

How A College Student Can Know That Christianity Is An Undeniable Worldview

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Those who argue against the limited objectivity of history apart from an overall world view should consider that without a world view it makes no sense to talk about objective meaning.¹ Meaning is system-dependent. The meaning given to facts will vary according to which system is used. Without a context, meaning cannot be determined and context is provided by the world view and not by the bare facts themselves. A historian cannot avoid a world view because he interprets the past in the overall framework of his own *weltanschauung* [world view]. The three basic philosophies of history are the chaotic, the cyclical and the linear views of history.² Which one of these the historian adopts will be a matter of presupposition for, unless one view or another is presupposed, no interpretation is possible. The *weltanschauungen* [plural for *world view*] will determine whether the historian sees the events of the world as a meaningless maze, as a series of endless repetitions or as moving in a purposeful way toward a goal. Now if there are several different ways to interpret the same facts, depending on the overall perspective one takes, then the argument would hold that there is no single objective interpretation of history.

However, can the credibility of a particular view be rationally substantiated, beyond reasonable doubt, over against other existing world-views? In order to pursue meaning in history, one cannot be neutral about the credibility of world views such as agnosticism, rationalism, fideism, experientialism, evidentialism, pragmatism and theism.

In this chapter we will affirm that *undeniability* is an adequate test for presuppositional axioms while *unaffirmability* is an equally adequate test for the falsity of such premises.

If one affirms the existence of square circles or flat pyramids this claim is essentially unaffirmable. It is unaffirmable to state: *I cannot express myself in words* because this statement is an expression of oneself in words. Thus, *unaffirmability* means that a statement is self-defeating. One cannot affirm that he cannot affirm nor can he deny his own existence without affirming the same existence.

Primary unaffirmability exists when a presuppositional axiom self-contains the necessary information to defeat itself, such as the statement: *Do not be deceived for no one can express himself in words*. The statement is an unmistakable expression in words. No further evidence of falsity is necessary.

¹ Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) p. 150f.

² Hans Mayeroff, ed., *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, "Written History as an Act of Faith" by Charles A. Beard, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 151.

However, there are more complex propositions which are not so simply defeated for they do not provide the information for their own self-destruction. Thus, the statement: *I came to the conclusion that I know everything intuitively* is indirectly unaffirmable when it is discovered that the process of *coming to* was a deductive process and deductive reasoning contradicts the idea that all knowledge is possessed intuitively without deduction. Other examples are: *I really know that nothing can be known about reality; I am certain that nothing is certain; Nothing is either right or wrong and that's right and You should be punished for judging me for it is wrong for anyone to judge another's actions as wrong.* A final example is: *Something should be done to relieve society of unloving people who cannot tolerate the presence of people differently than themselves.* If the above statements were true, there would be no way for a person to make such a statement. Thus, any proposition which negates the only basis on which it can make its affirmation [or denial] is unaffirmable or self-defeating.

Most agnosticism is unaffirmable in this way. The term *agnosticism* was coined by T. H. Huxley and it means literally *no-knowledge*, the opposite of a Gnostic or *Gnosticism*.³ Hume gave the basis of his agnosticism in the concluding lines of his famous *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*:

If we take in our hands any volume of divinity or school of metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.⁴

The writings of Hume had a profound influence on the thinking of Immanuel Kant. Kant affirmed that there was a great impassable gulf between the real world and our knowledge of it and that we must remain agnostic about reality. Kant concluded that we know only that reality is there but that we can never know what it is.⁵ A. J. Ayer believed that God is unknowable and inexpressible. For him it was even meaningless to use the term *God*.⁶

Limited agnosticism, on the other hand, is not self-refuting because it concedes that not everything about God is unknowable. But pure agnosticism asserts that one knows enough about reality to affirm that nothing can be known about reality. One cannot know this about reality and affirm at the same time that all of reality is unknowable. It is unaffirmable to assume some

³ T. H. Huxley, "Agnosticism and Christianity", *Collected Essays*, Edited by Frederick Barry (New York: Macmillan, 1929), Vol. V.

⁴ David Hume, *An inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Ed. By Chas. W. Hendel, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), Modern Edition.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, (N. Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 173f.

⁶ A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (N. Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1946; first published in 1936).

knowledge about reality in order to deny any knowledge about reality. One cannot even think that he knows nothing about reality without implying that he knows something of reality because he says that he *really* does not know.

A second world view, which is characterized by its stress on the innate or *a priori* ability of human reason to know truth, is *rationalism*. Thus, whatever is knowable or demonstrable by human reason is therefore true. Rationalism would stress the mind in the knowing process while empiricism would stress all five senses: taste, smell, touch, see and hear. In the ancient world, these emphases were found in the contrasts between Plato and Aristotle. In modern times Descartes⁷, Spinoza⁸ and Leibniz⁹ are the chief exponents of rationalism; while Locke¹⁰, Berkely¹¹ and Hume¹² are the prime examples of empiricism. Rationalists hold to an *a priori* [understanding prior to experience] aspect to human knowledge independent of sense experience. Empiricists, on the other hand, stress *posteriori*, or what comes through empirical experience. The rationalist believes in innate ideas or principles, whereas the empiricist believes that the mind is a blank on which sense experience writes its impressions.

⁷ René Descartes (1596 –1650) was a French philosopher, mathematician and writer who spent most of his life in the Dutch Republic. He has been dubbed the father of modern philosophy, and much subsequent Western philosophy is a response to his writings, which are studied closely to this day.

⁸ Benedict De Spinoza (1632-1677) was among the most important of the post-Cartesian philosophers who flourished in the second half of the 17th century. He made significant contributions in virtually every area of philosophy, and his writings reveal the influence of such divergent sources as Stoicism, Jewish Rationalism, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Descartes, and a variety of heterodox religious thinkers of his day. For this reason he is difficult to categorize.

⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646 –1716) was a German mathematician and philosopher. He occupies a prominent place in the history of mathematics and the history of philosophy. In philosophy, He is most noted for his optimism, *e.g.*, his conclusion that our universe is, in a restricted sense, the best possible one that God could have created. Leibniz, along with René Descartes and Baruch Spinoza, was one of the three great 17th century advocates of rationalism.

