

## **I. The Over-Arching Method: Scripturalism**

## **II. Apologetics from Greek word *απολογία* – to give a defense**

Uses in the courts of ancient Greece of one's defense. Used by Paul before King Agrippa in Acts: "My defense...."

A. Key verse: 1 Peter 3:15

## **III. Centrality of Scripture ("we are people of the Book")**

A. To defend and further the Gospel

1. Philippians 1 - Verses 5,7,12,17,27 (to further and defend the Gospel is a goal of apologetics)

b. Centered on Jesus Christ

## **IV. An all-encompassing worldview centered on Scripture, the Gospel and Jesus Christ**

A central mantra of the American Revolution "No King but Christ!" Relevant to all of life (i.e. education, work, the arts, science, etc.).

He is the *principium* of all life.

Colossians 1:16-18 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Cf. Acts 17:28 for in Him we live and move and exist....

Brings up a difficult philosophical/theological question: "Does God exist in the world or does the worlds exist in God?"

## **V. Positive and negative aspects: defending and proclaiming**

Everyone's responsibility to contend for the faith and defend it (cf. Jude 3). This relates even to so-called "Christian" views that do not comply with Scripture.

God doesn't think in multiple, conflicting truths.

## VI. Historical Considerations

### A. Apologetics changed over time

Apologetics originally dealt with criticisms of the Christian faith, namely as the faith developed in the early post-apostolic church (accusations against Christ, the apostles, apostolic doctrine, etc.). Apologetics then moved toward a positive proclamation of the faith:

“They [apologetics] were primarily defenses of the Christian faith attempting to remove the various materials, by which we mean arguments or reasons, which support the truthfulness of the Christian belief. Eventually, the transition took place in which it became apparent the main burden of Christian apologetics was to set forth the positive grounds for Christian faith, not to answer just accusations. This does not mean that apologetics, or defenses of the Christian faith, have ceased to exist. Christian apologetics, as they reply to the critics of Christianity, is an activity that pervades the whole history of Christian thought, even until the present time in which books of this nature are still being written.” [Bernard Ramm, 26 minute mark]

A defense/offense against worldly philosophies and for Christianity which is the only logical and acceptable world-in-life view. Every other system is flawed and faulty.

### B. Back to the centrality of Scripture and theology

#### 1. Mandate of 2 Corinthians 10:4–5

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

How do we accomplish this? Through the Word of God. Taking every thought captive to the mind of God. This is all-encompassing. Theology is foundational. We must know what and why we believe what we do. Theology is the “queen of the sciences.”

The role of apologetics as given by Gerstner, Sproul, and Lindsley in their book, *Classical Apologetics*:

“Apologetics, the reasoned defense of the Christian religion, is the job of every Christian. It explains why Christians are Christians and why non-Christians should be Christians. If theology is the queen of the sciences apologetics must be her handmaiden. It introduces people to the Queen and demonstrates Her Majesty.” [31:30 mark]

## **VII. Apologetics addresses all areas of thought and life**

Philosophy, Epistemology, Cosmology, Ontology, Ethics, Politics/Law, History.

Apologetics relates to the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28.

“Apologetics is considered to be more philosophical. It discusses broad fundamental principles: the existence of God as distinct from the universe – and therefore some discussion of the physical universe itself. The possibility of knowing God, including the question of revelation and the nature of man and his needs are standard topics.” [Gordon Clark, 33 min. mark]

## **VIII. Apologetics defined by Dr. Talbot:**

“Apologetics may be defined as that branch of Christian theology which gives philosophical expression and clarification to the total Christian system of truth, and life, over against all forms of non-Christian philosophical claims of truth and knowledge, with special reference to various specific attacks against the Christian faith.”

1 Timothy 6:20–21:

20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

We need to know the opposing philosophical and world-of-life views with the goal of demonstrating the superiority of a thoroughly Christian worldview.

## I. The Contemporary Necessity of Apologetics

A. We are in an era of post-Christian thinking

“That the western mind is sickened to death and that western culture and civilization to which it gave birth are in serious danger of collapse are facts that have become so evident that few observers are prepared to dispute this conclusion and argue for their vitality.”  
[Greg Singer]

Western society did not shape Christianity; Christianity shaped western society - particularly through the after-effects of the Reformation.

1. Our day is much like that described in Habakkuk 1:2-5

2 How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, “Violence!” Yet Thou dost not save. 3 Why dost Thou make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. 4 Therefore, the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, justice comes out perverted.

2. Os Guinness cites three causes of the problems of our day:

1) The erosion of the Christian basis of western culture; 2) The failure of optimistic humanism; The failure of the counter-culture movement of the 60s to provide an alternative to either Christianity or humanism. No God = no meaning, no purpose.

B. Secular humanism and the church

1. The majority within a culture cannot form the basis for ethics and morality

Not a “democratic” decision. Must be God’s Word that provides the foundation, the basis, the absolute.

The church today is becoming more like a commercial organization than that which ought to be founded on the teaching of Scripture; from being concerned that God is satisfied with its worship to a concern about being exciting enough to draw the masses into the church. Secular Humanism has a god: Man; redemption: scientific empiricism; eternal life and immortality with man the measure of all things.

2. Christians once led in education

First 106 universities and colleges were genuine Christian institutions. They gave all become secularized and are no different than any other secular educational institution.

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Notes to Lecture 2: The Necessity of Apologetics

Empiricism has dominated the apologetic of the church from the time of Thomas Aquinas. This is one reason why the church has failed – see for example the Darwinian controversy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the majority of the church capitulated to the compromise of theistic evolution (due to a common commitment to empiricism). [Note: Dr. T's commitment to CRI view of the Genesis creation account].

The church must re-think its apologetical method if it is to survive into/beyond the 21st c. The arts and sciences, education, all of life is to be defended from a Christian worldview based on the absolute of the Scripture.

The church today is much like that of Sardis: alive but dead:

Revelation 3:1–4 1 "AND to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. 3 'Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you. 4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.

C. The four-fold task of apologetics:

1) Theological; 2) Philosophical; 3) Evangelistic; 4) Cultural.

## **I. The Four-Fold Task of Apologetics**

### A. Theological Task

1. Foundational – we must know what we believe in order to defend it
  - a. The need for a good systematic theology
  - b. Orthodoxy and orthopraxy
  - c. World-changing

“It’s one thing to talk about changing the world, it’s another thing to change it.” [Marx]

True also of our apologetic – we have a goal to change the world for Jesus Christ.

- d. Bad theology in the church

### B. Philosophical Task

1. Theology is the queen of the sciences and philosophy is her handmaiden
2. Know who the enemy is, what he believes, what he teaches

Each system claims to be true. We need to understand them in order to refute them.

