

GIVING AN ANSWER

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INTRODUCTION

Bible-believing Christians are not having the effect they should in present American society. In past eras a far smaller percentage of the population were Christians, but those Christians virtually molded public opinion. Today a great percentage of the population claim to have “accepted Christ” yet seem impotent in influencing the course of events. The Bible insists that Christians are the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13) and “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20). Christians are missionaries to the nations (Matt. 28:19-20). If, therefore, they are not having success, they must re-evaluate the missionary role. What is not being done scripturally?

A thought experiment may help one to see the situation more clearly. Let one imagine himself assigned by God to spend the rest of his life living as a missionary to a jungle tribe somewhere in Africa or South America. From the Bible he would know that his mission would be to live out God’s will in all the details of life, especially in communicating the revealed gospel of Christ to these tribesmen. How would the missionary prepare to do this work? After securing adequate supplies and necessary survival skills, he would then have to learn about the tribal language and customs. Furthermore, he would have to learn how the tribe thought about things.

Let one suppose further that this particular tribe thought that everything came from water. In fact, their word for *God* would be the same as their word for *water*. Suppose this word were *ayst*. If one did not take this word and its concept seriously in planning evangelism, he would face very discouraging results. One can imagine how the tribe would misunderstand the statement that “Jesus Christ is *ayst*.” One can also imagine the mass confusion that would occur over the ceremony of water baptism for new converts. The tribes-people would assume that the missionary said that Jesus Christ is water and that to be saved one must be submerged in water. Although the tribal language and words would have been used, no communication could have occurred because of the radically different meanings and world views between Christ’s ambassador and the pagan tribe.

Is this same failure to communicate occurring between American Christians and their own American ‘tribe’? Could this point be the major missing element in Christian evangelism today? Could it be that Christians themselves have not even grasped the truly radical nature of biblical Christianity? Like the situation in the thought experiment above, Christians might well be using the same language as their non-Christian neighbors but failing utterly to communicate the gospel. Therefore, if neither American Christians nor American non-Christians have grasped sufficiently the radical differences between God’s world view (called divine viewpoint [DVP] hereinafter) and man’s world view (called human viewpoint [HVP] hereinafter), the Christian can have little or no impact. Instead of recognizing a white and black contrast between the two positions, many people face a confusing grey picture in which they assume no real choices are possible.

This pamphlet will insist that DVP and HVP have not been distinguished sufficiently in American evangelism and church life and that this failure to distinguish them has caused at least a major part of the Christian impotence mentioned above. In its concluding section this pamphlet will also offer a solution to the problem and develop it in succeeding pamphlets.

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CHAPTER 1

GIVING THE ANSWER WITH WORDS

If clear communication of radical biblical Christianity is needed, and if the Bible is sufficient for “every good work” (II Tim. 3:17), one ought to find authoritative guidance on this matter in the biblical text. How did God and His spokesmen communicate the Word of God in biblical times? How did they challenge with DVP men buried in HVP? Are there any scriptural examples or models?

Indeed, there are. This chapter will examine seven such biblical examples. Each of the examples will show God and His prophets giving men the answer to their dilemma through verbal address. (A later chapter will describe how they gave men the answer through specific life action.) The reader ought to study each of these examples directly from the biblical text. The Bible, not this pamphlet, is the Word of God. After all seven examples have been presented, a second section will integrate the truths learned into a consideration of apologetics.

SEVEN BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

The following seven examples show how the Word of God pictures itself being communicated to unbelieving men. These examples have been selected from numerous ones in the Bible because of their diverse settings and wide-ranging circumstances.

