect the covenant

although *only* on a finite level. There was always a distinction between the Creator and the creature.<sup>97</sup> There were attributes that God communicated to (or shared with) man, but there were also attributes that God did not communicate to man. That man is the image of God is the foundation for human dignity. It gives value to human life. Man is set apart from the rest of the creation because he alone is made in the image of the Creator.

Because man was created by God and in covenant relationship with God, man owed obedience to his Creator. God created man good. Although man was a finite creature, his creatureliness was not an imperfection. The purpose of man was to serve and glorify God and to rule over the creation under God. But instead man rebelled against God. The creature was obligated to obey God and trust His Word. But man attempted to put himself in the position to independently judge whether God's Word was true or not. Instead of living dependently on God's revelation, man attempted to live independently from God.<sup>98</sup> Man attempted to set himself up as the autonomous final point of interpretation. This ethical rebellion against God had consequences. The covenant relationship between God and man was destroyed and the penalty for this was physical, spiritual, and eternal death. God tested Adam's obedience and considered Adam to be the representative of the entire human race. Because Adam represented us all when he disobeyed God, we are all by nature ethically alienated from God. We are all sinners. We have broken God's Law.

This is the position you find yourself in today. Because you are a sinner by nature, you have set yourself up as independent from God. You, with your father Adam, have declared independence from the Creator. But no one is really independent from God. You live in God's world and are His creature, yet you attempt to live as if you were independent. There is a sense in which you know God. You know there is a God and that you are a creature of God,<sup>99</sup> but you suppress that knowledge of God in unrighteousness.<sup>100</sup> Because you sin against better knowledge, you are accountable. Because God is holy and just, He must punish rebellion. As a righteous Judge, He must bring justice to bear against a cosmic criminal like you. When I speak of you in this way, I am not exalting myself. I have also participated in this rebellion against God. Adam also represented me in the first sin. What I have, I have received by grace alone.<sup>101</sup> I was not smart enough to figure out these things. God needed to sovereignly change

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love of God." Ralph Smith, *Eternal Covenant: How the Trinity Reshapes Covenant Theology*, Canon Press, pg. 74

<sup>97</sup> "As a consequence of the creative work of God, there is now a created reality that is distinct from the Being of God. By its nature, as created, it is dependent upon the Creator, who has made it, and who now upholds and preserves it. Only God is independent and self-contained. The universe and all that is in it are dependent upon and derived from God." M.H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pg. 194

<sup>98</sup> "Here then is the heart of the matter: through the fall of Adam man has set aside the law of his Creator and therewith has become a law to himself. He will be subject to none but himself. He seeks to be autonomous." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 42

<sup>99</sup> "There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity...To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty. Ever renewing its memory, he repeatedly sheds fresh drops. Since, therefore, men one and all perceive that there is a God and that he is their Maker, they are condemned by their own testimony because they have failed to honor him and to consecrate their lives to his will." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1, 3:1, Battle's Translation (1960), AGES Software, pg. 88

<sup>100</sup> "According to Romans 1:19-21 all people know God, being surrounded by his revelation. Whether or not they fully acknowledge him or process the information correctly, every person is aware of God just by virtue of being human...This point is no doubt controversial. The Bible states it baldly without any explanation, yet the knowledge of God is not readily apparent in many unbelievers--because of a complicating factor. Though it is perfectly true that human beings *have* God's revelation, it does not follow that they *process* it correctly...What Paul literally says is that we suppress the truth, "holding" it in unrighteousness. The Greek word means something like "put into prison." That is, in refusing to be thankful to the Creator, we put the truth behind bars." William Edgar, *Reasons of the Heart: Rediscovering Christian Persuasion*, P&R, pg. 52

<sup>101</sup> "The Christian knows the truth about the non-Christian. He knows this because he is himself what he is by grace alone. He has been saved from the blindness of mind and the hardness of heart that marks the "natural man." The Christian has the "doctor's book." The Scriptures tell him of the origin and of the nature of sin. Man is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). He hates God. His inability to see the facts as they are and to reason about them as he ought to reason about them is, at bottom, a matter of sin...Believers themselves have not chosen the Christian position because they were wiser than others. What they have they have by grace alone." Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, P&R, pg. 18, 43

my rebellious heart. I too would have continued to declare my independence from God had not He, by His grace, intervened. I too would have continued as a would-be autonomous rebel.<sup>102</sup>

In His grace, God has provided a way for the alienation between God and man to be resolved. He has provided a way for His justice and holiness to be satisfied. Man cannot remedy the situation, and he cannot adequately reform his life to make peace with God. Man only deserves God's wrath and curse. But God has planned redemption. He has sent a Redeemer in the Person of His Son. The second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, took to Himself a human nature. He became the Mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man--one Person with two natures. How can one person have two natures? Again, a doctrine like this must be revealed to man, because it is not penetrable by human logic. Because of this union of two natures in one Person, Jesus Christ was able to reconcile God with man. He provided the atonement that satisfied God's justice and wrath against man's sin. The entire Bible is really the story about this Redeemer. God gradually unfolded His plan of redemption in history, and the Bible is the story of that plan of redemption.<sup>103</sup>

What happened at the cross? Jesus Christ went to the cross to bear the sins of people like you and me. God's justice demanded a penalty for sin, and man could not pay this penalty. Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, took to Himself a human nature and lived a life of perfect obedience to God as a man. He fulfilled the task that the first Adam failed to do. Christ became the "second Adam," the representative of a new, redeemed humanity. When Christ died on the cross He bore the penalty of sin for those who would believe in Him. He satisfied God's wrath and justice. He purchased redemption for those who were slaves to sin. Not only did He die, but He also rose from the dead. Death could not keep a hold on Him. His resurrection was a demonstration that God's justice and wrath had been satisfied.<sup>104</sup> It is by faith in the Person and Work of Christ that rebellious sinners like you and me can be saved from the wrath of God.

The good news of the gospel is to be proclaimed to all men, and you are no exception. The free offer of the gospel is to you. God offers you the forgiveness of your sins, reconciliation with Him and eternal life if you turn in repentance from your rebellion and trust in the Person and Work of His Son. God is gracious to you in that He has delayed judgment against you. He is gracious to you in that you have now had the opportunity to hear His gracious gospel offer. Do not continue in defiant rebellion against Him. Find the forgiveness and grace you need in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Saviour of sinners.

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<sup>102</sup> "The natural man virtually attributes to himself that which a true Christian theology attributes to the self-contained God. The battle is therefore between the absolutely self-contained God of Christianity and the would-be wholly self contained mind of the natural man." Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, P&R, pg. 148

<sup>103</sup> "This story reveals how God harnessed nature and controlled history to send his Son to rescue rebellious, foolish, and self-focused men and women. He freed them from bondage to themselves, enabled them to live for his glory, and gifted them with an eternity in his presence, far from the harsh realities of the Fall." Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, P&R, pg. 27

<sup>104</sup> "Christ's resurrection was the *de facto* declaration of God in regard to his being just. His quickening bears in itself the testimony of his justification. God through suspending the forces of death operating on Him, declared that the ultimate, the supreme consequence of sin had reached its termination. In other words, resurrection had annulled the sentence of condemnation... Vos, *Eschatology*, p. 151; cf. "Eschatology and the Spirit," p. 236." Quoted in Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, P&R, pg. 122