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A Contemporary Defense of the Bible

Gordon H. Clark

Last evening I'm not sure I conformed entirely to the title that was advertised. I sorta skirted around it. But the title for this morning is *A Contemporary Defense of the Bible*. And I think I shall adhere to that title very rigidly since I'm going to talk about something that happened in 1973 which I think can still be called contemporary.

Dewey M. Beegle in a book *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility*. This book of Beegle's is an all-out, no-holds-barred, always aggressive, sometimes insidious attack on the truthfulness of Scripture. Its basic thesis, used both as an axiom and as a conclusion is the occurrence of indubitable errors in the Bible. This thesis is a conclusion when the author cites historical, archaeology, and critical inductions to support it. It also serves the author as a premise from which he deduces theological conclusion concerning inspiration, concerning the doctrines of the gospel, concerning the purpose of revelation, the nature of truth, and the attributes of God.

These subjects overlap and are repeated many times throughout the book. In spite of such inter-mixtures a sufficient separation can be made to give the criticism an appearance of logical form.

Nos the outline is this, of course I do have 47 pages typed. Do you think I can read 47 typed pages in three quarters of an hour? The outline is this.

The first section is the phenomena. A word that has come into hermeneutics more recently. In which I discuss Pekah, Jude, or he discusses them and I make replies, and then some historiographical considerations. I shall omit this completely to save time.

Incidentally, this lecture will be published, presumably in two parts, in the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society in the next two issues. Unless the editor welsches on his promise to me.

The second part is logical fallacies under which there are seven subheads of which I will not read to you at the moment. And third theology and philosophy, under which the subheads are the purpose of the Bible, truth, and the third subhead the two kinds of truths.

As I said I will skip the discussion of the Assyrian inscriptions with reference to the reign of Pekah. And my remarks on Jude I shall skip and take up some of the logical fallacies in Beegle's book.

In the process of attacking the truthfulness of the Bible, Beegle of necessity must go beyond the "bare facts." He must state the doctrine he opposes and he must construct arguments. This section now examines those arguments.

The first of which is Nelson Glueck. He is a good argument. The case of Nelson Glueck comes first, not by virtue of any logical priority over the succeeding points, but simply because it connects so directly with the previous archaeological and historical material which I have so conveniently omitted.

On pages 223-224 Beegle considers the evangelical contention that so many of the errors alleged by the liberals, such as the assertion that writing had not been invented in the time of Moses and the denial that there had ever been a Hittite nation and things like that. So many of the errors invented by the liberals have turned out to be no errors at all. That very likely and at least very possibly the present unsolved problems will not turn out to be errors either. In partial support of this view, evangelicals have recently cited the liberal Jewish scholar Nelson Glueck, who said, "It is worth emphasizing that in all this work no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single properly understood Biblical proposition." I think that is worth repeating. Nelson Glueck, a liberal Jewish theologian. "It is worthwhile emphasizing that in all this work no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single properly understood Biblical statement."

And then well the Evangelicals argue, if we get a problem we can't solve right away we have to wait for a year till someone digs it up. It will likely be no error at all.

Beegle's reply to this evangelical argument is a study in liberal evasion. Beegle questioned Glueck personally. This is a verbatim quotation from Beegle. "I questioned Glueck personally. The latter maintained that he had no intention of supporting the doctrine of inerrancy. He cannot be claimed as a champion of the doctrine of inerrancy."

But no one claimed that Glueck is a champion of inerrancy. The claim is that Glueck as a scholarly liberal Jewish professor and other liberals too have acknowledged that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single properly understood Biblical statement. Since this is so, since the liberal attacks have uniformly failed in the past, the evangelical can reasonably hope that the next attack will fail also. If the Bible were so inaccurate as Astruc, Welhausen, Driver, Snaith, von Rad and Beegle have been claiming, should not a hundred or at least a dozen errors have been established by now, really without doubt. But Glueck acknowledges that not a single error has been established. Therefore Beegle has no scholarly basis for his dogmatic insistence that orthodox theologians are dishonest. Nor can he exclude their future expected that alleged errors will prove to be truths.

I'm going to omit a section on the Greek poet Pindar. Beegle claims that Pindar and the other Greek poets are the originators of the doctrine of Biblical infallibility. But I quote you Pindar. Go on a little bit. Point four.

False in all.

Increasing awareness of the difficulties facing inerrancy, says Beegle, meets with "a reluctance to make a change on account of the legal fear implicit in the legal maxim, false in one false in all." Beegle admits that perjury discredits a witness in court. But adds, "in no case is this legal rule adhered to rigidly in the courts. On what authority then must this be applied with absolute authority to the Scriptures?"

Laelius Socinus is supposed to have been the first to introduce this legal maxim into theology. His nephew, Faustus Socinus continued it. Yet Beegle admits that Socinus did not accept the maxim "false in one, false in all." He did not accept it literally. Rather, it was, and this is a quotation from Socinus, "If a person could doubt concerning one passage, there was no reason why he could not doubt all of them." It is this latter principle, therefore, that Beegle ought to refute if he wishes to have some faith in an erroneous Bible.

But Beegle comingles the two different statements so as to discredit the latter by destroying the former. The former means that a document with one mistake in it can contain no true statement at all. The other means that if a man is guilty of perjury no one can accept his other statements on his sole authority, but must search out independent witnesses. Beegle confuses these two and deprecates the disjunction. The disjunction being either the autographs were inerrant or else human fallibility infected all of Scripture.

Consistency, and I'm quoting Beegle now verbatim, would permit no mediating point of view. Even John Wesley resorted to this argument in later life, did he earlier believe that the Bible was full of falsehoods? in later life and so retorted, 'Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from God.'

But Wesley and the disjunction are correct, and Beegle must acknowledge it. The whole liberal attack on the Bible stresses the fact that men wrote the Bible, and men can err. On the liberal's own principles, therefore, "human fallibility infected all of Scripture." To err is human; Beegle himself says so. "To conceive of an absolute inerrancy as the effect of inspiration was not really to believe that God had condescended to the human sphere."

Right here let it be interjected that there is no reason to accept Beegle's arbitrary view of condescension.

But to continue the quotation: "A human literature containing no error would indeed be a contradiction in terms, since nothing is more human than to err." Hence Beegle must agree that on his grounds human fallibility infects the Scriptures from beginning to end. For this reason the

Bible believers insist not that if one statement is false all must be, but that if one statement is false the others may be.

A consequence of this is that reliance must be placed in Assyrian inscriptions, which I took up in the section on Pekah and Beegle does this, and other criteria external to the Scripture. How then can Beegle show that the doctrine of the Trinity or Christ's propitiatory sacrifice is not an error?

The topic, "false in one, false in all," and the quotation adduced merge into a discussion of inerrancy, infallibility and indefectibility. In fact it is best to give the same quotation again in extended form. I gave part of the quotation, I'll give some of the sentence I omitted a moment ago.

The terms "inerrancy" and "infallibility" are absolutes that actually apply only to God. "Instead," Vawter declares, Beegle quote Vawter, "we should think of inspiration as always a positive divine and human interaction in which the principle of condescension has been taken at face value. To conceive of an absolute inerrancy as the effect of inspiration is not really to believe that God had condescended to the human sphere but rather that he transmuted it into something else. A human literature containing no error would indeed be a contradiction in terms, since nothing is more human than to err. Put in more vital terms, if Scripture is a record of revelation, the acts of a history of salvation in which God has disclosed Himself by entering into the ways of man, it must be a record of trial and error as well as of achievement, for it is in this way that man learns and comes to the truth."