God To Adam (Genesis 3). After Adam and his wife sinned, God confronted Adam with his transgression and promised salvation to him. Their dialogue in Genesis 3:8–19 is the first biblical example of DVP opposing HVP. In 3:8 one can easily observe that Adam knew *before* the confrontation took place he was a sinful creature responsible to God. Adam did not stand in neutral ignorance unaware of the true source of his dilemma. He knew so much about the cause, in fact, that he deliberately hid from a confrontation with the Word of God. The purpose of the confrontation, therefore, was not so much to inform Adam of something he did not know as it was to persuade him to repent.¹

When God began the dialogue in spite of Adam’s retreat, He asked Adam to describe his situation (3:9). God expected that Adam was capable of seeing the true cause of his dilemma and of repenting from his rebellion. Adam, however, told only part of the truth, describing only the immediate causes (his nakedness and his wife’s invitation—3:10, 12). God responded by pressing for the specific historic facts which would show definite transgression and responsibility (3:11, 13). Facts from Adam’s historic experience were necessary to demonstrate Adam’s sin and the veracity of the word of God. Moreover, while God carried out the promised judgment of His word (2:17 cf. 3:11), He also extended the hand of grace to Adam in revealing future gracious salvation (3:15). This confrontation, of course, was successful. Adam repented by no longer hiding himself and by believing God’s new promise of grace by naming his wife Eve, a name in Hebrew related to the verb *to live* (*chavah*).

One learns from this Genesis 3 example that unbelieving man does not exist in neutral ignorance. He already knows of God and His demands upon him. The goal, therefore, of DVP-HVP confrontations is not one of primarily informing unbelief and providing DVP to it; the goal is persuasion of sin and

¹ *Repent* in the Bible does not mean sorrow, *per se*, as Hebrews 12:17 points out. To repent means to change one’s whole viewpoint of life; such a change may or may not involve great manifestation of sorrow.

demonstration of the veracity of the Word of God in order to secure repentance. The Christian uses historic evidence within the prior framework of the Word of God; he does not view them as neutral items which may or may not verify DVP. Facts are necessary to teach unbelief about sin and the Word of God when that unbelief retreats in guilt-caused fear.

One also learns from the Genesis 3 dialogue that God (and the Christian) expect unbelief to respond to the confrontation. Unbelief ought to respond positively although it does not always do so. Whatever the response, however, God's sovereign gracious program will certainly win out (note the air of certainty in Gen. 3:15).

God To Job (Job 38-41). The second biblical example of a DVP-HVP confrontation is that of God against Job in the final stages of Job's sufferings. Although Job was not an unbeliever (cf. Job 1-2), his viewpoint of his suffering had severe HVP defects in it which God radically corrected in Job 38-41. God thoroughly challenged Job's right to construct his own viewpoint independently of the Word of God. By an extensive analysis of the structure of creation God demonstrated to Job His creatorhood in contrast to Job's creaturehood. God showed the Creator/creature distinction by pointing to the infinite gulf that separated them mentally, physically, and spiritually. Job finally repented and confessed:

I know that thou canst do all things,
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.
Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
Wherefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:2-4, 6)²

From this second biblical example one learns the centrality of the Creator/creature distinction. God cannot be treated as part of the same reality as that of the creation. God and man and nature are not all on the same plane. Man the creature is dependent upon God the Creator at every point--mentally, physically, and spiritually. His knowledge must be derivative of God's knowledge, or it becomes so many "words without knowledge" (Job 38:2).

Moses To Israel (Deuteronomy 32). Moses' Song in Deuteronomy 32 provides a third biblical example of a DVP-HVP confrontation. About to die, Moses left the nation he had founded under God with an outline of their future history, including their future sin. Israel had been founded upon the Law as a sort of treaty between itself and Yahweh God.³ Any violations of the treaty would be challenged by God in the form of a lawsuit. Deuteronomy 32 is the first occurrence in the Bible of this God-against-Israel lawsuit format.

In Deuteronomy 32, therefore, one can observe God through Moses confronting the nation submerged in its HVP with His DVP from the Law. Moses insists that every aspect of history will glorify God's being (32:3-4). Just as God pressed Adam to view historical experience and see his sinfulness, Moses used historical evidences to demonstrate God's faithfulness to His Word and to persuade Israel of her sin. He claimed that the historical facts showed that God had faithfully molded Israel into a nation according to His promise to Abraham (see 32:7-14), but:

Jeshurun [Israel] waxed fat and kicked:
Then he forsook God who made him,

² All Scripture citations in this pamphlet are from the American Standard Version, 1901.