2. Properly formulate a system that addresses the various departments of the philosophical encyclopedia

Need for consistency in all areas of our worldview:

Epistemology,

Ontology,

Cosmology,

Ethics,

Axiology (from αξιολογία – value = the study of value, what is fitting, valuable)

We address what it means to know and serve God in all of life.

3. Develop a methodological approach to combat attacks against the Christian faith by non-Christian thinkers

Our philosophy must be consistent with our theology and flow out of it.

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### Notes to Lecture 3: The Four-Fold Task of Apologetics

Colossians 2:8–9 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

Cannot Christianize the secular way of thinking / secular philosophies. Must be adept at defending the truth using a thoroughly Christian philosophy. Must be honest in representing false views.

#### C. Evangelistic Task

The goal – to proclaim the Gospel that sinners might be saved. This encompasses the whole counsel of God. The Bible from cover to cover. Conversion of the people is the only means by which governments and cultures are transformed. Matthew 28:18-20. Evangelism includes teaching the whole counsel of God.

#### D. Cultural Task

1. This is the culmination of the first three tasks

a. If the first three tasks succeed, the fourth will occur!

b. There is only one culture: that which is founded on the Word

Part of the creation mandate, to subdue the earth. This is bringing every thought captive to Christ. Cultural reform is by redemption. Revolution changes nothing; redemption changes everything.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

## **I. Systematic Theology and the Theological Framework for Apologetics**

### A. Doctrine of Scripture

#### 1. God reveals His thought (singular) to us as thoughts (plural)

He has only ONE thought, but He reveals that to us in propositional thoughts. All knowledge comes from God.

#### 2. Inspiration and Inerrancy

##### a. Verbal Plenary Inspiration (1 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

(1) Importance of preaching and teaching in the local church

(2) Errors: Dictation theory; Partial inspiration; etc.

#### 3. The absolute standard of Scripture

a. It is the very Word of God

b. It is the rule of life, faith and practice

#### 4. Biblical Authenticity

The reason why we are to uphold the Bible as the standard is because God says it is His Word. It is based on God's authority. It is self-authenticating. Not dependent on any man, church, outside evidences. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:13; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16.

We believe the testimony of God's Word because He has revealed that truth to us by means of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 John 2:20,27).

God knows Himself perfectly, but not infinitely, for if His knowledge of Himself was infinite then He would not know Himself perfectly (cf. process theology).

#### 5. The Sufficiency of Scripture

a. The Bible teaches us as to:

1. God's glory

2. Salvation (what is required to be redeemed)

3. Faith (what we are to believe - Jude 1:2)

4. How we are to live to God's glory

b. Westminster Confession:

IV. The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and the government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

6. Illumination of Scripture (the Spirit in applying God's Word to our hearts)

7. Perspicuity of Scripture

“Perspecuity” = “Lucidly present, expressed, to see through or clearly.” Not all things are equally clear (cf. Peter's statement about Paul's letters).

8. God's Word is a divine law to be obeyed (Psalm 1:1ff.)

## I. The Final Authority of Holy Scripture

### A. WCF - 1.10

“The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.”

### B. Scripture is the highest and ultimate authority for all of life

1. Negatively: No body of men authorized to bind men to the Scripture - Only Christ can bind the heart of man - he does so by the Word
2. Positively: The Scriptures are the only authoritative voice for the individual within the church

### C. Creeds and Confessions

1. They are binding only in so much as they reflect the teaching of Scripture

### D. Simplicity and Authority

“Apostolic simplicity” = the plain teaching of Scripture. Cf. Matt. 22:29 (“you do err not knowing the Scripture”).

“Faith is based on God’s own testimony about Jesus Christ.” There is no other authority upon which we are to place our faith and hope.

## II. The Doctrine of God

### A. The Nature and Being of God

1. True knowledge of God comes by way of the Scriptures

The Bible does not exhaust the knowledge of God - it is inexhaustible. However, the Bible is sufficient for all we are to know.

- a. Univocal voice of Scripture (contra analogical)
- b. This is acquired knowledge - acquired from God alone

2. God’s infinite perfections

How does one define God? God can be defined only through the Scriptures - what He says about Himself.

a. Incommunicable attributes of God

(1) Independence / self-existence (God is autonomous; man is not)

Hegel wrongly claimed that God was an idea that existed in the mind of man. Therefore, God is dependent on man for His very existence. If man ceases to think of God, God ceases to exist (Cf. Nietzsche and the “death of God” movement).

(a) God is independent in His will

He does as He pleases and He cannot be thwarted (Daniel 4:35).

(b) God is independent in His counsel

(c) God is independent in all things which exist (Isa. 40:18)

(2) Immutability (Malachi 3:6)

(3) Infinity

Everything that belongs to His being is without measure or quality

(a) His absolute perfection (Psa. 145:3)

(b) His eternity (Psalm 92, 102:12)

(c) Immensity / Omnipresence (Psalm 139)

This speaks of God’s relationship to space and time.

(4) Simplicity: God is not a composite being and cannot be divided

God is a spirit in His essence (John 4:24).

b. Communicable attributes

(1) Knowledge (Isaiah 46:10)

God’s knowledge is immediate and not progressive. He knows everything past, present and future at once. He alone is omniscient.

Non-soteriological foreknowledge denotes God’s knowledge of something in eternity that has not occurred in the future. Soteriological foreknowledge refers to God’s intimate love knowledge of sinners whom He has chosen to be redeemed.

(2) Wisdom (Eph. 1:11-12; Col. 1:16)

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Notes to Lecture 5: The Doctrine of God

God always chooses the best means to those ends He has decreed. God's wisdom can be seen in His: 1) Creation (Psa. 19:1-7); 2) Providence (Psa 33:10-11; Rom. 8:28); 3) Redemption (Eph. 3:1-10)

(3) Goodness (Psa 36:6)

(4) Love

God's love of complacency which is His delight in the contemplation of His own infinite perfection.

(5) Grace (Eph 1:8-10)

Grace as salvific; there is nothing in the grace of God that applies to all men. Goodness applies to all men. Nothing can be done to merit or deserve God's grace.

(6) Mercy (Rom 9:16-17)

(7) Long suffering - He bears with evil (Romans 9:22)

*b. Communicable attributes, continued*

(8) Holiness

“Holiness is that perfection of God in virtue through which He eternally wills and maintains His own moral excellence.”

(9) Righteousness

“Righteousness is that perfection of God by which He maintains Himself over against every violation of His holiness and shows in every respect that He is the Holy One.”