This paragraph, quoted in its entirety, is an excellent example of the methods of propaganda. In it are half truths, statements that believers believe to be false, a priori philosophic assumptions, and bad logic.

The first sentence, which ascribes infallibility to God alone, may or may not be true. First, one must distinguish between persons and documents. If infallibility is ascribed to persons, and if infallibility means that the person has never made and never will make an error, then infallibility belongs to God alone, unless we wish to include the righteous angels also. On the other hand, if infallibility is asserted of a document, then it means merely that that document teaches no error. Believers believe that such is the case with the Bible. Believers do not believe that Isaiah and Paul never made false assertions. Paul clearly made many before his conversion; nor do we say he never made any afterward. We do not attribute infallibility to Paul. It is the Biblical text that is infallible. Nor need one insist that the Bible is the only infallible book. A first-grade arithmetic book may be infallible or inerrant. There is no reason to insist that a few pages of elementary arithmetic must contain a mistake simply because they were written by a human being. Thus in the first sentence of the quoted paragraph is deceptive, indeed false, and by implication misrepresents conservative theology. Clearly, therefore, the conclusion which is then based on it cannot command assent.

The second sentence of the quotation is vague and ambiguous. Inspiration may well be to quote Beelge again, “a positive divine and human interaction”; that’s inspiration may well be that. But “positive” means little, and interactions occur in various forms. Does the author intend to say that the doctrine of inerrancy denies a positive divine interaction between Paul and God? Even the crassest form of dictation theory would not make such a denial. The word “face value” also is meaningless by itself. No doubt the third sentence is supposed to determine the meaning. It is a definition, partial or negative, definition of inspiration, inerrancy and condescension. The previous subhead pointed out the arbitrary non-Biblical nature of this definition. But further, inerrancy, says the author, not only denies divine condescension; it also means that God has transmuted the human sphere into something non-human. This implies that neither Paul nor an author of an arithmetic textbook could be a human being, if he wrote two pages without making a mistake.

If the premises of Beelge’s argument are not a priori, alien assumptions, imposed on Scripture, he should be able to show their Scriptural justification. The present writer is convinced he cannot do this; and every reader must agree that he did not do it.

Beyond these considerations something more profound in theology is also involved. Beelge has asserted that error and human nature are inseparable. The Bible, however, says that this is not so. Before the fall Adam was human, but he did not sin and therefore, however ignorant he may have been, he did not err – he made no false assertions. Errorless speech or errorless writing and human nature do not form a contradiction in terms. If perchance God condescended to tell Adam that two plus two are four, or if he told them that eating the forbidden fruit would bring death into the world and all our woe into the world, and if perchance Adam had written this down on a piece of birch bark, would this action of writing have made the propositions false? Furthermore, how could this have transmuted the human Adam into something non-human?

But Beelge has an easy way out of all these difficulties. Since the Bible is so erroneous, Adam never existed.

However and nonetheless, another difficulty looms. When we all get to heaven, or at least when some of us do, will we still be human and therefore will continue to exemplify the maxim, or will we continue to exemplify the maxim, “To err is human”?

The last sentence of the quoted paragraph contains another definitional statement which no one need accept, plus an irrelevancy that befogs the issue. “If Scripture is a record of revelation” that phrase is partly definitional and partly befogging. Conservatives – that is evangelicals – that is, those who accept the Reformation principle of sola scriptura instead of scriptura et assyriana — are glad to agree that God revealed himself in conversation with Abraham. Moses then wrote a “record of revelation.” But the paragraph is deceptive in that it wishes to restrict the revelation not perhaps to God’s conversation but to his encounter with Abraham. Evangelicals on the other hand insist that the Bible is itself revelation, not just an erroneous record of a previous unwritten in fact unspoken revelation. Since we thus reject the if-clause, the conclusion does not convince

us. In addition, a record of God's dealings with man surely would contain accounts of men's sins and errors, as the writer says. But this is utterly irrelevant. Of course Abram was less than gallant when he told Pharaoh that Sarai was his sister. And David's sin was enormous. What is relevant, however, is the truth or falsity of the so-called record. To say that all saints sin does not imply that the record is erroneous. But such is the fallacious reasoning of the writer.

The quoted paragraph therefore imposes a non-Biblical a priori philosophy on the Scriptures; it deals in half truths and ambiguities; it lays down arbitrary definitions no one need accept; and its logic is fallacious.

Now I'll skip to page 29. And take up section 3 the title of which is Theology and Philosophy.

The previous part of this study has analyzed several instances of fallacious reasoning. I gave you 3 out of maybe 7. In doing so it was inevitable that some theology had to be included, for the fallacies were committed on theological material. But now it is necessary to make theology the direct object of attention, for here the fundamental motivations are revealed.

1. The Purpose of the Bible

Obviously Beegle must assign to the Bible a purpose consistent with its alleged errors. How does he determine what that purpose is? Does he determine it by what the Bible says, errors and all? Or does he impose a purpose borrowed from a non-Christian philosophy? The evangelical ought also to determine the purpose of the Bible. The evangelicals method is clear, but his use of the method and the results must nonetheless be evaluated. In either case, this is no simple affair; it embraces quite a complex of problems – for example, the value of doctrine as distinct from history, as well as the value of "encounter" or "experience" as distinct from both. Underlying these obviously important matters is the very nature of truth itself. But before penetrating the profoundest recesses of philosophy the discussion will begin on a more commonplace level.

To determine what the purpose of the Bible is we should look at the Bible, rather than imposing on it unsupported a priori principles. In one place Beegle seems to do this: God's "purpose is that his creatures come to the truth..." (294). As quoted this is a very good statement. As used by Beegle, however, it implies that a certain amount of the Bible frustrates God's purpose because those parts of the Bible are not true but false. Now Beegle may want to restrict the errors to only a few trivial matters. Yet for one thing, restricting the number of errors to a very few does not solve Beegle's problem; for if it is God's purpose to bring men to the truth, even one error in the Bible would frustrate that purpose. For another thing, Beegle never explains the method of restriction, nor even how to distinguish between important and trivial. If Pekah be a mistake, maybe justification by faith is also a mistake. How can Beegle determine which doctrines, if any, are the truth to which God wants to bring man? Similarly with trivialities. If Pekah is trivial, are not the contents of Numbers and 2 Chronicles also trivialities? Perhaps all history and doctrine are trivial, and neither the one nor the other is God's truth.

The evangelical will agree that the purpose of the Bible is to present us with the truth. To give content to this very general principle, the evangelical appeals to the “phenomena” of the Bible. Beegle dare not object to an appeal to the phenomena. These phenomena include Numbers 20 and Judges 10. Or, upon our recommendation the reader may open his Bible to the chapter I mentioned last evening, that remarkable chapter, Genesis 36. What is the purpose of Genesis 36? One might facetiously say that God included that chapter in his revelation for the express purpose of refuting Beegle’s theory. Nor is this altogether facetious. Genesis 36 shows that God places a value on historical information. To assign to the Bible a purpose that would make half of it useless is to impose an alien, secular a priori on the sacred text. The purpose of Scripture should be discovered in it, not imposed on it.