³ See third and fourth pamphlet of this series for further discussion on the treaty and lawsuit formats, respectively.

And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
They moved him to jealousy with strange gods;
With abominations provoked they him to anger. (Deut. 32:15)

Moses did not use historic evidences to prove or disprove God's existence; the facts were used within the framework of the Word of God to further the goal of repentance. Israel already knew before Moses' preaching that she had been elected by God (32:6-8), so Moses was not telling her something altogether new. He was pressing for repentance from her rebellion against the Law.

This third biblical example teaches, then, that the DVP goal of repentance controls the use of historic evidences. Men in unbelief have in some way the ability to respond to such a confrontation, knowing in advance much truth, which they have tried to put from their memory. Moses' last remarks in 32:43 also show the ever-present confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's gracious plan.

Elijah To Israel (I Kings 18). In I Kings 18:21-40 Elijah's confrontation with Israel over her HVP Baalism provides the fourth biblical model of a DVP-HVP clash. Once again actual historic data verified God's faithfulness and man's sinfulness (18:25-39). Unbelieving men in Elijah's day, operating in autonomous defiance of the Old Testament Word of God, invented the Baal myth and thus tried to attach Yahweh's divine attributes to a man-made god.⁴ They, like Adam in the Garden, gave a confused religious testimony. Some of the truth they acknowledge, viz., God is omnipotent over nature; the really vital truth, however, they refused to acknowledge, viz., Yahweh, Source of the Old Testament Law, is God alone. They were double-minded (18:21).

Elijah's test gave historic confirmation of the Old Testament position because it provided yet another work of Yahweh in addition to all His previous works in Israel reaching back to the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (18:36). Elijah reminded the people of what they had already known from the Law and had tried to suppress in their sin; the test itself, therefore, was not a strict proof for the existence of Yahweh before wholly ignorant men. Nevertheless, because Yahweh applied it to their hearts, Elijah secured at least limited repentance by the people of the Northern Kingdom (18:37-38).

One learns once again from this fourth example of a DVP-HVP confrontation that repentance, not mere education, is the goal. Unbelief is not neutrally ignorant; it is willfully ignorant. Leaders of HVP are guilty of the capital offense of treason against God's Word (cf. 18:40). All followers of HVP show by their indecisive behavior that they are suppressing the truth in their hearts (cf. 18:21). Historical evidences, therefore, are used to 'pressure' their hesitating consciences to reconsider the God against whom they are sinning. God, in turn, produces the repentance in their unbelieving hearts (cf. 18:37).

Daniel To Babylon (Daniel 4). A fifth confrontation example occurs in Daniel 4. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, knew that Daniel's God, the God of Israel, controlled history and in particular controlled Nebuchadnezzar's own reign (Dan. 2:36-38). The king's response, however, to this known truth was an idolatrous attempt to suppress it. He erected a great image apparently based upon his new view of the previously revealed truth (Dan. 3). Through Daniel, God confronted Nebuchadnezzar with his sinful behavior and urged repentance (4:24-27). God carried out His threatened discipline (4:31-33) until Nebuchadnezzar freely acknowledged the eternal sovereignty of Daniel's God (4:34-37).

The example of Daniel 4, therefore, teaches the repeated theme that unbelief starts not in ignorance but in willful suppression of what has previously been learned from the Word of God. Through historical experience, God seeks to remind unbelieving men of the veracity of His Word and their sinful rebellion against it. Central to this confrontation process is God's demand that men shift their entire viewpoint from one that is centered upon man to one that is centered upon Him as the sovereign Creator.

⁴See fourth pamphlet in this series for a discussion of idolatry.