¹⁰ John Locke (1632 –1704), was an English philosopher and physician regarded as one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers and known as the "Father of Classical Liberalism". Considered one of the first of the British empiricists, following the tradition of Francis Bacon, he is equally important to social contract theory. His work greatly affected the development of epistemology and political philosophy. His writings influenced Voltaire and Rousseau, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the American revolutionaries. His contributions to classical republicanism and liberal theory are reflected in the United States Declaration of Independence. He postulated that, at birth, the mind was a blank slate or *tabula rasa*. Contrary to Cartesian philosophy based on pre-existing concepts, he maintained that we are born without innate ideas, and that knowledge is instead determined only by experience derived from sense perception.

¹¹ George Berkeley (1685 – 1753), also known as Bishop Berkeley, was an Anglo-Irish philosopher whose primary achievement was the advancement of a theory he called "immaterialism" (later referred to as "subjective idealism" by others). This theory denies the existence of material substance and instead contends that familiar objects like tables and chairs are only ideas in the minds of perceivers, and as a result cannot exist without being perceived. Berkeley is also known for his critique of abstraction, an important premise in his argument for immaterialism.

¹² David Hume (1711 –1776) was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist known especially for his philosophical empiricism and scepticism. He was one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume is often grouped with John Locke, George Berkeley, and a handful of others as a British Empiricist.

Rationalism unaffirmably moves from thought to reality or from possible to actual. It assumes that because something is thinkable it must also be actual. That which is not contradictory could possibly be true but is not necessarily true. For example: there could be unicorns but there are humans and there cannot be square circles. Thus, we must distinguish between possible things, actual things and impossible things. It is not legitimate to move from the possible to the actual or from thought to reality. Logic does not determine reality, rather, reality determines the legitimacy of thought.

Rationalism concludes that the rationally inescapable is therefore the real. Hence, it confuses actual undeniability with rational inescapability. It is undeniable that squares could possibly exist and must be conceived of as having four sides. However, it is not logically necessary that a square exist anywhere. Logic alone is at best a negative test for truth in that it can reveal the unaffirmability of certain propositions by exposing internal inconsistency. However, the rationalist fails to realize that many opposing views may be internally noncontradictory and consistent with their own presuppositions but they cannot be equally true if they are opposed to one another. Thus, rationalism or logic alone is an insufficient test for truth even though it is a good test for untruth.

In addition to agnosticism, rationalism and empiricism, *fideism* often presents itself as a world view. It affirms that truth rests solely on faith and not on a reasoning process or a presentation of factual proof. This form of *epistemology* [how you know what you know] has been with Christianity since the time of Tertullian (d. A.D. 230) who wrote:

I believe because it is absurd...What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the academy and the Church?¹³

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) said: *The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of...it is the heart which experiences God, and not the reason.* (no. 277, 278).¹⁴ Thus, the heart is the absolute bedrock of all knowledge. Faith, for Pascal, is generated by humility, submission and inspiration. For Pascal,

¹³ Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics*. The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. Vol. 3. Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. Grand Rapids: Eardmans, 1957). 7.

¹⁴ Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*. Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, (N. Y.: Penguin Books, 1966). Pascal's *Pensées* is widely considered to be a masterpiece, and a landmark in French prose. In *Pensées*, Pascal surveys several philosophical paradoxes: infinity and nothing, faith and reason, soul and matter, death and life, meaning and vanity—seemingly arriving at no definitive conclusions besides humility, ignorance, and grace. Rolling these into one he develops Pascal's Wager: that humans all bet with their lives either that God exists or not. Given the possibility that God actually does exist and assuming an infinite gain or loss associated with belief or unbelief in said God (as represented by an eternity in heaven or hell), a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in God. If God does not actually exist, such a person will have only a finite loss (some pleasures, luxury, etc.). Historically, Pascal's Wager was groundbreaking because it charted new territory in probability theory, marked the first formal use of decision theory, and anticipated future philosophies such as existentialism, pragmatism, and voluntarism.

faith is different from proof; the one is human, the other is the gift of God. It is this faith that God himself puts into the human heart, of which the proof is often the instrument; but this faith is in the heart, and makes us not say *scio* [I know], but *credo* [I believe]. (No. 248).¹⁵

...contradiction is a poor indication of truth. Many things that are certain are contradicted. Many that are false pass without contradiction. Hence, contradiction is no more an indication of falsehood than lack of it is an indication of truth. (No. 177).¹⁶

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) wrote,

It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all; objectively Christianity has absolutely no existence.¹⁷

Thus, to Kierkegaard, one cannot derive the eternal from the historical nor the spiritual from the rational. Fideism is not irrationalism but, rather, antirationalism.

Karl Barth affirmed fideism in his *Commentary on Romans*.¹⁸ In this commentary, God is *wholly other* and revelation strikes the world with judgment from God, not knowledge of Him.

In response to fideism, an article written for a circular called *The Concept*, the present author wrote:

Beliefs are nothing more than just that. Neither old age, world-wide travel, building programs, changed lives or billions of

¹⁵ Ibid., Pascal, (No. 248).

¹⁶ Ibid., Pascal, (No. 177).

¹⁷ Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Translated by David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 116. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813 –1855) was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher. He wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christendom, morality, ethics, psychology and philosophy of religion, displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony and parables. He was a fierce critic of idealist intellectuals and philosophers of his time, such as Swedenborg, Hegel, Goethe, Fichte, Schelling, Schlegel, and Hans Christian Andersen. His theological work focuses on Christian ethics, the institution of the Church, the differences between purely objective proofs of Christianity, the infinite qualitative distinction between man and God, and the individual's subjective relationship to the God-Man Jesus Christ, which came through faith.