Even so, people who rely on common opinion may with a show of possibility maintain that Pekah and the dukes of Edom are trivialities, and on that basis they may excuse Beegle for not explicitly distinguishing the trivial from the important. But common opinion, among evangelicals, not extreme liberals, common opinion would deny that historical information concerning Christ’s resurrection is unimportant. Does Beegle believe in the resurrection? And further, common opinion among Protestants, until recently, has acknowledged and emphasized the importance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The questions therefore are: Are justification and the resurrection essential to Christianity, and are they true? These most serious questions Beegle refuses to answer: “Is there an authority that can tell a man what he has to believe and what he must do? No, there is not! That is an old-fashioned notion best gotten rid of...” (301). Check it for yourself. It is true that Beegle tries to modify the impression these words make: “On the objective side, Scripture becomes the basis of appeal in all matters pertaining to the content of faith and the practice of Christian living.” In a moment something will be said about faith and practice, but here let it be noted that no method of procedure, no directions as to how to appeal, no definite application of Scripture to a problem receives explanation. This failure is admitted and compounded by Beegle’s use of another writer’s words, named Bright, who said, “Let the right of each free individual to believe what he will without let or hindrance or threat of coercion, by all means be granted.” Bright and Beegle then agree that the Church need not regard one belief as much Christian as another; but apparently there is nothing the Church can do about it if one of its ministers repudiates predestination, justification or the Trinity.

Not only these doctrines. To return for a moment to the matter of historical information, can the Church require its ministers to believe and to preach that the resurrection of Christ was an actual occurrence on the third day? Karl Barth scoffs at the empty tomb. Bultmann mythologizes everything. Does Beegle also deny the resurrection? In reply to Bultmann Beegle says, “Yet surely something happened.” How true; surely the sun rose that Easter morning, and sunrise is something. Beegle does indeed propose several objections to Barth, Brunner and Bultmann. Marxsen finds no historical evidence of a resurrection; he finds evidence only of the apostles’ belief in a resurrection. But he cannot accept their view literally, and this Biblical interpretation cannot be the basis of faith today; belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus is unfounded (60-61). Check it for your self. Beegle then “concur[s] with him in acknowledging that the biblical passages dealing with the resurrection swarm with difficulties,” though there is an “historical

core” behind the erroneous accounts. Pannenberg sounds much more orthodox; but what does Beegle believe? Is the resurrection another Biblical error? Instead of giving a straightforward answer, Beegle hides under a page of obfuscating verbiage, the clearest sentence of which is, “Neither this writer nor any other Christian has the authority to declare that Marxsen cannot possibly have a genuine faith because he cannot bring himself to believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus.”

Not any other Christian? What about the apostle Paul?

This makes it clear that on Beegle’s view Scripture establishes neither doctrine nor history. It is also as little the norm of practice and conduct. Those contemporary theologians who try to salvage a role for Scripture by limiting its purpose to faith and practice misunderstand faith and twist practice to suit their liberal theology. Dr. Paul K. Jewett of Fuller Seminary, where such a rule is supposed to operate, acknowledges that the NT forbids the ordination of women. Is ordination a matter of practice? It has been practiced for many centuries. Dr. Jewett, however, holds that Paul was mistaken as to the role of women in the Church because of his cultural conditioning. But if ordination is not a case of practice, how can one define practice?

Such are the questions that plausible phraseology and irrelevant remarks never answer. God’s purpose is left vague. When Beegle asserts that errant texts are sufficient for faith and practice, he cannot tell us what parts of the Bible are matters of faith as opposed to superstition and what parts are ethically normative as opposed to being culturally conditioned. To be specific, he excludes not only the Levitical law from the category of salvation but also Paul’s opinions in 1 Corinthians 7:25. Paul’s opinions are temporary “secondary” or derivative revelation; but, you’ll hardly believe it, Einstein’s mathematics is “primary” revelation (73).

Such a view negates one of Beegle’s most warm-hearted sentences. “Many Christians, recognizing the untenable nature of the theory of inerrancy, have maintained a warm vital faith with deep concern for the Scriptures.” Warm, no doubt; but its persuasiveness evaporates when one asks, “If such a faith is warm and vital, is it also Biblical and Christian?” Even the most radical critics show a deep but not a Christian concern for Scripture.

The question of purpose is inseparable from that of doctrine and truth. Faith and practice are not themselves bad terms, but when left unexplained they are vague and ambiguous. Liberals exclude much of Genesis, Job, and half of Isaiah from the faith. Bible believers, on the other hand, insist that God purposed to give us all the information the Scriptures contains. The liberal view minimizes doctrine as well as history. Conservatives want all of both.

Note Beegle’s disparagement of the Reformation’s stress on doctrine. Because of doctrine and the absence of love – Beegle seems quite sure that the Protestants were loveless people – “during the seventeenth century – a century filled with wars – the Protestant theologians often fought viciously. How can Beegle so ignore the vicious Romish persecution of Protestants? What about the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, threatening a second Bartholomew

massacre? Does Beegle condemn Cromwell for protecting the Protestants in Savoy? Does he condone the cruelty of Jeffries and the efforts of James II to force Romanism on England and his persecutions and massacres of the Covenanters under Claverhouse in Scotland? This is a tawdry way to besmirch heroes of the faith in their defense of doctrine, truth, and their very lives.

Beegle no doubt dislikes the Puritans and the Covenanters, but the reason for his dislike and the object of his main attack is their fidelity to Biblical doctrine and their idea that God reveals information. He has a different notion of “truth” and “revelation,” if it can still be called truth and revelation. For Beegle the Bible is not a revelation from God. And revelation is not doctrine, nor is it history either. “Propositional truths, like doctrines, cannot be considered revelation because they cannot save.” Since therefore most of the Bible is propositional, most of it has not been revealed by God. To support his dialectical neo-orthodox views, he quotes from three distinguished authors.

Try to follow these three quotations. The first is a little long from a gentleman by the name of Ballie. “We speak of a man’s revealing himself, that is, his character and mind and will..., but we also sometimes speak of a man’s revealing to his fellow certain items of knowledge other than knowledge of himself.... According to the Bible, what is revealed to us is not a body of information concerning various things of which we might otherwise be ignorant. If it is information at all, it is information concerning the nature and mind and purpose of God – that and nothing else. Yet in the last resort it is not information about God that is revealed, but very God himself incarnate in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Beegle also quotes Dodd with approval: “Jesus was primarily concerned not with delivering ‘doctrine,’ but with making men anew.... Similarly the most important thing we find in the Bible is not ‘doctrine’ but something that helps us into a new attitude to God and life.” And then Brunner: “Divine revelation is not a book or a doctrine; the Revelation is God himself in his self-manifestation within history.”