(a) Three aspects of God’s righteousness:

1) God’s Rectoral Justice. God is ruler over both good and evil. He imposes a just law over all men and rewards the righteous while punishing the wicked (Isa 33:2).

2) God’s Remunerative Justice. God manifests Himself in the distribution of rewards for obedience (Psa 58:11).

3) God’s Retributive Justice. God sets forth penalties for disobedience as an expression of divine wrath (Rom 2:9).

(10) Veracity

God is always truthful, faithful and consistent in all He does. 2 Timothy 2:13. He is truth and His Word is truth (John 17).

(11) Sovereignty (Dan 4:35; Rev 4:11; Jam 4:15; etc.)

(a) Secret will (God’s will of decree)

(b) Preceptive will (that which is revealed in the Scripture)

(c) Cf. Deut 29:29

God’s will is perfectly free. He acts out of no compulsion, but out of his free will in keeping with his nature - Psalm 115:3.

3. The Trinity of God

God is One in one sense and Three in another. One in substance; three in person.

Ontological Trinity vs the Economical Trinity.

a. Distinctions

The Father generates the Son, the Son is generated from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

4. Decree of God (Eph 1:11; Psa 33:11)

5. Providence of God (related to His decree)

That work of God by which he preserves all of his creation; actively guiding all that transpires unto their appointed ends (Psa 103:19; Heb 1:3). There is nothing that God does not rule over.

### III. The Doctrine of Man

#### A. Views as to the Essential Elements of Man

1. Dichotomy (body and soul/spirit)

a. Monothomism (“one Adam”): Man is a whole being

b. Genesis 2:7

2. Trichotomy (body, soul, spirit)

a. Popularized by Plato

#### B. Origin of the Soul

1. Creationism (Augustine)

2. Traducianism

3. Preexistenionism (the soul is recycled and has preexisted)

a. Also popularized by Plato

#### C. Image of God

Man is the crown of God’s handiwork, created in God’s image and likeness. WCF: Man is a rational being, created immortal, endowed with knowledge, righteousness and holiness (cf. Genesis 1:26-27).

#### D. Sin (Genesis 3)

1. WCF 6:1-6

1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

## 2. Necessity of Regeneration (John 3)

### a. Covenant of grace (WCF 7:3-4)

In the Old Testament, this is seen in the Promise given to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. A promise fulfilled in Christ alone: Ephesians 1:3-4. (Note, that believers are elected into Christ.) Cf. the covenant of works, redemption. The purpose of Pentecost in Acts 2 was the fulfillment of the New Covenant.

## IV. The Doctrine of Christ

### A. WCF 8:1

1. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people, to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

1. See Ephesians 1:3 ff.

## V. The Doctrine of Salvation

### A. WCF 14:1-2

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word, by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

2. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

### B. Saving faith: a work of the Spirit enabling the sinner to believe the Gospel

#### 1. Regeneration precedes faith

Faith and repentance are a monergistic work of God (Eph 2:1-9; 2 Tim 1:9). Faith is the instrumental cause. God is the first cause in redemption (cf. John 1:12).

### C. Justification

#### 2. Justification is a forensic term: a judicial declaration

Justification affects the state of the sinner, not the existential condition (as in Romanism). Therefore, it is essential to differentiate justification and sanctification. They cannot be confused. Justification is a work wholly outside of the individual that occurs once. Sanctification is progressive.

### C. Sanctification

This is a gracious work of the Spirit where He purifies the sinner from sin and renews his nature into the image of God enabling him to perform good works. Sanctification cannot be totally divorced from justification. Where justification has truly occurred, sanctification will follow. Sanctification is the necessary fruit of the Holy Spirit.

1. Negatively: the mortification of the old man (Col 3:5 ff.; Galatians 5)

2. Positively: the active putting on of the new man (Rom 6:1-23)

### D. Perseverance (John 10:28-29)

## I. Definition of Philosophy

### A. Literally: Love of Wisdom

Wisdom is the right use and exercise of knowledge. Therefore, philosophy deals with the issue of epistemology. The history of philosophy has focused on who man is in light of the world around him.

### B. From the words of the Philosophers themselves

#### 1. Pythagoras (571-496 BC)

He was a mathematician and a mystic who was born in Ionia but spent most of his time in southern Italy. He was the first individual to use the word “philosophy.” For Pythagoras, philosophy was directly related to soteriology: the salvation of man (hence his mysticism).

#### 2. Socrates (469-399 BC)

Socrates was from Athens and spent his life there. No extant works of his exist today. What we know of Socrates we know from his pupil, Plato. His focus in philosophy was self-knowledge by conceptual clarity. The goal in life is self-knowledge; knowing who one is as the primary goal in life. Hence his famous dictum: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” His was the pursuit of epistemological self-consciousness.

#### 3. Plato (427-347 BC)

Plato was born to an aristocratic family in Athens. He established the first philosophical institute called “the Academy.” For Plato, philosophy was the discovery of truth, or reality: to know what is true, or real; and a love of truth based on a knowledge of reality. According to Alfred North Whitehead, Plato was first among the philosophers and every other philosopher is a footnote on Plato. He was an Idealist.

#### 4. Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Aristotle was Plato’s foremost student, he was born in northern Greece. While in Macedonia he tutored Alexander the Great. He maintained that philosophy is a discipline concerned with the investigation of the causes and principles of things. He was very much

concerned with logic. He is also the father of inductive reasoning (reasoning from the effect to the cause).

#### 5. Neoplatonists

Followers of Plato, Neoplatonism was a school of thought, based in Alexandria, that focused on his writings. Plotinus (AD 204-270) is considered to be the founder of Neoplatonism. The goal: man in union with the divine. This took place by means of “intermediaries” which came from the divine by means of emanation. Reality is a series of grades from the divine to the material. Man desires union with the divine (comes by way of being less materialistic and more spiritual). This manifested itself in monasticism and to a lesser extent, Pietism, by which Christians removed themselves from the world. This is still seen today. (Note that Augustine was influenced by the Neoplatonists.)

#### 6. Thomas Aquinas (b. AD 1225)

Aquinas was born in Naples. He studied under the Benedictines and the Dominicans, before finally joining the Benedictine Order in 1243. He held a professorship at the University of Paris. He was considered the great thinker of his generation. He was a follower of Aristotle and brought Aristotelianism into the Roman Catholic Church, replacing much of the Augustinianism that dominated the church prior to that.

Philosophy, for Aquinas, is the pursuit of the truth of a world controlled by God. He was an Empiricist; when he speaks of reason he does so on an empirical basis. We must proceed on the basis of faith, which for him was not a part of reason. This was later championed by Soren Kierkegaard in the 19th century.