¹⁸ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. From the 6th ed. By Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). (1886 – 1968) Barth was a Swiss Reformed theologian. Many critics have referred to Barth as the father of neo-orthodoxy. Barth emphasized the sovereignty of God, particularly through his reinterpretation of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, the sinfulness of humanity, and the "infinite qualitative distinction between God and mankind". His most famous works are his *The Epistle to the Romans*, which marked a clear break from his earlier thinking; and his massive thirteen-volume work *Church Dogmatics*, one of the largest works of systematic theology ever written.

believers can make them true. Long practice does not transform error into truth. Truth does not require belief in order to be true. We should not use the word *believe* in setting forth what we know. For millenniums the earth was believed by many to be flat and millions proceeded on this belief. Neither age nor numerous believers flattened the earth. Truth is not verified by popular vote. Superstitions today were the elite scientific theories yesterday.¹⁹

Fideism is unaffirmable because, if we do not have any tests for truth with which we can begin, we can never make truth claims nor can we even know something is true. Without an epistemological way of knowing the truth, no ontological truth claims can be pressed. Fideists properly stress the basis for belief in God, namely, His revelation, but they seem to neglect entirely the warrant or support for exercising this belief. The warrant should be the historical credibility of the Scriptural writings. There is no reason why God's revelation cannot be both personal and propositional. This is what the Christian Scriptures claim for themselves.²⁰

There is a difference between the unavoidability of and the justifiability of presuppositions. No one can avoid presuppositions but the question is whether or not we can justify the presuppositions we use. In a sense, all men are fideists because they have basic things they believe about reality with which they have no purely factual nor demonstrably rational grounds for holding. The issue is, can some of these beliefs be eliminated as false and others be established as true? If so, by what method or test for truth? Fideism, without warrant, is unaffirmable in that it makes a truth-claim without a truth-test. If the fideist cannot offer justification for his belief, he does not have a rightful claim to knowledge. If the fideist offers undeniable justification for his belief—as indeed the whole argument for fideism would seem to be—then he is no longer a fideist. Thus, either fideism is not a rightful claimant to truth or else it is self-defeating.

A fifth presuppositional world view is *experientialism* [or mysticism]. Remembering that Pascal appealed to the heart's experience of God, and Kierkegaard and Barth to a personal encounter with God through Christ, it is obvious that both psychologically and logically fideism reduces to experientialism. However, there is a difference. Fideism offers no test for truth, whereas experientialism offers experience as the final test for truth and reality.

The view of Plotinus²¹ was that God transcends not only all good and all being but also all knowing and is experienced only by mystical intuition or union.²² Here again is a self-

¹⁹ J. O. Hosler, *Does Evidence Strengthen Faith Or Does Faith Strengthen Evidence?*, Published in The Concept, Vol 3, No.7, (Indianapolis, Ind.: Christian Challenge, Inc., 1980).

²⁰ Norman L. Geisler and William E Nix, *From God to Us* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1974), Chap. 2.

²¹ Plotinus (c. 204/5 – 270) was a major philosopher of the ancient world. In his philosophy there are three principles: the One, the Intellect, and the Soul. His teacher was Ammonius Saccas and he is of the Platonic tradition. Historians of the 19th century invented the term Neoplatonism and applied it to him and his philosophy

defeating presupposition in that, if God cannot be described, how can one know that he is experiencing God? Plotinus would simply reject this question and assert that God could not be known for He is literally the *Unknowable*; God could only be felt or intuited by mystical union. In mysticism, experience is its own *proof*. There is no reason or evidence applicable to it. Either one has had the experience or he has not. He who has, needs no other *proof*. There is no reason or evidence applicable to it. Either one has had the experience or he has not. He who has, needs no other *proof*, and he who has not can never be convinced until he has.

Unlike Plotinus (d. A.D. 270), Fredrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)²³ built upon general experience rather than a special mystical experience. He exhorted people to *turn from everything usually reckoned religion, and fix your regard on the inward emotions and dispositions...*²⁴ Thus, religious experience is the *stuff* and religious language and ritual are the structure of religion. The experience of God is the primary reality and religious thought is but a later reflection on that reality.²⁵ This idea leads to pure relativism for, since religion is not constituted by ideas, the concepts of true and false do not apply to it. All religions would be *good* and *true* in an infinite variety of forms.²⁶ This idea is also self-defeating because all religions claim to expose that which is untrue and unwise in other religions. The self-contradiction is in other words, *if your religion does not recognize all religions as true then your religion is not true*.

Actually, it is a mistake to speak of a *true* experience. Experience is a personal condition whereas truth is a characteristic of propositions or expressions persons make. One may have an experience but it is his statements about that experience which are subject to the test of truth or falsity. A *claimed* experience cannot be used to support or prove propositional conclusions derived from that experience. This would *beg* the whole question. The only truth established by an experience is the truth that one has had an experience. The *whence* of some truth may be rooted in experience but the *warrant* for claiming truth is something else.

Experience is not self-interpreting. Experiences do not come with truth labels on them. Here we have a self-defeating circular reasoning. Since a world view is an overall interpretation

which was influential in Late Antiquity. Much of the biographical information about Plotinus comes from Porphyry's preface to his edition of Plotinus' *Enneads*. His metaphysical writings have inspired centuries of Pagan, Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Gnostic metaphysicians and mystics.

²² Plotinus, *The Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna, (N. Y.: Pantheon Books, 1957).

²³ Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (German: ['ʃlaɪəməxɐ]; 1768 –1834) was a German theologian, philosopher, and biblical scholar known for his attempt to reconcile the criticisms of the Enlightenment with traditional Protestant Christianity. He also became influential in the evolution of Higher Criticism, and his work forms part of the foundation of the modern field of hermeneutics. Because of his profound impact on subsequent Christian thought, he is often called the *Father of Modern Liberal Theology* and is considered an early leader in liberal Christianity. The Neo-Orthodoxy movement of the twentieth century, typically (though not without challenge) seen to be spearheaded by Karl Barth, was in many ways an attempt to challenge his influence.

²⁴ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultural Despisers*, Translated by John Oman (N. Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Schleiermacher, pp. 1-18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Schleiermacher, pp. 53-56.

of all the facts and experiences, it is not valid to use a particular experience within that overall interpretive framework to establish the overall framework or world view. *Begging the question* [or reasoning in a circle] can be illustrated thusly:

Are you the King?

Yes, I'm the King!

How can I know that you are the King?

Because I'm wearing the King's hat!

Why are you wearing the King's hat?

Because I'm the king!