Jesus To Israel (The Four Gospels). All of the four gospels present Jesus' DVP confrontation with Israel's HVP. As in the previous five Old Testament examples, Jesus used historical evidences to convict his generation that they ought to repent. He pointed repeatedly to his own miraculous works (e.g., Matt. 11:2–6; John 10:38).⁵ The gospel writers themselves relished the historical evidences (Luke 1:1–4; John 20:30–31; cf. Acts 1:1–3; 26:26; 1 Cor. 15:5–8; 2 Pet. 1:16–18; 1 John 1:1–3). All of these evidences, however, derive their apologetic force from the prior Old Testament framework, which outlined the saving work of Yahweh in definite terms which were fulfilled by Jesus. In the Old Testament, for example Yahweh alone reigned over the seas (Ps. 29:3, 10; 65:7; 89:9; 93:3–4; 107:29) and rebuked the waters with His voice or wind (Ex. 14:21; cf. Ps. 106:9; Job 26:10; 38:10–11; Psa. 104:7–9). Thus, in the New Testament when Jesus did this very thing, the Jewish observers caught some of its Old Testament significance (Matt. 8:26–27). Numerous other examples of such revelation could be cited such as the Old Testament anticipation of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Jesus insisted that the real reason why unbelieving men of his generation were not convinced by these historic evidences was that they had rebelled against prior Old Testament revelation: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31; cf. John 5:45–47). These unbelievers were not men in neutral ignorance; they were definite sinners who had suppressed the truth in advance of Jesus' appearance. Nevertheless, Jesus went ahead expecting his generation to make a genuine response to his words and works. The great majority who rejected his Messianic claim simply fulfilled God's sovereign plan; those who believed also fulfilled God's sovereign plan: "I thank thee, O Father... that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and following (Matt. 11:25–26; cf. 13:10–17; John 6:44–45).

This sixth example of a DVP-HVP confrontation teaches what is by now familiar truth. The goal of every such confrontation is to get men to turn from their HVP motive to the DVP motive. The unbelieving men thus confronted are not unaware of the truth but have at some point in the past deliberately suppressed what they then knew of the Word of God. To such suppressors of the truth God gives further historical revelation in order to probe their response. Whatever their response, however, it is not a result ultimately of their own determination but of God's.

Paul To The Gentiles (Acts 17 and Romans 1). The last example is that of Paul in his approach to the Gentiles, especially seen in Acts 17:22–31 and Romans 1:15–32. This seventh example is the most pertinent of all because it shows how Paul evangelized a pagan civilization like our own. Paul indicated to his pagan audiences that they were already conscious of God in spite of their lack of a Hebrew Old Testament (Acts 17:22–29). They had enough revelation from nature (Rom. 1:20; cf. Acts 14:17; 17:26) and from their own heart (Rom. 1:19; cf. 2:14–15) that they were "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). In fact, pagans were not only aware of God; they were busy suppressing this true knowledge by twisting it into weird idolatrous shapes (Rom. 1:18–23). Pagans, far from being ignorant men, were extremely guilty about their fallen creaturehood (Rom. 1:32; cf. 2:14–15).

As in the other six examples, therefore, Paul preached for true repentance, not just for education (Acts 17:30). Paul used historic evidences to manifest God's character, not prove His existence (Acts 14:15–17). He believed that the pagan mind was hopelessly dark and dead to spiritual things (Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:7–16; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1–3; 4:17–21), yet he also believed that vigorous discussion could be the means God used to open up and regenerate such minds (Acts 17:17). As in the cases of God with Job and Daniel with Babylon, Paul stressed the central truth of the Creator/creature distinction (Acts 17:24–25, 29). Finally, he let it be known that God's gracious program was sovereignly certain of success (Acts 17:31).

⁵ See the fifth pamphlet of this series for biblically reported evidences used to reveal the character of Christ.