#### 7. Rene Descartes (b. AD 1591)

Philosophy is the elucidation of ultimate truth. When truth is pursued to its ultimate state, certainty of one’s existence is solved, hence “Cogito ergo sum” (I think therefore I am). He borrowed that from Augustine. They were both epistemological self-conscious individuals: through self-consciousness one has a knowledge of self. This is to be rejected in favor of

Scripturalism: a knowledge of our existence comes from a knowledge of God, not from a pursuit of what is in man.

As for the Imago Dei, Dr. Talbot states:

“Yes, there is a consciousness, but it’s not of my existence, it is of the God who created me. And then from the special revelation I gain a knowledge of my existence. Very important; my knowledge all proceeds from God, not from me. Nor can I access or understand myself apart from the God that’s revealed in the Scriptures, an impossibility, especially as a result of sin . . .”

8. John Locke (c. 1632-1704)

Locke’s thought was influential in the founding of America, but not nearly so as John Calvin. Locke was born in England, exiled to Holland, and returned to England toward the end of his life. For Locke, philosophy required an analysis of the ideas “of which our mind is stocked.”

Goal: unpack these ideas and understand them.

9. Hegel (1770-1831)

Born at Stuttgart, he spent his life tutoring at the University of Bern and Frankfurt. Goal: deduce basic ideas to understand the nature of things.

10. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Born in Baden Germany and professor of philosophy Marberg University and later Freeberg University. The object of philosophy is to rediscover the meaning of being (ontology). From understanding the meaning of being one may understand the meaning of life.

11. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)

He was born in Vienna, served as professor of philosophy at Oxford. He held that philosophy is the disease of which philosophy is the cure. Maintained that philosophy is the science of sciences; the criticism and organization of all knowledge.

C. Summary

This how, as a summary, the world is viewed by secularists (with the exception of Aquinas). Most of philosophy follows Plato and Aristotle. Among secular philosophers there are two basic schools of thought: Rationalists and Empiricists. (Even Irrationalism is related to

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Notes to Lecture 8: Introduction of Philosophy

Empiricism.) Note that most all philosophers and philosophy courses begin with the question of God.

D. For the Christian the Authority (and starting place) is the Bible (the axiom)

The wisdom and knowledge of God comes from Scripture and subsequent a knowledge of Christ (1 Cor 1:24; Col 1:16-19). Ultimately, this depends on a true, redeemed knowledge (1 Cor 2:14).

## I. Common Objections to the Study of Philosophy

### A. Among Christians

#### 1. Neo-Fundamentalists and Ant-Intellectuals

These tend to shun higher education in general, especially a study of the liberal arts. Many viewed the liberalization of universities (especially Christian schools) in the early 20th century and came to disdain all higher education. (TAB: I would add that there was also a negative reaction to German higher-criticism and Darwinism.) The Bible College movement began and many of these were stripped of liberal arts studies and were little more than glorified Sunday School classes.

#### 2. So-Called Neutral Christians (Evangelical Humanists)

These would encourage the study of philosophy, but with an open-mind, understanding that the world is filled with many truths. Don't be biased; rather, be neutral. This view would encourage that when one subjects like philosophy, one must leave behind the Christian sphere of life and all Christian presuppositions. Then, after having studied philosophy, reconcile (synthesize) those claims with those of the Bible. This was the approach of Thomas Aquinas.

### B. Among Non-Christians

Christians must approach the subject of philosophy from the standpoint of neutrality, as they claim to do so. These reject Christianity, summing it all up as an existential reality.

#### 1. The myth of neutrality

##### a. There is no such thing as neutrality (Clark, Dooyeweerd)

“Every philosophy which claims a Christian starting point is confronted with the traditional dogma concerning the autonomy of philosophical thought, implying its independence of all religious presuppositions. The acceptance of autonomy of theoretical thought has been elevated to an intrinsic condition of true philosophy--without having been justified by critical inquiry into inner structure and the theoretical attitude of thought itself. So long as the belief in human theoretical reasons as the ultimate judge in matters of truth and falsehood goes unchallenged, this belief could be accepted as a theoretical axiom. This means the assertion that autonomy is the primary condition of philosophical thought all the more problematic in so far as it is maintained in the present situation of western philosophy.” [Herman Dooyeweerd]

(1) Neutrality is itself a presupposition

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2. A false dichotomy between the sacred and secular

The Roman Catholic church operates under this dichotomy. This is why they make no dogmatic statements about scientific issues - they see these as secular.

II. A Question of Authority

For the believer, there is no debate that the only authority is the Word of God. Therefore, we are to be intellectually in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24-30; Colossians 1:16-19, 2:3). 2

Corinthians 10:5: we are to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ!

## I. The Nature of Philosophical Inquiry

### A. Goals

1. Further our understanding of all reality
2. Defend the faith over against all competing thought
3. Develop a personal conviction about the nature of life, it's purpose and meaning, as given by God
4. Develop who we are in Christ as it relates to our world
  - a. To be active citizens
5. Develop a system of thought that helps others in theirs
6. Contribute to the furtherance of philosophical thought
  - a. *Semper Reformanda*

### B. Basic Approaches

#### 1. Historic or Traditional Approach

A chronological study of those who have developed philosophical thought through the ages. Words and concepts (Eg. "empiricism") have historical context.

#### 2. Issues Approach

Many introduction to philosophy courses follow this approach: ethical issues, etc.

Problem is that this approach generally does not adequately address the history of philosophical thought.

#### 3. Conceptual Approach

##### a. Defined:

"This approach seeks to explicate in definitive research the ideas and meanings of various departments of the encyclopedia of philosophical study. This allows for us an approach in which we will deal with the basic issues of philosophical thought as they have been developed in history."

## II. Philosophical Departments

### A. Epistemology (theory of knowledge)

Epistemology investigates the origin, structure, method and validity of knowledge. Was apparently first used by J.F. Ferrier (The Institutes of Metaphysic, published in 1854) who

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developed two branches of philosophy: 1) Ontology; 2) Epistemology. Prior to Ferrier, the two branches were combined. Separating them was a key development in philosophy.

#### B. Ontology / Metaphysics

This is the theory and nature of being. The first question that is generally addressed is, “Is there a God?” (And how can we, or can we, know that Being?) This is the science of fundamental principles about nature or being. The term “metaphysics” means “that which comes after physics” (coined by Aristotle) and deals with ultimate reality; causes, or first causes first in the natural order, or first principles as being understood by natural powers (relates to cause and effect).

#### C. Cosmology

Addresses the order and structure of the universe: its creation, eternity, mechanisms, nature of laws, space, time, and causality.