Oh! I forgot

The idea that experience transcends knowledge and that ideas proceed from experience is self-refuting. No one can talk meaningfully about experience unless he is employing cognitive categories that are at least formally independent of that experience. A consciousness of something without conceptualization or predication of it is cognitively meaningless. No experience can be meaningful to someone else [and probably even to self] unless it is describable. It is self-defeating to speak of the experience without being able to describe it but only evoke it. How does one know that it is *it* being evoked and how can he know the *it* without knowing something about what *it* is in distinction from what *it* is not. An experience is neither understandable nor justifiable apart from some truth framework independent of the experience itself. One must have some justification as to why he interpreted the raw data of the experience itself one way and not another way. To retreat to mystical and inexpressible experience is self-defeating because it is an attempt to meaningfully describe the indescribable. The indescribable cannot be distinguished from anything else unless it is describable.

A sixth category of world view may be called *evidentialism*. This view bases truth in facts or events and seems to distinguish between facts and interpretation. Thus, the facts are separate and distinguishable from the interpretations men give to them. To the evidentialist, facts need interpretation, however, the interpretation cannot be arbitrarily imposed from without but rather, it arises from the facts themselves in a natural way. Many evidentialists place strong emphasis on the objective and public nature of facts. In this respect they regard private and subjective experience as nonevidential. If a truth is not observable and general it is unsubstantiable. Truth may be subjectively realized but it must be objectively grounded. To the evidentialist, events are fundamental to interpretation. The viewpoint does not constitute the factualness of the events, rather, the events support the credibility of the viewpoint. Evidentialism attempts to place the horse before the cart by saying that no fact should be

interpreted out of its intended context because the meaning and the fact of an event are concomitantly related.

Evidentialism is one of the most impressive of the world views but still suffers from some fundamental weaknesses. A fact cannot be used to project a world view or overall context while the same fact derives its meaning from that over-all context. Evidence has philosophical meaning only within and by virtue of an overall context in which it is conceptualized.

Contrary to evidentialism, not all meaning is inherent in, nor does it arise naturally out of, bare facts or events. Since facts are distinct from the interpretation, their meanings would vary from one world view to another. For example, in the context of a naturalistic world, the resurrection of Jesus Christ would not be a miracle but merely an unusual natural event for which there is no known scientific explanation, but which, by virtue of its occurrence, motivates scientists to find a natural explanation.

This present writer would refer to himself as a *limited evidentialist*. This would mean that, if the resurrection of Christ took place in time, space and history in the presence of eye-witnesses whose credibility was underscored by their willingness to be tortured to death for what they claimed to be eye-witnesses of, this fact carries with it its own meaning: the resurrection of Christ means that Christ arose. However, a limited evidentialist will concede that the philosophical and theological implications of that resurrection are not derived from the fact. That the resurrection did in fact take place does not establish that Christ was the Son of God unless one presupposes that there is a God Who could have a Son.

Therefore, *Theism*, as a world view, would have to be presupposed before significant theological or philosophical meaning could be ascribed to the fact of the resurrection. The great question before us is: *Is there any warrant for Theism to be presupposed?* So, philosophical and theological meaning is given to facts from a certain perspective [one's world view]. The selection, relation and weight given the facts are not inherent to the facts themselves.

A seventh category of world view could be called *pragmatism* wherein one cannot think or even feel truth, but can discover it by attempting to live it. Thus, truth is not what is consistent or empirically adequate but what is experientially *workable*. Kant²⁷ used the term to mean *a contingent belief, which yet forms the ground for the actual employment of means to certain actions...*²⁸ However, the pragmatic theory of meaning was developed in America by

²⁷ Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was a German philosopher who is widely considered to be a central figure of modern philosophy. He argued that fundamental concepts structure human experience, and that reason is the source of morality. His thought continues to have a major influence in contemporary thought, especially the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics.

²⁸ Op. cit., Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A. 824, B. 852.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914).²⁹ Actually, Peirce did not offer pragmatism as a test for truth but as a theory of meaning. According to Peirce, our problem would be greatly simplified if, instead of speaking of *truth*, one could attain belief unassailable by doubt, namely, a state of confidence which he called *The Fixation of Belief*. For Peirce, only the method of *science* is sufficient for fixing beliefs. The thesis is:

There are real things, whose...realities affect our senses according to regular laws...yet, by taking advantage of the laws of perception, we can ascertain how things really are....any man, if he has sufficient experience and reason enough about it, will be led to the one true conclusion.³⁰

Thus, the person who confesses that there is such a thing as truth as versus falsity simply says this: *that if acted on it will carry us to the point we aim at and not astray...*³¹ Therefore, the meaning of anything would be found in its practical results.

William James,³² on the other hand, would discuss pragmatism as an actual test for truth. He believed that there was no way to settle the religious question on purely intellectual grounds. Hence, he concluded that:

Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide on option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot be decided on intellectual grounds...lay at the root of all

²⁹ Charles Sanders **Peirce** was an American philosopher, logician, mathematician, and scientist, sometimes known as "the father of pragmatism". He was educated as a chemist and employed as a scientist for 30 years. Today he is appreciated largely for his contributions to logic, mathematics, philosophy, scientific methodology, and semiotics, and for his founding of pragmatism. He made major contributions to logic, but logic for him encompassed much of that which is now called epistemology and philosophy of science. He saw logic as the formal branch of semiotics, of which he is a founder. As early as 1886 he saw that logical operations could be carried out by electrical switching circuits; the same idea was used decades later to produce digital computers.

³⁰ Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Fixation of Belief* in V, collected in Moore, (N. Y.: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 133.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Peirce, V.

³² William James (January 11, 1842 – August 26, 1910) was an American philosopher and psychologist who was also trained as a physician. The first educator to offer a psychology course in the United States, James was one of the leading thinkers of the late nineteenth century and is believed by many to be one of the most influential philosophers the United States has ever produced, while others have labeled him the *Father of American psychology*. Along with Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey, he is considered to be one of the greatest figures associated with the philosophical school known as pragmatism, and is also cited as one of the founders of functional psychology. He also developed the philosophical perspective known as radical empiricism. James' work has influenced intellectuals such as Émile Durkheim, W. E. B. Du Bois, Edmund Husserl, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hilary Putnam, and Richard Rorty.

our convictions...as a rule we disbelieve all facts and theories for which we have no use.³³

For James, the whole defense of religious faith hinges upon action.³⁴ Thus, religion is not to be judged by its source or root but by its result or fruit, which are:

- (1) A satisfying feeling of being in a wider ideal of life than this world's selfish interests, (2) a sense of friendly continuity between oneself and this ideal power, (3) an immense sense of freedom and elation as our confining self melts down, and (4) a shifting of our emotional center toward love and harmony with the other. Externally religion manifests itself in (1) asceticism where self-surrender becomes self-sacrifice, (2) strength of soul by enlargement to new reaches of patience and fortitude, (3) purity or spiritual sensitizing that results from a shift of our emotional center, and (4) charity where the same shift brings increased tenderness to our fellow creatures.³⁵

In a general way, then, and *on the whole*, ...our testing of all religion by practical common sense and the empirical method, leave it in possession of its towering place in history. For economically, the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare. The great saints are immediate successes; the smaller ones are at least heralds and harbingers, and they may be leavens also, of a better mundane order. Let us be saints, then, if we can....³⁶

If the reader is lost in all of this verbosity, it boils down to this: the true, *is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.*³⁷ Pragmatism's *only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best....*³⁸

Although there are some positive features in pragmatism, as a test for the truth of a world view, it is insufficient. Results do not establish what is true but rather what happened to work. Success does not equal truth and failure does not equal falsity. The truth question is not settled

³³ William James, *The Will to Believe* in *Essays in Pragmatism*, ed. Alburey Castell, (N. Y.: Hafner Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 90-98.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Castell, pp. 105-108.

³⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (N. Y.: The Modern Library, 1929), Lectures 11-15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, James, p. 280 (Mentor Paperback).

³⁷ William James, *Pragmatism and Other Essays*, (N. Y.: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 89-96.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, James *Pragmatism*, What Pragmatism Means, p. 38.

by results. Truth may be unrelated to results. Terrorism may work in obtaining concessions from capitalists but that does not demonstrate that this was either right or that the result was right. On the other hand, refusing to practice terrorism has proven painful to the U. S. and often places it at a disadvantage. Does this mean that the U. S. is wrong for accepting such a disadvantage? Neither the desired nor the desirable is necessarily right or truthful. Truth is more than the expedient. Josiah Royce³⁹ wondered whether James would be satisfied to put a witness on the stand and swear to tell *the expedient, the whole expedient, and nothing but the expedient, so help him future experience.*⁴⁰ The meaning of truth cannot be limited to the functional and practical. What is meaningful, functional and practical for the individual may not be the same for the race.

A passional and volitional basis alone for deciding truth is insufficient. It is subject to the same self-defeating weaknesses found in fideism. A purely personal and private test for truth cannot meet even the minimal standards for truth criteria, for it is neither available to others nor can it really exclude other views.

Actually, on purely pragmatic grounds, opposing world views may work equally well. James admitted that pantheism has worked for millions for hundreds of years. If a pantheist desires the cessation of all craving, then attaining Nirvana (i.e., the extinguishing of all craving) will work better than heaven as Christians conceive it. Heaven would be a perpetual frustration to one who does not want to experience the fulfillment of desire. Likewise, Nirvana could never fulfill the desire of a Christian. But Nirvana and Heaven are based on opposing world views. Both cannot be simultaneously true. Pragmatism is therefore self-defeating because what constitutes proof of truth to a pantheist is proven false by the experience of any opposing world view.

Remember, primary unaffirmability exists when a presuppositional axiom self-contains the necessary information to defeat itself. Thus, any proposition which negates the only basis on which it can make its affirmation [or denial] is unaffirmable or self-defeating. Because the non-theistic world views we have just reviewed are somehow self-defeating, we must therefore conclude that they are not a sufficient source for discovering bottom-line truth in all areas.

So finally, this brings us to the subject of *theism*. But, before we affirm the existence of the theistic God of Scriptures on undeniable premises, we must have certain terminologies clarified in our minds. If there is a pencil on your desk which is not moving, it can be *possibly* or *potentially* moved. Thus, *potentiality* or *possibility* is something that logically could happen but

³⁹ Josiah Royce (1855–1916) was an American objective idealist philosopher. At Johns Hopkins he taught a course on the history of German thought, which was *one of his chief interests* because he was able to give consideration to the philosophy of history. After four years at the University of California, Berkeley, he went to Harvard in 1882 as a sabbatical replacement for William James, who was at once Royce's friend and philosophical antagonist. Royce's position at Harvard was made permanent in 1884 and he remained there until his death, on September 14, 1916.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Joseph L. Blau in *Introduction to Pragmatism and Other Essays* by William James, p. XIV.

does not necessarily have to happen. *Causality* is that which causes the transition of the pencil from non-movement to movement. *Actuality* occurs at the moment when the pencil has undergone the transition from potential movement to actual movement. The *actualizer* is that which causes this transition. If the pencil is moving or has been moved, there cannot not have been an actualizer. Thus, where there is movement there must necessarily be an original unmoved mover to whom all movement in the universe can be traced: [a *Necessary Being*].

The first undeniable premise is that one cannot deny his own existence without affirming it. Remember, whatever is *undeniable* is therefore true and whatever is *unaffirmable* is therefore false. This does not mean that one's existence is rationally inescapable. It is logically possible for one to not have existed just as it was possible for the pencil not to move. However, one who does now exist must realize that his existence is logically undeniable.

The second undeniable premise is that one's nonexistence is possible. It is possible to conceive of someone who does not exist. One's existence was probably conceptualized in the minds of his parents before his existence was actualized but it was not logically necessary that such an existence should ever be actualized. Therefore, it would have been logically possible for such a person to never have existed. On the other hand, such a person's existence was not impossible either. Only impossible things like square triangles cannot exist. Further, one's existence was not necessary. A necessary existence is one that cannot *not* exist. The non-existence of a necessary being is impossible, as we shall see in this chapter.

Although one may now undeniably exist, he has the potentiality within his very being to go out of existence physically at any moment. Thus he is *contingent* as well as limited and changing. This is *undeniable*.

The third undeniable premise is that whatever has the possibility for nonexistence is currently caused to exist by another [*a necessary actualizer*]. Thus, existence is either self-caused, caused by another, or un-caused. There are no other possibilities. *Nothing* cannot produce something. Therefore, one's existence cannot be self-caused for this would necessitate not existing and existing at the same time, which is unaffirmable and impossible. Therefore, whatever potentially exists must be caused to exist by another [*an actualizer*]. A self-caused being would have to be impossibly prior to itself. It would have to be in a state of potentiality and actuality simultaneously, which is logically unaffirmable. Mere possibility does not logically account for actuality. So, we cannot deny that the impossible cannot be; the possible can be but it is not logically necessary and the first necessary must be and can never come to be or cease to be.