These three quotations agree in drawing a sharp distinction between a man’s, or God’s, revelation of himself and his revelation of information. Baillie’s terms were “items of knowledge other than knowledge of himself versus a revelation of “his character and mind and will.” So stated, this is a triviality. Of what use is it to say that Bob can tell Jack the score of a football game (mere information), or that he can tell him he has a toothache and thinks that pain is evil, which of course isn’t information. Of course men can talk about them-selves or about the daily news. The only way to escape this triviality is to operate on the underlying assumption that “certain items of knowledge other than knowledge of himself” cannot be a revelation of the revealer’s “mind and will.” This underlying assumption is not well supported. Men who constantly talk about sports and use no subjective psychological analysis in so talking nevertheless reveal their mind, will and values. Such talking gives the hearers some information about the speaker. Thus when God spoke to Job or Cyrus, God revealed himself. But Baillie continued by saying, “According to the Bible, what is revealed to us is not a body of information concerning various things of which we might otherwise be ignorant.” This statement is utterly false. It is not

“according to the Bible” at all. The Bible in Genesis 16 reveals a family squabble in Abraham’s family. This is information the Bible gives us of which we otherwise would surely have been ignorant. Second Kings 6:12 shows that Elisha revealed to the king of Israel the words that the king of Syria spoke in his bedchamber, which words the Lord had revealed to Elisha. Otherwise both Elisha and Jehoram, if he was the king, would have been ignorant of the facts. This is according to the Bible. What Baillie says is according to the Bible isn’t.

Here two points should be noted. First, philosophically, knowledge of a person, his mind and will is itself propositional information. We know a man’s mind when we know what he is thinking, and we know God by receiving a statement of his ideas or doctrine. That God is merciful, that he forgives sin, that he is just and punishes the impenitent – these are all propositional pieces of information. If Bob keeps talking about football and never talks about forgiveness, Jack easily understands what sort of a person Bob is. This is information.

Beegle, however, wants to exclude information from revelation and restricts revelation incarnate Christ. Strange! Where did Beegle get the useless, historical, non-revelational information that Jesus was God incarnate? And to the same end Beegle’s Christ-revelation must remain silent, for if Jesus should speak, as he did, he speaks in propositions and reveals information about God. For example, “All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven...but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.” This is revealed information concerning the mind of God, of which we otherwise would be ignorant.

The second quotation, the one from Dodd, begins with a false disjunction. Dodd said Jesus was not primarily concerned with doctrine but with making men anew. Now of course Jesus was concerned with making men anew; he told Nicodemus that he must be born again. But though the last half of Dodd’s statement is true, the first half is only a half truth. The antithesis is false. Jesus’ concern for the new birth does not preclude a concern for doctrine. Indeed, to prepare for Nicodemus’ new birth, Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for not understanding some doctrines that a teacher of Israel should have understood. Regeneration and orthodoxy or correct doctrine are indeed different; but as the new life cannot begin without regeneration, so it cannot continue without doctrine. The Holy Spirit raises the elect to newness of life, and God gives to them the gift of faith. That is, God causes them to believe the Gospel. The Gospel is good news, information. Throughout the Gospel of John Jesus places great emphasis on doctrine, truth, words. Examples are: “He who hears my doctrine and believes him who sent me has eternal life.” “You do not have his word remaining in you.” “If anyone keeps my doctrine, he shall not see death, ever!” “If anyone loves me, he will keep my doctrine; he who does not love me does not keep my doctrines.” “You are already clean because of the theology I have spoken to you.” “The words (Oh this is literal translation. You look in your Greek New Testament and see) that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”[4]

This should be sufficient to show that Beegle depends on false disjunctions to support a theory that contradicts the Bible.

Finally, in the third quotation, Brunner said, "Divine revelation is not a book or a doctrine." Now this certainly is not the Biblical concept of revelation, for the Bible is a book. What has happened is that these men have imposed an alien theory of truth upon the Bible, by which they not only rid themselves not only of alleged historical errors but of all information as well. Though Beegle tries to avoid what may appear as the excesses of Brunner, and though both of them attempt to salvage some Christianity, the operation turns out to be a failure. Even Brunner, though in one place he said that "God and the medium of conceptuality are mutually exclusive," makes some room for doctrine. Beegle says, "A minimal amount of theological ideas or teaching is necessary as a prerequisite for true faith." This is a fine statement, but Beegle has vitiated it by excluding information and has left it dangling because he cannot give an example of true doctrine. The Church he talks about can have no doctrinal standards whatever, for there is no criterion and everyone must have the freedom to believe or disbelieve as he pleases. But even if Beegle, without any reason for doing so, could select one particular doctrine as true, the role he assigns it is empty. Note: "There is no assurance that this rational objective truth will lead to or preserve genuine faith." The evangelical will of course say that this belief is itself genuine faith. But Beegle has a different notion of faith. For him faith is not a belief in anything. He calls Brunner to support him. Brunner said, "It is possible to hold correct views of doctrine without faith.... It is extremely bad for the church to confuse that which is the gift of the Holy Spirit alone with that which anyone with a good brain can learn at a good college." After another line or two Beegle quotes Brunner again: "It is possible to understand the new message of the apostle Paul completely, intellectually, and logically, and that means theologically, without having real faith. The believer in inerrancy, it is true, will reply. 'Then the message has not been rightly understood!'"

But the believer, if he has a fair knowledge of the Bible and average intelligence, will make no such reply at all. The whole series of quotations is full of confusion. To take the last phrase first, the believer will not make the reply that Beegle and Brunner wish to put in his mouth, because understanding the doctrine and believing the doctrine are two different things. True enough, as the arduous language training of missionaries testifies, it is impossible to believe what is not understood; but it is far from impossible to understand what is not believed. Before his conversion Saul, the persecutor, understood Christian doctrine better than most Christians; but because he did not believe it, he persecuted them. Had he not understood, he probably would have merely disliked them. Contrary to the implications of Beegle and Brunner, believers in inerrancy do not quote the New Testament as saying, "Understand and be saved." They quote it, "Believe and thou shalt have everlasting life."

Understanding may indeed be had by anyone with a good brain at a good college. But faith or belief is the gift of the Holy Spirit alone. It is indeed extremely bad for the Church to confuse natural learning with the supernatural implantation of faith. But faith, unfortunately a Latin term, correctly in Greek it is "belief", is the belief in the message – a voluntary assent to an understood proposition. Christ never disparaged his words or message. The Gospel is good news, it is information.

There then follows a section on twofold truth. Not exactly the same as in the Medieval times, but some similarly to it. Two kinds of truth which I guess are not truth at all, but as I say, this is a long article, and hopefully you will find the first part of it in the next issue of the ETS journal. And the second part in the following issue. I'll stop here at this time. There are two questions that have been handed to me.

This one is nicely printed and I think I can read most of the words. Do you see any connection between the increasing popularity, is it, of empirical apologetics as represented by Montgomery, Pinnock, and Geisler and the wide-scale defection of many Christians from the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy? Do I see any connection between the popularity of empirical apologetics and the widespread defection from Biblical inerrancy?

Well, now, Pinnock, of course, is very strong on the matter of Biblical inerrancy. He is an outrageous empiricist. But, he certainly holds to Biblical inerrancy. And so does Montgomery. They are both empiricists. And so I cannot really say that psychologically that empiricism leads to the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy. I do hold, of course, that empiricism is not good apologetics, and not good philosophy. But, everybody I suppose is inconsistent to some extent. Why even I may make an inconsistency once in two or three months. But, we all make mistakes, and this is what I believe to be Montgomery's and Pinnock's mistake. But I do not question their sincerity in believing the inerrancy of Scripture. Geisler is rather a more peculiar position and I don't think I want to go into Geisler. It would take me quite a little time to describe what I think his position is. So we'll just let it go on Montgomery and Pinnock. Now if anyone wants to ask further questions about this, he or she may do so in a minute or two.