In summarizing the lessons of this seventh biblical example of a DVP-HVP confrontation, one can also summarize the lessons learned in the previous six illustrations:

1. The goal of each such confrontation is a wholesale change in mentality from HVP autonomy to DVP submission to God's Word.
2. Unbelieving men already know in advance of the gospel that God exists and that they have fallen under His judgment because of their sin. Failure to insist upon this knowledge is a HVP compromise.
3. God uses vigorous confrontation to cause a change of heart in unbelieving men. He does not treat their unbelief passively and fatalistically.
4. With most pagan unbelievers the confrontation should stress God's sovereignty and the Creator/creature distinction.
5. One can use evidences from history, whether the miracles of Israel or the Wisdom features in the creation design, to awaken unbelievers to the character of God and the sinfulness of men. One should never use historic evidences to prove God exists (see point 2 above).
6. In a confrontation one ought to remind the unbelievers that God's gracious program is a sovereignty certain one that cannot be stopped.

THE NEED FOR DVP APOLOGETICS

As the seven examples show, the Bible gives many illustrations of the proper way to communicate DVP into a HVP world. These examples show that lengthy argumentation often occurs in DVP-HVP confrontations, argumentation that deals with specific HVP issues and DVP answers. This process of argumentation with unbelieving men in their HVP is the concern of *apologetics*. The term apologetics is derived from the Greek word for answer (*apologia*), which occurs eight times in the New Testament: Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Cor. 7:11; Phil. 1:7, 16; 2 Tim. 4:16; and 1 Pet. 3:15. Robert Raymond defines apologetics as follows:

Christian apologetics is the discipline wherein an intelligent effort is made to defend before an unbelieving world the truth claim of the Christian faith, specifically its claim of exclusive true knowledge of the living and true God, in a manner consistent with the teaching of Scripture.⁶

Apologetics is sorely needed today, and whatever argument it uses the apologetic effort ought to be accomplished "in a manner consistent with the teaching of Scripture."

The Need For Apologetics. The idea that no argumentation with unbelief is necessary, that the Christian ought simply to urge the non-Christian to rely on pure blind faith, is called fideism. Fideists argue that reason is useless in religious matters; they avoid historical evidences and rational discussion. Fideism occurs, for example, in statements like this one: "Don't discuss side issues with unbelievers; stick to the one issue of accepting Christ." Unfortunately, this advice renders the gospel impotent because it permits the unbeliever to think that Christ's claims cannot be defended and that Christ has no connection with the entire universe. Fideistic advice like this example promotes a weakened, truncated, false gospel instead of the triumphant, commanding, true gospel of the Bible.

⁶ Robert L. Reymond, *The Justification of Knowledge* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1976), p. 1.

Fideism, or the denial of the need of apologetics, is specifically condemned in 1 Pet. 3:15-16. Peter argues that pagans will ask questions about why men who live Christian lives in word and deed believe what they believe. When the pagans ask these questions, says Peter, *every* Christian ought to be able to give a *reasoned* answer to *every* questioner. Against fideism Peter insists that the gospel can and ought to be defended before the non-Christian world. This passage teaches that:

1. The non-Christian world ought to perceive the Christian commitment to a definite position, “the hope that is in you.”
2. The Christian position is defensible in rational terms. It is possible “to give an answer” to those asking for “a reason.”
3. The Christian has some point of contact or common ground with the non-Christian in this conversation.
4. Every Christian ought to be able to engage in apologetics with all kinds of non-Christians.
5. The Christian ought to accomplish the apologetic effort with a gracious mental attitude.⁷

Fideism, whether due to conscious conviction or laziness, is thoroughly unscriptural. The Bible both recognizes the need for apologetics and commands the Christian about its practice.

The Need For DVP Strategy Of Apologetics. Not only ought there to be apologetics, but the particular apologetic strategy ought to reflect DVP principles. Not every apologetic strategy, therefore, is suitable for the loyal Christian.⁸ Currently Christians are using a wide variety of approaches, some suitable, some not. Some apologetic strategies appeal to man’s reason and emphasize the rational consistency of Christianity. Other strategies appeal to historic data and emphasize the empirical evidence of Christianity. Still other strategies appeal to the God-consciousness in man and emphasize the self-contained authority of the Bible itself.