Since the existence of possible beings has actualized, it is undeniable that there is a cause of existence outside of them which actualizes their existence. The actual cannot come from the potential unless something outside it actualizes its potential. No potential can be self-actualized.

Many things could possibly exist but do not, for example, centaurs. However, other things which might not exist actually do exist. The only adequate explanation for why there is something rather than nothing at all is that the something that could be nothing is caused to exist by something that cannot be nothing [*a necessary Being*]. Thus, all contingent beings are caused by a necessary Being. So, whatever is, but might not have been, is dependent or contingent on what is but cannot *not* be.

An ultimate necessary Being would be pure actuality with no potentiality in Its being whatsoever. Why? If there were any potentiality in a necessary Being, He would have to be partially self-actualized, which is *unaffirmable*, or have an *actualizer* outside of Himself. By contrast, impossible things have neither actuality nor potentiality. They are not and cannot be. But possible beings have both potentiality and actuality in their very being once they do exist. Because there can be no potential in a necessary being to be yet actualized, it would, of necessity, be an infinite and unchanging being and would be *uncaused* and not self-caused. Whatever changes must have the possibility for change. But there is no unactualized possibility in a necessary Being.

A necessary existence would have to be non-temporal and non-spatial. If space and time involve change of position and moment, then a necessary Being could not be either spatial nor temporal. Its being cannot change and space and time involve change.

A necessary Being would have to be eternal. If It ever did not exist, then It would have to have been *self-actualized* [which is impossible] or, have an actualizer, in which case this additional actualizer would be the true ultimate *actualizer*. Likewise, for the same reason, a necessary Being could not ever cease to be for it has no *possibility* for nonexistence.

There can be only one necessary Being since there is no way for one thing to differ from another in its being unless there is some real potentiality for differentiation. Where there is no difference, there is one.

A necessary Being would have to be *simple* or undivided. He could not be composed of different parts or elements. There is no principle of differentiation in it/Him; all in Him is simply *one*. Furthermore, whatever is composed must have a composer or be self-composed. A necessary Being is *un-composed*.

A necessary Being would have to be *infinite* in all of its attributes. It must be all-knowing, all-powerful, all good, all-present, all-loving and all-justice. Why? Because only that which has potentiality can be limited. Limitation means that which differentiates the sphere of one thing from another. Pure actuality would be unlimited and thus not limited by any potential in and of itself. The only limitations on pure actuality are those of impossibility outside of it. Even pure actuality could not know or perform the impossible [i.e. create a square or three-sided circle].

Finally, a necessary Being must be an *uncaused* Being. Whatever is caused passes from potentiality to actuality. But a necessary Being has no actualizer outside of itself. It is not self-actualized and it cannot change.

From this description of a *necessary existence*, it should be obvious and undeniable to oneself that man is not a necessary existence. Now, the cause of becoming existent may be before the effect, but the cause of actual being [*continued existence*] must be current with the effect. The cause of one's current existence must be *vertical* and not *linear*. The sculptor may be the cause of the becoming of a statue but not of its continued being. The sculptor dies but the statue continues to be. Likewise, parents are the cause of one's coming-to-be but something else must be the cause of one's continuing-to-be, since one continues to exist without the parents.

The fourth undeniable premise is that there cannot be an *infinite regress* of current causes of existence. We cannot repeat the phrase: *and this caused this, which caused this, which caused this, ad infinitum*. There had to have been a *FIRST CAUSE*. A cause cannot *not* exist and exist at the same time. But a chain of causes, however short or long, wherein every cause is simultaneously both actual and potential with regard to existence, is clearly impossible.

By appealing to an infinite regress of current causes of contingent beings one must conclude that either the series of causes as a whole is a sufficient ground for all contingent beings or it is not. If not, then there must be some force or Being outside the series on which the series is grounded. That is, unless the *series* is self-caused, which is impossible, there must undeniably be an *uncaused cause* outside the series on which the series is grounded. Now, if the cause outside the series is itself caused, then it is a part of the series, making the series *self-caused* which is impossible and therefore *unaffirmable*. So, adding up an infinite number of dependent/contingent causes within a series does not provide an adequate ground for them. If the parts are contingent then the whole is undeniably contingent. Making the series longer or even infinitely longer does not lessen the need for a grounding cause to explain it. If a chain with five links in it needs a peg to hang upon, then a chain with an infinite number of links would need an even stronger peg outside itself to hang upon.

Therefore, an infinite regress of current causes of here-and-now existence is impossible. The only possible ground for what can pass from potentiality to actuality [a contingent thing or being] with regard to being is what cannot pass from potentiality to actuality [a necessary Being].

Therefore, as a fifth undeniable premise, it must be affirmed that a *First, Uncaused Cause* of one's current existence does in fact exist. The First Cause must be the necessary ground of all contingent existence and must be uncaused by anything outside of itself. It is the un-caused cause of all that is caused. It is the not-affected effecter of all effects. It is the un-actualized actualizer. It is the necessary ground of all actualized possibility. It is therefore

philosophically and logically *undeniable* that there is an *Uncaused Cause* of the existence of all that is caused to exist, of which oneself is an undeniable example.

The sixth undeniable premise, as previously discussed, must be infinite, unchanging, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-perfect, all-good, all-justice and eternal. A cause can communicate to its effect only what it has to communicate. If the effect actually possesses some characteristic, then this characteristic is properly attributed to its cause [except for contingency for the unlimited can bestow limitation]. The ultimate cause of limited knowing must be all-knowing and the cause of contingent personhood must be a Person and not just a *force* [or an *it*].

This brings forth the big fundamental question: *How did evil actualize if the unactualized Actualizer is all-good?* Of course, the person asking this question should realize that if his category of *all good* did not exist, he would have nothing with which to compare evil in order to classify it as *evil*. If there was no such a thing as *straight*, we could never know that something was crooked. Logic forces us, therefore, to the conclusion that, if an all-good Person exists, He must have created the freedom of will which actualized *evil* without actualizing it Himself.