The second question is: C. S. Lewis makes reference to "mere Christianity" — those fundamentals of the faith common to Christians. Would you articulate what you believe to be the elements comprising mere Christianity. Particularly with regard to belief about the historicity and infallibility of Scripture. That is, can you determine how orthodox one's beliefs must necessarily be about the Bible and what in the Bible, if one is truly born again.

That is a complicated question. C. S. Lewis, as I suppose you know, is a Thomist. He follows the Roman Catholic philosophy rather strictly. And I do not. I don't like the phrase "mere Christianity." This, I have not read his book as a matter of fact, this one. But, mere Christianity seems to give the impression that you want to find out how little you can believe and get away with it. And my inclination is to see how much you can believe even if it takes you a lot of time to study it through. So when you ask, can you determine how orthodox one's beliefs must necessarily be about the Bible, I don't think I can determine how orthodox one's beliefs must necessarily be. I suppose the writer of this means necessarily if you are regenerate. There are lots of false doctrines that regenerate believe. I think they are mistaken and inconsistent. But we certainly cannot insist that a person be 100% orthodox in order to enter heaven. This would rule out just about everybody. That is a question I think is a poor question, and really has no answer. Well, I mean it, no answer. There isn't any minimum belief. There isn't anything absolutely, no particular doctrine is absolutely necessary for a regenerate person to hold. Look at all the

converts on the mission fields in primitive lands. All the peasants in medieval Russia or in Africa not so very long ago. They knew very little. They believed very little, and probably got it mixed up. But I'm not willing to say on that account they are excluded from heaven. There is no minimal belief that you can specify and I'm rather, and I would rather prefer to approve of the desire to know as much and believe as much as you can rather than to find out how little you can and get away with it.

Now anyone may ask further questions about this, but there is one student, what was his name, Mike Woods, who started to ask a question and I was rescued from his clutches for a few minutes. If he would care to state his question over again, I'd be glad to take this opportunity to answer.

Moderator: Don't be embarrassed now Mike.

Questioner: The question dealt with the argument, I think.

Can everybody hear what he is saying?

Questioner: The argument, the end of the article by Ronald Nash. Is that the one. I don't have it. I don't have the book, but I think that question was asked last night. And I think you might have answered it.

Well, very well. It has to do with the summary of Nash's objections in the Festschrift, the book that is called the Festschrift. And there Nash says that unless you're an empiricist you're a skeptic, although I say if you are empiricist you are a skeptic. He say unless you're an empiricist you must be a skeptic. And that therefore I cannot maintain the truth of anything at all. i do not think this is a very cogent objection. And my answer would of course be rather lengthy, but I'll give some parts of it. As briefly as I can, though because a number of people are interested I might extend the answer just a little bit.

If you are an empiricist there is no use of your beginning with saying, "well I have a Bible in my hand and I can see it." You will have to begin and give a consistent philosophy of empiricism. You don't start with midway through the system, that is begging the question. You must decide on your first principles. Now I think I said last night that observation can never demonstrate the validity or truth of observation. It cannot show that observation is the way of knowledge. In order to have a thoroughgoing empirical position, you, presumably, you must begin with sensation. Now if you disagree with that statement I'd be willing to listen to you for two hours or more but at least most of them say that. You must begin with sensation. Then, to make your system tick, you will have to show how sensation develops into perception. And this is something hardly anybody ever does. And beyond that you will have to show how perception develops into or involves images, from which concepts are abstracted. I tried to make clear last night that at least 5% of the population, including a good many of the more educated people, have no images, and hence cannot abstract concepts from images as Aristotle says they should be able to do. And I

take this as an empirical refutation of empiricism. But the step between sensation and perception ought to be considered. What do you mean by sensation?

Well now, Brand Blanshard, who was professor of philosophy in Yale University for many years, and one of the most brilliant, and perhaps the most brilliant philosopher in the United States during his lifetime or since, attempts to begin with sensation on page 1 of his 2 volume work called "The Nature of Knowledge", what is it, "Nature of Knowledge" something like that. He tries to begin with sensation and show how, by inference, you arrive at perception. He takes 75 pages to do this. But he virtually admits that no one ever has any sensations, and he even, well he says if very young infants have sensations by the time you get to our age you cannot reconstruct that infantile mind and hence at this stage we just have no idea what a pure sensation would be. Now, in spite of this, he tries to show how you can make inferences to perception from these forgotten sensations. And he gives oh quite a lot of very interesting material, but my objection to it is that he never shows which inferences are valid. You can always make invalid inferences, and simply to say that perception are inferences from sensations does not show whether the inference is valid. Now, if you're going to be an empiricist you must do this. Or make some substitute which I cannot imagine since I can't imagine it at all. The popular empiricists begin in the middle and assume that this is all done, and my criticism is a criticism directed at the very basis of empiricism. And there are many more criticisms that I didn't mention. Someone last night talked about having a Bible in his hand or something of that sort. I might have answered, which I didn't, I might ask him, "how do you know you're not dreaming?" You have no Bible in your hand. You're not even in this room. You're just dreaming. Oh, you say, I pinched myself. Well, did you ever dream that you pinched yourself? You can dream all sorts of things. And dreams, while they last, are just as vivid, and if they're nightmares they're more vivid than what you consider your ordinary waking life. And I would like some of these empiricists to give a solid argument that they're not dreaming. They never accommodate me. They begin in the middle and say you're not sure this is your wife. Of course I'm not sure she is my wife. There are such things as perfect twins and you can make a mistake and maybe some people have made a mistake.

You know the story about, at least it is by Dumas père, I don't know whether it is quite historical or not. But that Louis Quatorze had a twin. And he was kidnapped when a very small baby and trained and then at a certain period during the life of Louis Quatorze the conspirators substituted the other twin for Louis Quatorze and nobody knew it except the conspirators of course. Well you can make all sorts of mistakes. And we just cannot prove that Louis Quatorze was the same person at the end of his life as he was at the beginning. You can't prove, at least I don't know how to prove, that a person is not dreaming or that I am not dreaming right now. Maybe I haven't gotten up yet this morning and I'm still reposing comfortably but it isn't a nightmare. It is very pleasant. I enjoy the dream. Does that answer the question enough? I could keep on going for hours, but I don't want to.

Moderator: Dr. Clark, I think probably what they would like to see is if we derive our knowledge, in our fideist position, from holding a Bible in our hands, does not that make us empiricists?

No, I would say not. Because in the first place you cannot on empirical grounds show that you have a Bible in your hand. In the second place, ink marks on paper are not very clearly connected with theological meaning, doctrine of justification by faith. If you wish a more detailed discussion of this as I see some of you do, I would recommend that you read Augustine's treatise called *De Magistro*. This is the original refutation of logical positivism and the language philosophies that are common today. Now, the first part of *De Magistro* is a little tedious. It is so elementary that most of you wouldn't be interested. But by the time you get through you will see that ink marks on a paper, or sounds in the air, the noise I'm making, never teach anybody anything. This is good Augustinianism. And Protestantism is supposed to be Augustinian, and least it was in its initiation. And it was the most unfortunate event that Thomas Aquinas came in and replaced Augustinianism with Aristotelianism and empiricism which has been an affliction ever since. But the point is that ink marks on a paper, and the sound of a voice, this sort of thing never generates any idea at all. And Augustine's solution of it is that the Magister is Christ. Christ is the light that lighteth every man that comes into the world. This is not a matter of regeneration. This is a matter of knowledge. And Christ enlightens the unregenerate in this sense just as well as the regenerate. If an unregenerate man learns anything at all, he learns it from Jesus Christ and not from ink marks on a paper.