“The task of cosmology can be distinguished from that of ontology by a difference of level. The cosmological analysis seeks to discover what is true for this world and the ontological analysis attempting to discover relations and distinctions which should be valid in any world.” [W.L. Reese]

#### D. Logic

Addresses the issues of valid reasoning; the systemization and study of notions relative to it, and the study of relations that follow from, or are consequences, of others. Logic is correct thinking, or reasoning; the validity of an argument. Logic also is the study of the principles of deductive inference as it relates to a rational demonstration of a valid argument. (But even formally valid arguments may be false.) Note the law of noncontradiction: truth will not contradict itself. Logic is not man-made, it is derived from the eternal nature of God. Our knowledge does not come from logic, as in rationalism. Our knowledge comes from God.

#### E. Ethics (sometimes referred to as “moral philosophy”)

Addresses value judgments (goodness or badness; good vs evil; right vs wrong).  
Axiological ethics are ethics based on values (value judgements)--that which is deemed valuable, or desirable.

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#### F. Aesthetics

The department of philosophy that examines beauty in art, music, etc. What makes music desirable or good? What makes art beautiful, proper? What is an aesthetic experience. What about the world (sunsets, landscapes, etc.)?

#### G. Political

Political philosophy asks, “What is the philosophical justification for the existence of the state?” Examines the role of family, education, religion, caste systems, justice.

#### H. Other Related Areas of Study

Philosophy of history; Philosophy of science; Philosophy of religion; Philosophy of law and politics; Philosophy of language; Philosophy of education; Philosophy of mind (philosophical approach to psychology); Philosophy of the natural sciences; etc.

## I. Rationalism

### A. Defined

“Rationalism is the theory that all knowledge can be deduced from logic alone by way of pure reason apart from sensory experience and revelation.”

#### 1. Propositions apart from revelation or experience

### B. Reason Understood Different Ways by Different Philosophical Camps

#### 1. All epistemic methods rely on reason to one extent or another

- a. Rationalism: thought constructed through logical construction
- b. Empiricism: thoughts resulting from sensory experience
- c. Christianity: does not discount logic or reason

### C. Rationalism is Structured on the basis of a Deductive Method of Logic

#### 1. A Priori

Knowledge is drawn, or deduced, from a principle, or many principles. Rationalism is sometimes referred to as the *a priori* method. The investigator relies upon the intellectual or rational capacity of man himself apart from the aid of any sensory evidence to discover truth. Mathematics is one example in that all truth, according to the rationalist, can be attained by the same means as the discipline used in mathematics. Knowledge originates within man: the criterion for truth comes from an innate knowledge. Man is not dependent upon any other being for knowledge, it comes from the mind of man alone. It is the ability to think apart from sensory experience or revelation. Thus, man is autonomous.

### D. In Theology

“In theology, rationalism has been present throughout man’s history. But it is more evident in modern thought. This means that man’s natural abilities are to be used exclusively in the formulation of religious beliefs. There is no reliance on the authority of revelation. Nothing but man’s own reason. Human reason is considered fully competent to discover and to define religious belief without any supernatural aid or divine revelation. In religion, rationalism may take the form of liberalism or anti-supernaturalism such as humanism or agnosticism.” [Warren Young]

E. The source of truth and knowledge comes from the innate property of logic alone

F. Development

1. Plato: the greatest proponent of rationalistic thinking

Plato believed that all knowledge is innate in the mind of man. This was obtained by the soul in a preexistent state. The world of matter is constantly changing. Nothing remains the same. What the eye sees is not reality. Heraclitus (535-475 BC) long before Plato said that no man can step into the same river twice. In the realm of sensation man is cognitively capable of gaining opinion, but not true knowledge. The five senses are not capable of discerning reality. True knowledge must be changeless; thus, true knowledge cannot be attained by the senses. The innate intellect alone can apprehend the immutable, the world of ideas. This is the level that scientific, or true knowledge can be reached. The soul contains true knowledge, but that knowledge has become encumbered by natural lusts and desires. The senses are easily deceived. Examples: parallel roads coming together in the distance; colors looking different under different lighting conditions; larger objects appearing to be smaller than those that are truly smaller. Therefore, we cannot go to sensory perceptions for truth. What we can rely on are unchangeable ideas.

a. Plato's three classes of society:

(1) Philosopher Kings

(2) Military

(3) Peons (the rest)

b. Relativism

Plato's thought as it pertained to perceptions was relativistic. Each person's perception of reality is true for them, therefore, they are all equally true. A teacher can teach a student nothing by way of the senses, as each one has their own reality.

c. Key point: all empiricism leads to skepticism

d. Correspondence theory of knowledge

Only innate ideas are immutable truth. Plato's concept of truth means that there is to be a correspondence of one's ideas with the facts of the universe. What is in the mind must

correspond to something (the mind of a tree must correspond to an actual tree). If a concept is true knowledge, it is true because it corresponds to an objective reality. Falsities have no such correspondence. The idea is that which gives form to reality, which has no reality in and of itself. The reality is in the unchanging concept. The thought in the mind is true knowledge.

(1) Plato's cave illustration

Inside the cave are people who are chained together, forced to look at the back wall of the cave. This, for Plato, is the real world. If a sheer screen was then erected at the back and a fire started for a light source, and if the people went behind the screen so that their images were projected onto the wall, those projections would be forms. The real world is like these shadows (forms). The forms are seen, but the reality is not.

(2) This is akin to idealism (the ideal exists in the mind alone)

e. Critique

In all correspondence theories you only know the forms, not the reality. There is no way to prove that the idea in the mind is the same as the form. This is the problem with analogical knowledge. You only know the analogy, not the true reality (or THE truth). It is self-refuting. There is no connection between the rational and the real.

(1) Compared to the Empiricist

(a) Rationalist: Idea to the Material (sensation)

(b) Empiricist: Material (sensation) to the Idea

2. Augustine

a. Caveat: Augustine was not a strict rationalist

He allowed for knowledge, revelation, and sensation as a means to determine truth. How does one know? Augustine contended it was from all three. However, is this possible? Can all three come to the same conclusion when they are all based on different theories?

“How do we allow for two sources of truth? That is, how do we have two sources of knowledge. The problem always remains of reconciling two or three sources of truth and knowledge. And does not this idea of two or more sources of knowledge exist in conflict?”

During the middle-ages there was a theory of a two-fold truth that allowed a man to believe in theology what he proved false in philosophy. In the present sensory, Emil Brunner proposed the possibility that a man as a believer could be certain that God (that is Christ) was crucified, while as a historian the same man could be uncertain that the event ever happened. . . .”