If God could have avoided evil by not creating *free-will*, why did He not do so? The answer is simple. If everyone were programmed to love with no possibility to hate, there would be nothing to cherish in love. That which makes the love of one's wife so valuable is the fact that she has the option to hate and chooses to not use that option. Without the option to hate, there would be no love worth having. If God created contingent beings who could not fail to worship Him, it would not be worship worth receiving. *Good* would be meaningless to a contingent being apart from the *free will* to choose it instead of evil.

Furthermore, the only thing such a Being cannot know is what is impossible for Him to know. For example, He cannot experience the personal actualization of unactualized potential in Himself. Thus, ignorance and other imperfections found in finite knowledge cannot be attributed to the Cause of the world.

Is this Being *all good*? In order to discover if a man really believes it to be good to practice justice, do not look at the way he acts toward others. Rather, look at the way he reacts when others do something unjust to him. The cause of one's ability to conceptualize and choose good must be Good since He cannot give what He does not have to give. All actualities actualized in the effect must pre-exist in the cause in perfection. Since the cause of all goodness and justice is infinite, it follows that He must be infinitely good and just.

The seventh undeniable premise is that this infinitely perfect Being is appropriately called *GOD*. By *God* we mean that which is worthy of worship. *God* is that [or He] which has ultimate intrinsic value. If contingent beings value their own existence and have self-respect, the Cause of such a value system must totally value Himself and consider Himself entirely worthy of worship. Anything less than what is ultimately and intrinsically worthy of our admiration and

submission is not really *God* but a false god. An ultimate commitment to what is less than ultimate is idolatry. Nothing can be more worthy of worship than the infinitely perfect uncaused Cause of all else that exists. Therefore, it is appropriate to call this infinitely perfect cause *GOD*.

At this point of our thesis, we cannot resist the temptation to digress and present the philosophical logic behind the orthodox Christian view of *salvation*. Remember, there can be only one necessary Being. What is pure actuality must be one since there is no way for one thing to differ from another in its being unless there is some real potentiality for differentiation. But in a Being of pure actuality, there is no potential whatsoever. If there were more than one, the difference would constitute unactualized potential in one or the other. God must be simple and undivided. What is composed of different parts requires a composer.

Therefore, the holiness, justice and love of God are one. **HEREIN LIES THE PROBLEM!** If God actualized our sense of justice, which requires retribution for social and personal evils in order to preserve civilization, then God's justice must demand retribution for every violation of His standard of perfect goodness or holiness. Otherwise, God Himself would be unjust.

It is impossible that our sense of justice was self-actualized. However, because mankind fell when free-will first chose evil, the race has fallen below God's level of holiness. God has only one way to be outraged about this...*infinitely*. This necessitates God's just condemnation of all mankind. I am finite and therefore I would not be that angered if someone stole my lawn mower. But God has only one way to be outraged...*infinitely*.

On the other hand, our sense of love was caused by One Who is all-love. If our sense of love desires our own salvation and the salvation of our children, then God's love must desire the salvation of all fallen finite men [i.e. salvation from His just condemnation].

It cannot be affirmed that fallen man can actualize the solution to his own fallen/condemned state without turning back time and being as holy as God from his beginning, in which case he would be infinite and not finite.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that the love of God cannot satisfy the justice of God on behalf of the condemned. A mere benevolent God would be unjust. If a court judge said to the murderer of your daughter, *I love you and I am benevolent, therefore go free*, this would indeed be love and benevolence but the judge would be crooked and unjust. If God is simple and undivided and His holiness, justice and love are one, how can He be just and then save condemned man through love at the same time? There would seem to be a conflict between the infinite love and infinite justice of God. One of the two attributes would have to be less than infinite in order to act. If God is eternal, then He must have had in mind the solution to this infinite conflict throughout eternity past.

The fact that the solution to this problem does not reside in fallen, finite man is the precise reason why we must affirm the eighth undeniable premise, namely, this God Who exists is identical to the God described in the Jewish/Christian Scriptures. Therein He is said to be eternal (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2); changeless (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:18); infinite (I Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1); all-loving (John 3:16; I John 4:16; all powerful (Hebrews 1:3; Matthew 19:26), etc. There could not be two beings Who have all possible perfections attributable to them. Where there is no difference in being there is only one being and there can be no difference unless one being has potential that the other does not have. Thus, the God of the Hebrew/Christian Scriptures is identical to the God concluded from this argument.

So, regarding the solution to the conflict between the infinite love and infinite justice of God. The Bible affirms that God is one being and yet three persons. The reader may be asking at this point, *What has this to do with the philosophy of history?* Precisely this, the Bible affirms that God resolved the conflict without compromising His infinity by appearing in time, space and history, empirically in the person of His son. He then proceeded to impute the guilt of the entire race upon His own perfectly innocent self. He then proceeded to execute His infinite and just condemnation by pouring out His infinite wrath upon those imperfections through the suffering and physical death of Himself incarnated in the Son. This Son was one with Himself.

After 100% of His justice was satisfied through His execution of retribution against said imperfections (i.e. *sins*), He was then free to offer fallen man complete justification and restoration as a free gift, paid for entirely by Himself. Thus, without compromise, he simultaneously satisfied His infinite love and justice.

Although this solution is *actual* in the eternal sphere, if it did not empirically take place in time, space and history in the Christ event, then the problem is still unresolved as far as man's knowledge is concerned. But, if this problem is unresolved, and cannot be resolved by finite human efforts, then existence itself has no meaning.⁴¹

Thus, the ninth undeniable premise: The God described in the Hebrew/Christian Scriptures does exist.⁴²

(John 1:1-4, 14 NIV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind... The Word became flesh and

⁴¹ This explanation of the resolution of the conflict between the love and justice of God is the composition of this present author.

⁴² These nine undeniable premises were capsulized from the much more expanded defense of the same by Norman Geisler in his *Christian Apologetics*, (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976).

made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.⁴³

That God imputed human kind's guilt to Christ in order to provide infinite justification to fallen man is stated in Isaiah 53:6...

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Justification places the infinite righteousness of God upon fallen man. This is a form of righteousness which could never have been actualized by man himself, II Cor. 5:21...