Question down here.

Questioner: This relates essentially to the same thing. Last you stated that your axiom is "The Bible is the Word of God." My question relates essentially to the same thing. How do we come to know the contents of the Bible if not through empiricism? And if it is through the way you have just stated how do we come to know the knowledge which Christ imparts to us, if not through some form of empirical sensation? Even if it is recollection or whatever it might be. I'm still not understanding how we come to know anything at all apart from the senses that we have. Is it an immediate inspiration, revelation, intuitive type of thing, or what?

It is due to the fact that we live and move and have our being in God. We are in direct contact with the mind of God. And God impresses these ideas on our minds.

Questioner: How do we know that?

Well, let me ask you, how do you know you are talking? Are you dreaming?

Questioner: I think that is ad hominem.

Yes, of course it is ad hominem, I meant it to be directed to you. Because that is what all the empiricists do. They assume the point at issue and won't argue it. But let me say a little bit more. As I mentioned last night too, the purpose of apologetics is to produce as detailed a system, detailed a system as possible to meet the systems of logical positivism or mechanism in physics, or other non-Christian systems. And the only way that you can have any systematic

knowledge is to begin with indemonstrable axioms. Even empiricism makes the unproven assumption that experience can give you truth. And that assumption, which cannot be proved, is an assumption that I just reject. And instead of saying sensation connects us with reality I say we are immediately connected with the mind of God. We live and move and have our being in Him. And God illuminates our minds and gives us our ideas.

Questioner: Alright, maybe I'm not hitting it at the right point, but my question would still be ... this connection that you just mentioned, or this illumination is received sensorily, in the mind.

Of course not. Tell me, is the doctrine of justification blue or yellow? Does it weigh five pounds? And is it three feet long?

Questioner: Well I didn't mean to restrict sense ...

Audience member: Well I think justification by faith is definitely blue.

Now I don't mean to irritate you or put you down or anything like this and I would be a seminary student, a graduate student.

Moderator: Go ahead and put him down ?????

Well, maybe not as much as I would like. But I would sorta try to irritate you by asking you how in the world could you ever get the doctrine of justification by faith out of sensations of blue or red, or loud, or hard and so on? That just seems to be utterly impossible. Justification by faith is not a sensory object. It has no connection with sensation. So does the square root of minus one. How can you possibly get the concept of the square root of minus one through your senses? Now these are the questions I try to irritate empiricists with.

Questioner: I'm not an empiricist.

Well then you are not irritated.

Questioner: My question would still be I came to know the doctrine of justification by faith by reading Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Did you? Tell me how ink marks on a paper convey the doctrine of justification by faith?

Questioner: I don't know. God's combination of the word and the spirit works mysteriously. But it is still not just the spirit, it is a combination of the word and the spirit.

It is very mysterious.

Questioner? Is that ... ok, I pass.

I might add this if you wish. This is about as far as I would care to go. Sometimes, now you said recollection but you tried to connect even recollection with sensation which I wouldn't dare to do. But if you wish to mention recollection, and I do not exactly mean the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence. But at any rate a stimulus to recollection is not necessarily anything like what you recollect. To give an easy example. You might, I'll give two examples to contrast it. You might look at, this part of Texas is quite flat, somewhere or other you might look at a hill and then think of Pike's Peak and the hill is somewhat at least like Pike's Peak. It does rise up above the ground a little bit. So sometimes the stimulus to recollection is similar to what you remember or recollect. But on the other hand, you might see a violin and this would stimulate to remember some musician that you're fond of. But certainly the violin doesn't look like the musician. And for that matter anything at all you happen to want, might remind you of the square root of minus one. So there is no necessary connection between the stimulus and the recollection. And what stimulates one person to remember a given object might not stimulate another person. So it, you're interested in the thing recollected and not the stimulus with which it has no necessary connection.

Questioner: My question is really sorta a continuation of Sam's and that is would you expound more on how Christ illumines the unbeliever? For example, how does he learn language if it is not through sensations? Could you expound more on the Augustinian idea if that is your idea also? And using that as an example.

Yes, I'm just about completing a course in the philosophy of language and that is a good question. The common philosophy of language, even with different variations from school to school, the common philosophy of language today is of course empirical. Language is an evolutionary development from the grunts and squeals of animals that become more and more complex and so on. And this explains, or it allegedly explains how language came to be what it is today. Now, there are at least two things, there may be others, but there are at least two things with respect to the question how is inappropriate. Whenever there is no process the question how is inappropriate. Hence, it is a mistake to ask the question "how did God create the world?" for there is no how. It was an instantaneous fiat, and that is all you can say. There was no process. Oh, there has been a process since. But an instantaneous creation to begin. Now, similarly, it is my view that language was implanted in man's nature by creation, not particularly, or not solely for the purpose of social converse and the ordinary affairs of life like what we should have for breakfast and this sort of thing, it was of course that was part of the purpose. But particularly, for the purpose of speaking to God and understanding God when he spoke. So that language does not have an empirical basis. It is a divine implantation. There is no how.

And let me say furthermore, if you will study maybe the earlier language philosophers, take Jean-Jacques Rousseau for example. He faced a problem which language philosophers still have to face, though most of them don't discuss very much. He asked, is language a product of society? And he didn't see how a solitary individual could learn to speak. It is a social process. And you have to be a member of society before you can learn to speak. But then Jean-Jacques

Rousseau, whatever else he was, he was bright enough to see that if you couldn't speak you couldn't form a society. So it seems that language presupposes a society and society presupposes language. Because that is an impossible point of view. And Rousseau says I just can't solve this, but this is the way it seems to be. Now, I avoid this intellectual impasse by asserting that language is implanted by God in human nature in the act of creation. Alright.

Questioner: Dr. Clark, somewhat along the same lines, do you believe that we can know certainly, I'm not saying that we can prove it, but that we can know with certainty that we're not right now dreaming?

You use the word certainty. People are certain of very peculiar things. Some people, I judge, a few not many, are certain that drinking vinegar will cure warts. Hence it is not particularly important in my point of view to ask or explain why a person is certain of anything. Certainty is a psychological act that is more misused than anything else. To be certain of something doesn't mean that it is true. People are certain of many things that are false. And so that part of your question I would dismiss.

Questioner: Ok, my problem is that if, it seems to me that if you're going to be uncertain of something then you're a skeptic. So unless you're saying that we all must be skeptics, and if I understand your writings correctly, it is only in the system of faith that has come out of the Reformation, or the Scriptures, that we have any certainty that we can have certainty of knowledge, that we can know truth.

You said two things. One of which I sorta agree with and the other I don't. As I just finished saying, certainty doesn't impress me. Because, as I say, I just used a facetious example, but you can think of all sorts of examples of people being certain of the most ridiculous things. But as a matter of truth, that is quite different. I am interested in truth, I am not interested in certainty. That is just a psychological quirk. And furthermore, as I have said, the problem of apologetics is to present a detailed system of truth. So that it all fits together. I don't say that a person can achieve this perfectly. I'm quite well aware of that. We all make mistakes. But our aim is to produce an intelligible system. And this requires axiomatization in my opinion. And the axioms themselves are the teachings of Scripture. So I would be interested in truth in the insisting on absolute unchangeable truth. But people have been certain that the moon is made of green cheese.