“But even if the two sets of truth do not conflict, there is a technical philosophical difficulty. The question is how to relate, combine, and unify them. This is really to ask whether two methods are permissible. If one conclusion is obtained by one method and is called knowledge, and if another conclusion is obtained by a different method, can the latter be ambiguously called knowledge too?” [Gordon Clark]

This is a problem with Augustine: his trifold method of obtaining knowledge. He started with logic and thus began with the wrong axiom. He argued that a person may know whether he is awake or asleep; he cannot help but know whether he is one way or the other. Thus, universal doubt (I doubt therefore I am) leads us to some knowledge (the doubting) hence it cannot lead to total skepticism as knowledge is possible.

“There is nothing more basic on which the axiom of logic depend. All explanation must use them. If an instructor explains a principle of economics, or of chemistry, or of what-not, he says ‘because such and such is true because.’ And then the instructor gives a reason from which the thing to be explained can be deduced or inferred. Therefore, logic cannot be explained, or proved, or deduced from anything else because it is absolutely and without exception basic.” [Gordon Clark]

#### b. Augustine’s *cogito* argument

Again, even if I don’t know whether I am asleep or awake, I do know that I am doubting--even doubting what I’m thinking. So I have a knowledge of my doubting. I know that I doubt so I am not left to absolute skepticism. Augustine argues that truth, or knowledge, is within man. Man has this innate knowledge because God has illuminated him. But Augustine goes from doubt to truth.

“Augustine in refuting the skeptics of his day turned what has now come through Descartes to be the famous argument from the soul’s thinking about thinking. It is *cogito ergo sum*, ‘I think therefore I am.’ But Augustine faced the sensationalist of his day who insisted that no changeless truth can be known since all comes from . . . sensations. He asked them do you exist. If they said ‘no’ Augustine’s position was correct. Because there was no one there to dispute it. If they said ‘yes,’ then Augustine reminded them that they refuted their own position by admitting that this truth that they know they exist could be known. This is called the argument of the *cogito*.” [Edward John Carnell]

c. Four implications of Augustine's *cogito* argument according to Carnell:

1) the argument detours our attention to the mind and from sensation, thus resulting in the implication that the source of all knowledge is not sensation but the mind.

2) Doubt, as an act of the intellect, was not something previously in the senses which contributes to it.

3) The *cogito* provides us with a knowledge of God. If we know what is true we must know what God is. The proof of God may be analogically set forth as the proof for logic.

4) The *cogito* allows us to make univocal predictions about God. To know ourselves is to know truth. God is truth therefore we know God.

We would add that rationalism cannot explain belief in God. One cannot argue from logic to truth.

2. *Augustine, continued*

d. Not a strict rationalist

Augustine is often considered a rationalist, but he was not a strict rationalist. He was trying to emphasize the fact that we have a knowledge of ourselves (an epistemic self-consciousness) therefore I know some truth. He argues from self-consciousness to the truth about God. This is the problem: his starting point. Logic is not the source of the truth.

3. Anselm (Archbishop of Canterbury)

a. "I believe in order to understand"

Anselm established his foundation upon Augustine's maxim: "I believe in order to understand." Gordon Clark writes:

"The doctrines of Christianity are revealed in Scripture and accepted as true by faith. Faith saves. If salvation depended on an understanding of philosophy, few would ever get to heaven. Nevertheless, understanding is a laudable aim and one increases in Christian virtue by increasing in understanding. But unless God first gives the revelation, and man first believes it, there would be nothing to understand. Therefore, I believe in order to understand."

b. Ontological argument

A concept of a person being must exist in reality as well as in the understanding. Otherwise, it could not be regarded as a perfect being. It's one thing for an object to be in the understanding; it is another for the being to exist. He used as an example, an artist may have the conception of an idea (to paint), but the idea doesn't yet exist in reality. After the task of painting has occurred, he has an understanding of what he has conceived, and an understanding that it exists.

"Hence even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding. At least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood exists in the understanding. And assuredly that than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot exist in the understanding alone. For suppose that it exists in the understanding alone? Then it can be conceived to exist in reality. Which is greater? Therefore, if that which nothing greater can be conceived exists in the understanding alone, the very being in which nothing greater can be conceived is one than which a greater being can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence there is no doubt that there exists a being than which nothing greater can be conceived and it exists in both the understanding and reality." [Anselm]

Summed up: nothing greater can be conceived than that which exists in the mind. If you can conceive of a great being which no greater can be conceived, you must believe that there is a correlation in reality of such a perfect being (ontological argument). There is an exact correspondence between idea and reality. How can that which does not exist be greater than that which does exist?

If you can conceive of God as the greatest possible being, then nothing greater can be conceived of. He exists in your mind as a conception which demands a correlation in reality.

c. Issues with the ontological argument of Anselm

(1) Rationalism

The correspondence theory cannot be demonstrated. (Which “god” is being conceived of in the mind?) Anselm believes that anything that exists in the mind must have a corresponding reality. This is fallacious reasoning.

(2) Problem with his method

Anselm alternates between using the Scripture and logic as the source for truth. That men have an idea of God does not prove the existence of the God of the Bible. Additionally, conception does not necessitate existence. In response, I. Kant said that both the teleological and cosmological arguments for the proof of God’s existence were dependent upon or presupposed upon the ontological argument. The axiom cannot simply be God exists; at least not apart from the revelation of Scripture. Kant further argued that all proofs of God that arise from natural theology (Eg. Aquinas) contain a leap from the assumed necessity of something to reality, or from the intellect to the substance. They never demonstrate how they go from the concept to the real. This is *fideism*: believing apart from a reason for the belief. We, however, have a reason to believe; God gave us a reason in His own words. God alone is autonomous; man is not and, therefore, cannot reason from himself to God.

## II. Empiricism

A. Defined: “All knowledge comes from experience of sensations alone”

Empiricism denies that any ideas are innate and sees the mind as a *tabula rasa* upon which the experiences of sensation are inscribed. Focuses on the inductive method of logic. We can never arise at an absolute, but only in probabilities as the world of sensation is in a constant state of change (Eg. “you can’t step in the same river twice”). Note also the inductive methods of science and the fact that science is always in a state of flux.

David Hume, himself an empiricist, asked, “What does the word probability mean in a world of chance?” How can one even speak of probability in a world that is always changing? Probability implies the possibility of an absolute, which Hume said was impossible. He declared that *probability in a world of chance is a meaningless something*. Empiricism, like rationalism, centers its meaning on man. Man is the autonomous judge of the evidence.