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The purchase price for this forgiveness, restoration and justification was paid for in full by the finished work of Jesus Christ in His physical death, Acts 20:28...

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

This was the only way God could remain infinitely just and yet justify the sinner, Romans 3:26, 28...

He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus... For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

According to the Holy Scriptures, a person cannot experience this justification if he attempts to actualize it through his own finite righteousness, Romans 10:3-4...

Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

I Peter 3:18... For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

⁴³ All Scriptural quotations are taken from Zondervan's *New International Version* of the Bible.

It is totally unaffirmable to say that fallen man can self-actualize the infinite solution to the fact that he is entitled to the infinite condemnation of God, Acts 13:39...

Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

Galatians 2:16... know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

If a man cannot self-actualize his own justification, then he can only appropriate justification as a free gift paid for in full, 100%, by the price paid by God Himself, Ephesians 2:8-9...

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

According to the orthodox interpretation of Scripture, one receives justification and thus deliverance from God's just condemnation the moment he/she, by faith, receives this deliverance as a free gift from God, John 1:12...

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

In addition to the preceding arguments for theism, Thomas Aquinas⁴⁴ argued from the standpoint of motion: (1) things do move [motion is the most obvious form of change]. (2) Change is a passing from potency to act [i.e., from potentiality to actuality]. (3) Nothing passes from potency to act except by something that is in act [for it is impossible for a potentiality to actualize itself]. (4) There cannot be an infinite regress of actualizers or movers [if there is no first mover, there can be no subsequent motion, since all subsequent motion depends on prior movers for its motion]. (5) Therefore, there must be a first un-moved mover [a pure act or actualizer with no potentiality in it which is unactualized]. (6) We understand this to be God.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), also **Thomas of Aquin** or **Aquino**, was an Italian Dominican friar and priest and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism, within which he is also known as the "*Doctor Angelicus*" and "*Doctor Communis*". "Aquinas" is from the county of Aquino, an area his family held land in until 1137. He was born in Roccasecca, Italy. He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology, and the father of Thomism. His influence on Western thought is considerable, and much of modern philosophy was conceived in development or opposition of his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law, metaphysics, and political theory.

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* in Great Books of The Western World. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Revised by Daniel J. Sullivan (William Benton, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, London, Toronto, 1952), Vol. I, 2, 3.

The Apostle Paul affirmed this precise conclusion when he reminded the Atheists that they were already aware that they were not self-actualized and that they had already conceptualized a first cause necessary Being. Paul also charged them with contradiction in attributing causality to created images which had been humanly actualized. Paul concluded that the only solution for man would be the incarnation of God in Christ for the purpose of resolving the conflict between the infinite love and infinite justice of Himself. Paul affirmed that this conclusion had been empirically substantiated in the time, space, history resurrection of Christ in the presence of objective eye witnesses, Acts 17:22-31...

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.

Paul is taking the linear view of history [rather than the chaotic or cyclical views] which believes events to be providentially directed toward a particular end. Paul attributes the history of nations and their geographical boundaries to God's providence.

Paul began by presupposing theism on the basis of the same argument that many Greek poets had concluded theism in their search for a First Cause. One of his illustrations was the fourth line of a quatrain which has been preserved from a poem attributed to Epimenides the Cretan:

They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—The
Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies! But thou art not

dead; thou livest and abidest for ever; For in thee we live and move
and have our being.⁴⁶

Paul's other illustration is the fifth line of the *Phainomena* of Paul's fellow-Cilician, Aratus, which opens with the words: *Let us begin with Zeus*. Zeus, considered not as the ruling member of the traditional pantheon of Greek mythology but as the Supreme Being of Greek Philosophy...

Never, O men, let us leave him unmentioned...all ways are full of
Zeus and all meeting-places of men; the sea and the harbours are
full of him. In every direction we all have to do with Zeus; for we
are also his offspring^{47 48}

Paul spoke of the outraged holiness of God which demands justice when he affirmed that this same God will judge the world in righteousness. This is a reference to the righteousness of God which leaves the world condemned. Paul is also implying God's solution to this condemnation as having been actualized in real, objective, linear, human history and confirmed by a supernatural resurrection, II Corinthians 5:21...

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we
might become the righteousness of God.

In conclusion, we must be careful not to assert that theism should be imposed upon anyone simply because it is undeniably logical and because the other world views mentioned in this chapter are self-defeating and unaffirmable. We believe that theism does its best work in an arena of free thought. However, we are affirming that a Christian theist can feel very confident in such an arena as he contends for the time, space, history character of his Christian/theistic world view, warranted by the empirical incarnation and resurrection of God Himself in the *the Christ event*.

We must also be careful to mention that our undeniable conclusion [that a God such as the one described in the Bible does exist] is not an affirmation that the Bible is inspired by this God or is inerrant. This will be affirmed and warranted in a later chapter of this paper.

⁴⁶ The quatrain is quoted in a Syriac version by the 9th century commentator Isho'dad (cf. M.D. Gibson, *Horae Semiticae* X [Cambridge, 1913], p. 40). Isho'dad was probably dependent on Theodore of Mopsuestia. He describes these words as addressed by the Cretan Minos to his father Zeus in protest against the Cretan's claim that they could point out the tomb of Zeus. The second line of the quatrain is the hexameter quoted in Titus 1:12, which according to Clement of Alexandria (*Miscellanies* i. 14. 59. 1f) comes from a work by Epimenides. This work might be the poem on Minos and Rhadamanthys ascribed to Epimenides by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Philosophers* i, 112). These lines of Epimenides were probably imitated by Callimachus in his *Hymn to Zeus*, where he says (lines 7f.): *The Cretans are always liars: for the Cretans, O King, actually fashioned a tomb for thee. But thou hast not died; thou livest forever*. The line quoted by Paul can, with little difficulty, be given hexameter form; Cod. De spoils the rhythm by adding *day by day* after *have our being*.

⁴⁷ These last words quoted from Aratus may have been borrowed from a similar expression in line 4 of Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*. K. Lake (*Beginnings* V, p. 247) points out that the immediately following lines of Aratus's poem have a strong resemblance to v. 26 of the *Areopagitica*.

⁴⁸ Footnotes 33 & 34 were taken from the footnotes of F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), pp. 359, 360.