Questioner: When John says that these things I have written that you might know that you're saved, in other words that we should be able to know the truth. I would, I have always assumed anyways that we was concerned that we have a psychological response that we are comfortable, that we are, we have a degree of certainty. We are not anxious, we are not in doubt. That we are in fact in the truth, that these things are true. If that's true, then I'm still a little be confused as to the fact that some people are certain of false things. Does not seem to me to imply that certainty is unnecessary. That certainty is unimportant.

Jesus himself made a number of statements that I suppose are applicable to people who are uncertain. He spoke about not quenching the smoking flax. He talked about faith as little as a mustard seed, and there are various expressions like that which indicate to me that there are people who have doubts. They do not have a great degree of certainty. But that Jesus accepts them. What I am objecting to is an emphasis on certainty used to prove perhaps that something is true.

Questioner: No that was not my point at all. But if we know the truth and the truth should produce in us a certainty of it. It would seem to me. And I don't understand, let me try to make myself a little more clear. You, by reducing all of the systems to skepticism, in so far as I understand you, I'm in complete agreement. If certainty is an unimportant issue then it seems to me that your objection of skepticism is a meaningless objection.

No, because skepticism is a position which says that no knowledge is possible at all.

Questioner: But if you can't know that you have truth knowledge, then what's the point of it.

Because you still know the truth.

Questioner: But you don't know that you know the truth. You're not certain of it.

Do you know that you know that you know that you know? But let me quote another verse of Scripture. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Was the person certain? No, obviously not.

Questioner: Well he had some degree of it. I maybe getting ... you're taking me into waters that I haven't ...

If he had some degree of it, you invent a thermometer that will give the degree.

Questioner: I was agree you'd respond like that.

I was hoping he would exhaust his certainty.

Moderator: I'm taking it away from him Dr. Clark. I know these men here. We have a little group in which we wrestle.

I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll play you a game of chess and beat you and that will settle the question.

Moderator: There is a question back here.

Questioner: This is from Acts chapter 1. Jesus "to whom he also he showed himself alive, after his fashion by many infallible proofs being seen of them forty days and speaking of the

things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” Now what are these proofs? Did they appeal to their senses or to their faith?

I do not deny, of course, that the apostles had certain visual sensations, but they cannot deduce from those visual sensations any Christian doctrine. And I would repeat again that if you think that is possible you are under obligation to show how sensation becomes perception, how perception develops images, and to give a theory of abstraction so that you can get such doctrines as the Trinity and justification and the other doctrines. Though it may not say so in just that passage that you read, I referred last night to another passage where Peter, after being with Jesus for a year and half or so, something like that, when Jesus asked him who he was, he replied “thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” And according to my beautiful way of translating the New Testament, Jesus answered, “you didn’t discover that through empirical observation, this was a direct revelation from God.” And I think that ... now consider this, Jesus rose from the dead, he was seen, he even ate fish as it says in the Gospel of Luke. But if you will read 1 Corinthians, not only are there no marriages in heaven, there is no food in heaven either. We don’t have stomachs in heaven. Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, but they shall both perish. And these conditions of our present temporal life are not those of the future life. And Christ was raised from the dead, his body appeared, but it was a much different body from the ordinary body he had before. And I would suppose there was a greater change after the ascension than there was after the resurrection. But at any rate, there is no way of deducing or inferring validly the doctrines of Christianity, or even the truth of historical events, through a process of sensation, perception, imagination, and abstraction. And once again, the problem of apologetics is to present a system that will confront non-Christian systems.

Questioner: ???

I would be glad to reply concerning another appearance of Jesus where something else is said. He didn’t say everything every time he spoke. But when he walked with the disciples to Emmaus he appealed to the teaching of the Old Testament. Now, I agree that when he went in he broke bread and they saw it but this stimulate in them a theological understanding. Somebody else might have been in the room and Christ would break a loaf of bread and it wouldn’t mean anything to him. You cannot get out of a certain breaking a loaf of bread the doctrine that Christ wanted to teach the two men on the way to Emmaus. It just can’t be done. At least, if you think it can be done well you do it. You must, if you want to be an empiricist, you must face the difficulties of empiricism. And remember, empiricism can neither begin with the Bible nor with God. Let me ask you this question, if you say you’re faced with a lot of problem and you want to get an answer. Say you want it figured out. You start from scratch. That’s the way you have to begin. You have to begin, and if you begin there is nothing preceding. Now, since you’re starting from scratch and you’re not ready to assume anything at all let me ask you this, suppose, and since we don’t know anything at this point, we’re just beginning. This is not an absurd supposition, because you can’t say anything is absurd unless you have some truth by which to judge it. And here we’re just starting, we have no truth yet. Let us assume for the purpose of argument that the world is controlled entirely by an omnipotent demon whose chief

delight it is to fool us. And through his omnipotence he makes us believe that two and two are four. When really two and two are five. And how he chuckles. Now if you're beginning to get a system, how will you answer this possible supposition? Where do you start? And I challenge you, try to start with sensation and see if you can possibly answer this situation, which of course from a Biblical point of view is absurd. But if you are starting and have nothing to begin with nothing is absurd. This is the challenge, how can you show that the world is not controlled by an omnipotent demon whose chief delight it is to fool us? And until you explain, this would be a process of deduction from sensation, and I would be very happy to see the process. I wouldn't be happy, oh no I wouldn't, but. I would be happy if people would try it.

Questioner: Are you saying the philosophy called dogmatism or presuppositionalism which is appropriated by the teaching of the Holy Spirit through faith, provides a philosophical system whereby we can incorporate empirical knowledge, that is, we understand empirical truth because of our presupposition of dogmatism, but that empiricism as a system can never explain the other.

I would say empiricism can never reach any knowledge whatever. It can never get from sensation to perception.

Questioner: But it does fit into the system of dogmatism as details. We understand the details because of our dogma.

That is not my position, no. No knowledge is deducible from sensation.

Moderator: I think he means Dr. Clark when he says dogmatism, presuppositionalism.

Yes, I think that's right. I think he does. That's right. Yeah, but no, I do not see how you can give a strict demonstration to the fact that we are here in this room this morning. We may be home dreaming. If you want to try to prove that we're not home, but that we're here in this room, try it. And I don't propose to demonstrate a lot of propositions which people commonly accept. I do not see that Christianity requires us to believe that we are now in the city of Dallas. We may be in Chattanooga dreaming. And this doesn't affect Christianity in the least. So there are a lot of propositions which common opinion accepts, but which in my thought have no place in Christianity. They are irrelevant. And they are not a part of apologetics. And pay no attention to them.

Questioner: Dr. Clark let me ask a question to try to clarify this a bit. In your philosophy what exactly is the role of empiricism and sensory data?

There is role of empiricism in my philosophy. I am utterly anti-empiricist. I've been trying to get that point across. And I give you the challenge again, show me how you get perception out of sensation.

Questioner: Well, I think that's not really what we're trying to get to.

Well, that's what I'm trying to get to.

Questioner: I understand. For example, a man, a scientist in a laboratory, he gathers data.

No he doesn't gather data. There are no such things as data in the science of physics.

Questioner: That's what they call it.

Some scientists don't know much science.

Questioner: Well, what would you consider they are gathering? What are they collecting in the laboratory? When they do run experiments.