### B. History

1. Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535 - c. 475 BC) the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher

2. Aristotle (384 - 322 BC)

Aristotle may be seen as the father of empiricism. He was reacting to his teacher, Plato. Aristotle developed the concepts of logical deduction and induction. For Aristotle, sensory experience is necessary to demonstrate the eternal truths of reason (of which Plato spoke). Only through the experience does the intellect gain knowledge.

3. Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225 - 1274)

a. Known for “the Aquinian Theory of Empiricism”

He sought to prove the existence of God through sensory perception, arguing from the effect back to the cause (Eg. his “natural theology”). This is mere induction. Conversely, to argue from the cause to the effect is deduction. We argue from the Bible which reveals the cause, God, to the effects of His creation.

“Sense impressions are the only primary source of our knowledge, nor are there any notions within the natural range of experience infused into the mind by divine influence. Before the intellect has received the impressions of sense, it is a *tabula rasa*. Stimulation

of the senses by some object existing outside the organism is the necessary condition for the start of mental thinking.” [Thomas Aquinas]

The question becomes, “How do you go from the physical to the mental?” This is assumed, but not demonstrated in empiricism.

Aquinas held that, if a sense is lacking, a corresponding idea cannot be conceived in the mind. The sensory is essential. He also believed that reason alone can demonstrate the existence of God apart from revelation.

#### b. His Five Theistic Proofs for the Existence of God

##### (1) Argument from Motion

Motion is the change a thing undergoes from potency to act (from potential to actual). Unless one can trust his sense that motion is real, life is an illusion with no meaning. In order for a thing to go from potency to act, there must be an prime mover who causes the act--every act has to have a cause. This becomes a problem of infinite regression. For Aquinas, the answer is the necessity of a first mover: God.

This argument rests on unstated presuppositions: 1) that motion is real; 2) that the infinite God of the Bible is the first mover of finite things. This is Fideism (faith is independent of reason).

##### (2) Argument from Efficient Cause

Effects follow from an efficient cause, which cannot cause itself. There are intermediary causes but there must be a final, efficient cause: God. This too is Fideism.

##### (3) Argument from Contingency

All things are dependent for their being upon another, since they are capable of being or not being. But if everything cannot be, then, in infinite time, everything would not be. Nothing can come from nothing, therefore, nothing presently exists, which Aquinas said was ridiculous. Therefore, since there is being, there must be a first being who created being: God.

##### (4) Argument from Grades of Perception

Aquinas contended that his first three arguments account for the existence of God, but not His perfections. How can he argue, apart from revelation, that this God is a perfect being. He

does so by observation in nature: that we grade objects and concepts by degree of excellency (hence the adjectives, “good, better, best,” etc.). Apart from such superlatives, the comparisons have no meaning. A thing is known by that which is best. The best is the exemplary cause of the better--and this exemplary cause is God. The ultimate cause of perfection is God who alone is perfect.

(5) Argument from Teleology (Teleological Argument)

Experience tells us that nature is wisely managed, as bodies act out in specific ends. Since there is a rational order to things, there must be a corresponding “something” that causes this order. And as there must be a corresponding purpose, a cosmic mind must exist to bring about this order and purpose.

c. Critique

In addition to those things already noted (Eg. Fideism) it must be observed that one cannot argue from finite causes to an infinite God (apart from Divine Revelation). Absolute certainty cannot be gained by inductive means. Aquinas’ arguments devolve into irrationalism skepticism and despair. If we only know the idea / experience we do not know the real. Man is ultimately autonomous in this *a posteriori* system. See the next lecture which addresses further arguments against empiricism.

### C. Arguments Against Empiricism

#### 1. Empiricism ends in skepticism

If all the mind has to work with are sensory perceptions, knowledge can never rise to the universal and necessary (so Hume). From flux, only flux can come. One cannot come to immutable from the serial impressions of the mind. How we move from the physical to the intellectual must be demonstrated, supposed. An empiricist does not believe in presuppositions, however. Yet, the empiricist cannot demonstrate that which he believes. If everything is in a state of change you cannot know anything as it really is. Secondary experiences, or sensations, can never be the same as those that preceded them (all things are constantly changing). Therefore, empiricism ends with skepticism.

#### 2. The Principle of Economy

Hume asserted that the cause must be proportionate to the effect. The effects (and experiences) are all finite, so all one can argue for is a finite cause. Thus, the God of the Bible cannot be demonstrated.

#### 3. The Fallacy of Impartation

Aquinas sought to skirt the principle of economy by asserting that only some of God's attributes are demonstrated by the cause and effect argument. Thomas presupposes that the cause has greater perfections than those that are seen in the effect. This is fallacious reasoning on a purely empirical basis. One can speak of possibility--even probability--but this is meaningless in a world of flux (so Hume).

All experiences must be validated by God's Word, not sensory experiences. Anything else is possibility (or probability) which only can lead to doubt.

#### 4. The Fallacy of One God

Aquinas is arguing for one God on the basis of five proofs. Why one God? Why not five gods?

### 5. The Fallacy of Anticipation

Aquinas (and other theological empiricists) are coming to their conclusions with preexisting knowledge of revelation. It is easy to argue from revelation to experience, fitting the experience into the revelation. An empiricist cannot reverse that argument. Therefore, his axiom of sensory perception is faulty. Thomas has his answer (the true God) before he engages in his empirical evidences.

### 6. The Predicament of Commitment

Once one begins on a road toward a philosophical worldview, he must continue on that road to final conclusion. The road to empiricism only leads to the possibility of a finite god, not the Triune God of the Bible. One cannot accomplish this without revelation as the axiom.

### 7. Non-Empirical Presuppositions

To know the cause, one must first know the non-cause. Presuppositions are necessary--even for empiricists in order for them to perform empiricism!

### 8. Epistemic Clarity

Christians who wish to do philosophy must formulate a complete and consistent theory from its beginning to its end. Empiricists who want to demonstrate reality by means of perception have the task of first defining sensation. Show how sensation can become a perception and how memory images can produce universal concepts of abstraction. This they fail to do. No perceptions are the same, therefore, they cannot be universally defined.

In the Garden, men sought experience (eat) and disbelieved revelation. This was the first failure of empirical methodology. We are not called to prove God by means of empirical evidence--and we are not able to do so.

### III. Epistemological Irrationalism

#### A. Summary

The methods of the sciences are incapable of providing satisfactory knowledge. Uses the inductive method of reasoning to argue their position. Ultimately, life is meaningless and filled with despair.