In terms of the five points listed above from 1 Pet. 3:15 the issue of what is the proper strategy largely concerns the matter of what is the common ground between Christian and non-Christian. Is it reason? Is it history? Is it God-consciousness? Is it all three, or is it none of these? The next chapter will discuss the problem of apologetic strategy and the common ground, using as the standard of judgment the six conclusions derived from the biblical examples of DVP-HVP confrontations and listed in the first part of this chapter. In other words, not only will the biblical mandate for apologetics given in 1 Pet. 3:15 be followed, but the numerous other biblical data will be used to define the proper apologetic strategy.

SUMMARY

The original problem of the beginning of this chapter was the matter of how to speak the Word of God (DVP) into a fallen HVP world. The Bible was taken as the source of sufficient guidance in solving this problem. Seven examples of DVP-HVP confrontations gave a consistent pattern of common elements, elements which were summarized under six points. The biblical examples supported the command of 1 Pet. 3:15 that speaking DVP into a HVP world involves considered argumentation.

How about you? Are you willing to obey the Scripture in being ready to communicate DVP to any HVP unbeliever who wonders about your faith? Being ready, of course, means being prepared, and

⁷ Ibid., pp. 2–3

⁸ The term *strategy* refers to the overall philosophy of apologetics including its goal, its resources, etc., whereas the term *method* or *tactic* refers to a particular item involved in the discussion such as the resurrection, creation, or miracles.

making preparation requires effort. Consider what God's Word demands of you and the effort it requires. Are you willing to learn, or would you rather hibernate in a lazy fideism?

CHAPTER 2

APOLOGETIC STRATEGY

Continuing the argument of the previous chapter, this present chapter will discuss the selection of the proper apologetic strategy. Choosing an apologetic strategy involves deciding upon the *way* one argues for DVP, regardless of the particular issue at hand. Apologetic strategy is not primarily concerned with specific tactical issues such as the resurrection or the inspiration of the Bible; it is concerned with the whole direction of appeal made to the non-Christian.

Present day apologetic strategies will be classified into three groups, depending upon the common ground their exponents conceive to exist between Christian and non-Christian. After noting a modern representative of each of the three groups, the discussion will conclude by specifying a sound apologetic strategy using the biblical material mentioned in the previous chapter.

THREE APOLOGETIC STRATEGIES

A Christian approaching a non-Christian assumes they share some common ground. Otherwise, of course, they would have no hope for any conversation whatsoever. A Christian may believe that historical experience is the common ground he and the non-Christian share; historical experience refers to the so-called facts of history, e.g., the Exodus, the Resurrection of Christ, and material causation. Another Christian may see rational thought as the common territory and attempt to base his apologetic strategy on it; rational thought refers to the use of the law of contradiction, a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time and in the same way. Still another Christian may suppose God-consciousness the tie between him and the non-Christian; God-consciousness refers to the awareness of God in men, the sense of divinity in men, called by the Reformers the *sensus deitatis*.

Perceiving a common ground between themselves and non-Christians, modern evangelicals have fashioned apologetic strategies on each of the three previously discussed ideas. First, the representative of the appeal to the facts of history or empiricist apologetics is the Christian historian Dr. John Warwick Montgomery.⁹ Second, the representative of the appeal to the law of contradiction or rationalist apologetics is the Christian philosopher, Dr. Gordon H. Clark.¹⁰ Finally, the representative of the appeal to God-consciousness or authoritarian apologetics is the Christian theologian Dr. Cornelius Van Til.¹¹

⁹ Major works in this area: *The Shape of the Past* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1962); *History and Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1965); *Where is History Going?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication House, 1969); “Clarks Philosophy of History” in *The Philosophy of Gordon Clark*, ed. Ronald Nash (Nutley, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1968), pp. 353–90; and “Once Upon An A Priori” in *Jerusalem and Athens* (hereinafter JA), ed. E. R. Geehan (Nutley, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1971), pp. 380–403.