They are not collecting. They are formulating or construction. They never discover anything. And every law of physics is false.

Questioner: What is the role, for example, when you read a book, you're using your eyes to read the book.

You don't even know you have a book in your hand.

Questioner: You assume you have a book.

Is that your assumption?

Questioner: Well, I wouldn't, yes sir that'd be my assumption.

Well then you deduce a lot of theorems from the assumption, "I have a book in my hand." Can you construct a philosophy on the assumption "I have a book in my hand?" Of course you can't appeal to sensation, because you're starting with a proposition "I have a book in my hand."

Questioner: Right, ok, when you read. What role does reading have in your philosophy?

Well I answered that a moment ago, but see you were offering an alternate point of view. You wish to base a philosophy on the proposition "I have a book in my hand."

Questioner: No, no. Taking your presupposition "the Bible is the word of God" that is your fundamental principle. In your philosophy, when you read, what role does reading have? When you see what role does seeing have?

A stimulus to recollection if you wish.

Questioner: Is it confirmatory at all? For example, in the case of the resurrection, the resurrection is obviously no proof of Christianity, but does it confirm in any way your presuppositions?

The elaboration or construction of a system of thought, in my opinion, is a matter of deducing theorems from axioms. You used the word *confirm*. I don't know what you mean. I think strictly in deducing theorems from axioms. If you use the word *confirm* or *evidence* or something like that. I've written a book on historiography. About 380 pages or so to show that evidences never prove the occurrence of any historical event.

Questioner: Ok, in your Wheaton Lectures, you make a statement when you're offering your axiom, you're saying that what a man is looking for in an axiom is an axiom that will produce a consistent system.

Yes, that's right.

Questioner: Are you not on the verge of empiricism when you make that statement?

Well, I should hope not.

Questioner: The reason I suggest that is because aren't you saying that you must test your axiom?

No, there is no test for an axiom.

Questioner: Then what do you mean by saying you look at the axiom in terms of the system it produces? That's how you select it. At least that is the understanding I got from reading the lecture.

Now, I don't want to berate you, but, and apparently you did not mean what I thought you meant a moment ago. I thought you were offering an alternate system on the basis of "I have a book in my hand." Supposed, if you wish, for the purpose of argument, suppose you wish to accept that as an axiom. Nobody can object to your accepting it because one person accepts one thing and one person another. But you will be forced to admit that from that axiom nothing or virtually nothing can be deduced. Now if you're satisfied with deducing nothing from your axiom, I certainly can't convince you to abandon that axiom. Because since it is an axiom it is not capable of either being demonstrated or refuted.

Questioner: Your apologetics then, you basically look at the deductions that come from the principles of various systems and from that you argue that the axiom is bad or invalid because it produces an inconsistent system. Is that correct?

No that isn't correct either.

Questioner: What is your apologetic then?

If you take some very restricted axiom, maybe just two axioms of geometry instead of six. I think it is possible to deduce validly a few theorems. They will not presumably be self-contradictory. But they will be a very limited number of theorems on a very narrow subject matter. Now if a person wants to insist on that there's no way to refute him. And all I can say is I want a system that includes more detail and more truth. Of course inconsistency would be a sign of falsity, but axioms on a very narrow limit within in a very narrow field so far as I can see will not produce inconsistency. They won't produce much else either. And that is why I don't like them. And I take as axioms a set of propositions that will give me a much wider system of thought. Since axioms are axiomatic you can't prove or disprove them. Yes sir.

Questioner: I'd like to ask, if you care to answer, on Geisler's attempt to formulate an argument from his own experience to reaching God. Have you had a chance to work through his argument?

I didn't want to talk about Geisler. However, Thomas Aquinas did a much better job than Geisler has done.

Questioner: He says that too.

Oh, I know he has had a Roman Catholic training. And it is true that he is a sort of a Thomist. I don't know just how much I can attribute to him from my knowledge of thomistic philosophy. But he is sort of Thomistic. And I think I could list a few hundred mistakes in Thomas' argument for the existence of God and they would also occur in Geisler's proposal. If you will look in my *Thales to Dewey* in Thomas Aquinas, or is it in the 3R book, somewhere or other, I give five major objections to the cosmological argument. I think any one of them, and certainly all five, but some by themselves are a sufficient refutation of any attempt to prove the existence of God on the basis of experience.

Questioner: Thank you very much. Would you care to comment on what you would conceive to be the chief differences between your system of apologetics and that Cornelius Van Til's.

Didn't want to get in that either. In *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which I suppose you know something about. I think it was in 1956 I answered that question. But I suppose you want me to say something more. Among other things, Dr. Van Til has written that the knowledge that God has, and I think he says the contents of God's knowledge if that's the correct phrase. The contents of God's knowledge and the contents of what man can possibly know. That's not exactly verbatim but that's about right. The contents of God's knowledge and the contents of the knowledge possible to man. I think they're the exact words. The contents of the knowledge possible to man do not coincide at any single point. Now, I ask this, does God know that David was King of

Israel? I hope you will answer yes. But if you take Van Til's position and say that your knowledge does not coincide with God's knowledge at any single point you simply cannot know that David was King of Israel. I disagree with that. I think anything we know is coincidental with God's knowledge. God has all truth and if we have any truth whatsoever it must be God's truth. And I'll give other examples like this. You have heard of course, it is common for people to disparage "mere" human logic. I have something to say about that. But why don't they disparage mere human arithmetic. We say 2 plus 2 is 4. That's mere human arithmetic. For God, even if he isn't an omnipotent demon, 2 plus 2 must be 5 but anything other than 4. Because we believe that 2 plus 2 is 4 and our knowledge doesn't coincide with God's knowledge at any point. Therefore, for God 2 plus 2 isn't 4. I think that is a sufficient difference between professor Van Til and myself.

Questioner: Dr. Clark, I want to know if faith comes by hearing and hearing by preaching the word does not our sensory organs have some type of role in coming to know knowledge?

Yes. It is like the violin that reminds you of Mischa Elman or whoever else it may be. There is sensory stimulation, but the stimulation, the sense material, will never give you the knowledge. Our knowledge is due to the light that lightens every man that comes into the world. And the reason is that God's mind and our minds penetrate. We exist in God. And maybe I might not want to press it quite as far as the author of this expression pressed it but we see all things in God. We live and move and have our being in God and he uses these things to stimulate us but the knowledge itself, the propositions, cannot be deduced from any sensory experience.

Moderator: Dr. Clark, it is about a little after ten to twelve and I feel that maybe there are a few questions that have not been properly understood, but this is the time to stop. We're going to have another session tonight. And you'll get another opportunity to ask our speaker questions. I think it is proper for us to give him a little rest.

Now if anybody isn't satisfied I'll prove my point by beating you at chess on the board back there.

Moderator: That is a sensory activity.

Yes. That is an intellectual activity.

Moderator: Let's close our discussion time with a word of prayer. Remember tonight the subject is human evil, rather the problem of evil and human responsibility.

Evil and responsibility, something like that.

Moderator: And at 7:30 and then we'll have discussion afterwards and you can have another go at our professor of the kings of Edom. Dukes of Edom.

Professor of confusion.

Moderator: Let's close with a word of prayer. Father we are grateful to thee for the privilege of studying together and for the stimulation of it. We pray thy blessing upon us throughout this day. We ask that thou will bless our time together tonight and tomorrow morning for Jesus sake, amen.