#### B. Characters

##### 1. David Hume (b. 1711)

David Hume, a British Empiricist, moved toward irrationalism and skepticism toward the end of his life. Hume contended that all that men can be aware of is a series of impressions with no necessary relation to each other. When one looks at a tree and looks away, the tree that existed in his mind no longer exists (all things are constantly changing). When he looks back at the tree, it's not the same tree he saw before. The only basis we have for connecting disconnected experiences or events is our mental habits. There is no ground of justification for any belief (beliefs are irrational to the empiricist). Hence, there is no real basis for belief and we can't know if our beliefs are true. We can say we think something, but what we think is not what we know. Hume states that there is one habit that leads to the ordering of experiences causally: the relating of constantly conjoined sequences of sensations. Hume reduces empiricism to skepticism.

##### 2. Immanuel Kant (b. 1724)

Kant attempted to synthesize empiricism and rationalism. He provided for *a priori* or innate categories in the mind where the sensations of data could be organized. Empty categories (with no sensory input) lead to nothing; sensory input alone leads to skepticism: bring both *a priori* and *a posteriori* categories together in synthesis resulting in knowledge. The problem is, one cannot know the sensation (the object) before it is altered or categorized in the mind. Therefore, sensations are imprints of that which cannot be known. This is a paradox of asserting something that cannot be known.

##### a. Phenomenal vs Noumenal

The world exists in the realm of the phenomenal. This realm is known by the senses. Everything in this realm may be known. The noumenal realm is beyond the senses where God exists. Nothing can be known outside of the phenomenal realm, yet God is needed for people to have morality. God is necessary, and Kant assumes His existence, but his empiricist philosophy cannot demonstrate how he arrives at a theistic conclusion. He just assumes it to be true because it is necessary.

b. Kant invented the unknowable thing in itself to account for that which is given in our experience

### 3. Friedrich Schleiermacher (b. 1768)

Schleiermacher based religion on a non-rational religious feeling. Theological propositions are derived through an analysis of this feeling. For Schleiermacher, God is love--to the neglect of the rest of His attributes. (cf. "God is love theology" later championed by Barth.) This became the basis for modernism and humanism in the church. Schleiermacher was stuck with the problem of asserting an unknowable object.

### 4. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (b. 1770)

a. Resolution?

Hegel attempted to resolve Schleiermacher's conflict between the rational and non-rational as it pertained to God who dwells in an unknowable noumenal realm (and, therefore, cannot be known). He identified the key problem that one cannot assert what one cannot know. To assert that something is unknowable (and not just unknown) is to assert that there is something that exists which is self-contradictory.

b. God

God, for Hegel, is an idea. This idea is beyond the sensations and understanding. He exists in pure reason. God's distinctive characteristic is His knowledge of Himself. Self-consciousness is God's reality. Yet that self-consciousness exists in and through man. God needs man for His own reality! God's self-consciousness = man's knowledge of God. For Hegel, God exists because I choose to think God. If I choose to stop thinking God, He dies. But this is not

pure subjectivism, for Hegel deems the idea of God with exalted meaning. God is His own self-consciousness and He manifests Himself in reality via nature and logic, with the highest form of that reality being human self-consciousness (man's thinking ability).

The problem with empirical evidences for God's existence, according to Hegel, is that they assume He is transcendent. The identity of God is the totality of being (mono-ontological theory of reality). God is simply a name for the rationality of the world in its totality. Since men know they exist, there is no need to prove God's existence. Self-consciousness proves His being.

c. Hegelian Idealism Seeks to Establish the Following:

1. The introduction of rationalism into every aspect of existence, affirming that nothing is unknowable in itself. The rational is the real and the real is the rational. This is an utter rejection of Kant.

2. The proper development of the pattern of rationality which is the basic construct of thought. Hegel's thought pattern is known as the Triadic pattern, or Hegelian Dialecticalism. The event or idea creates its own opposite. This involves a conflict between an idea and its opposite. The conflict then must be resolved in a higher idea, which also suggests an opposite and another higher idea, etc. By logical necessity, thought and event must have the same pattern.

Thesis==>Antithesis==>Synthesis==>New Thesis==>Antithesis==>Synthesis==>New Thesis (repeat). This pattern is followed by Communism with the goal being the perfection of the state, as well as Hitler's philosophy by which he sought to bring about a perfect people. No wonder Francis Schaeffer called this "the line of despair."

5. Soren Kierkegaard (b. 1813)

a. Considered the father of modern and secular theological thought

(1) Francis Schaeffer asked:

“Why is it that Kierkegaard can so aptly be thought of as the father of both? What proposition did he add to Hegel’s thought that made the difference? Kierkegaard came to the conclusion that you could not arrive at synthesis by reason. Instead you achieve everything of real importance by a leap of faith.”

b. Faith divorced from reason

For Kierkegaard faith must be separated from the rational as it is neither rational nor logical. Kierkegaard held a theory of complete skepticism: nothing can be known with certainty. All knowledge is subjective. This is existentialism. Each perceives his own reality. Kierkegaard’s solution to man’s ignorance is to recognize man’s epistemological plight (skepticism). Epistemological knowledge through experience is impossible (and faith is illogical). Faith is the non-rational means by which man can reach God. But nothing can be proven.

c. There is no objective truth

However, it would be more probable to prove a finite god can be demonstrated more easily than an infinite God. To be absolutely sure of anything, one would have to demonstrate that it is absolutely false, which cannot be done in a changing world. Out of flux can only come flux. Therefore, man knows nothing.

d. Back to Kant’s Phenomenal vs Noumenal World

God (hypothetically) exists only in the noumenal world. To be known, He would have to escape the noumenal world and enter into the phenomenal world. But even if He did this, He could not be known as everything in the phenomenal world is changing!

“If we define God as an eternal, unchanging being, it may be possible if the definition is carefully contrived, to show that a proposition of the form God necessarily exists follows from that definition. But this process or procedure has no bearing on whether there is such a being in the world of our experience. It merely shows the logical relationship that exists between concept and conclusion. To state that God necessarily exists does not mean that God necessarily exists in reality. That’s why no presupposition beginning with the concept ‘God exists’ is valid. It only show that you have stated that God exists, but doesn’t prove that He exists in reality.”

e. A claim God exists only means that He does so in concept or conclusion

God cannot exist in time and space, for, to do so, would mean that He is changing. This bears on the doctrine of the incarnation--the infinite cannot become the finite. This is a liberal theologian's dilemma, one that Karl Barth tried to reconcile with a doctrine of two Christ's: one of history and one of eternity. The Christ of eternity must be believe upon for the work of justification. Liberals claim that this dilemma is a logical contradiction. Therefore, one must escape to the world of the noumenal. We are left with a choice of either skepticism, or an illogical leap of faith into the noumenal. This is existential subjectivism which is the philosophy of our world today.