¹⁰ Major works in this area: *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1946); *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952); “Apologetics” in *Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Harper-Channel, 1957), pp. 137–61; “How May I Know the Bible Is Inspired?” in *Can I Trust My Bible*, ed. Gordon H. Clark (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), pp. 9–32; and his first three essays and his numerous replies in *The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*, ed. Ronald H. Nash (Nutley, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1968).

¹¹ Major works in this area: *The Defense of the Faith* (3rd ed. Rev.; Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1967); *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1976); and his essay “My Credo” and his numerous replies in JA.

Empiricist Apologetics. Empiricist apologetics has had many exponents. Besides Montgomery one can cite as familiar recent examples C. S. Lewis¹², Clark Pinnock¹³, and Josh McDowell¹⁴, E. J. Carnell and Francis Schaeffer are more difficult to classify¹⁵. Montgomery, however, is the most aggressive, consistent, and voluminous advocate of empiricist apologetics today.

THE POSITION. Montgomery characterizes modern man as being confronted with “a cacophony of conflicting religious claims”¹⁶ which he must judge by some method or never arrive at the truth. He writes:

When world views collide, *an appeal to common facts* is the only representative against philosophic solipsism and religious anarchy... Non-Christian positions must be destroyed factually and the Christian religion established factually. Any lesser procedure is the abrogation of apologetic responsibility to a fallen world.¹⁷ (Emphasis supplied)

All men share the common ground of historical experience and the facts thereof. All men make their everyday decisions on the same inductive basis, reasoning from given facts to a general conclusion, separating truth from falsehood. All men, therefore, even after the fall can still interpret properly the facts of historical experience. Adam, for example, “was still able to interpret properly both the origin of the [Lord’s] voice and its meaning.”¹⁸

The Christian apologist, argues Montgomery, ought to use an empiricist strategy of apologetics in which he forces the non-Christian to face up to the facts. When such a non-Christian refuses to accept the factual case for Christianity,

he must not be allowed to justify himself by his alien starting point; rather, he must be led to see that in all spheres other than that of Christian claims he regularly accedes to comparable evidence—and *has* to do so to retain meaningful knowledge of the past and operating existence in the present. Thus the non-Christian is driven to recognize the volitional nature of his rejection of Christ and his consequent moral responsibility for such unfaith. Apologetics fulfills its function only when it brings the unbeliever to the “offense of the cross,” i.e., to the cross as evidentially compelling—able to be resisted only by a deliberate act of egocentric will.¹⁹

Montgomery lays out his inductive validation of Christianity as follows:

1. On the basis of accepted principles of textual and historical analysis, the Gospel records are trustworthy historical documents--primary source evidence for the life of Christ.

¹² *Mere Christianity* (New York: MacMillan Publication Co., 1952) and *Miracles* (New York: MacMillan Publication Co., 1947).

¹³ *Set Forth Your Case* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1968); *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971); and “The Philosophy of Christian Evidences” in JA, p. 420–27.

¹⁴ *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* and *More Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1975 and 1976, respectively).

¹⁵ During his career Carnell vacillated in his apologetic emphasis. See his *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, and *The Kingdom of Love and The Pride of Life* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948, 1952, 1959, 1960, respectively). Schaeffer has mixed approach which he admitted in his Fort Worth Seminar, March 17–19, 1977. See chiefly his two works *The God Who Is There* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968) and *He Is There And He Is Not Silent* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1972).

¹⁶ “Once Upon An A Priori”, p. 389.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

2. In these records, Jesus exercises divine prerogatives and claims to be God in human flesh; and he rests his claims on his forthcoming resurrection (John 2:18–22; Mt. 12:38–41).
3. All four Gospels describe in minute detail Christ’s bodily resurrection; Christ’s resurrection evidences his deity.
4. One cannot discount the fact of the resurrection on *a priori*, philosophical grounds; miracles are impossible only if one so defines them--but such definition rules out proper historical investigation.
5. If Christ is God, then he speaks the truth concerning the absolute divine authority of the Old Testament (Mt. 5:17–19; John 10:34–35) and of the soon-to-be-written New Testament (John 14:26–27; 16:12–15; cf. Acts 1:2126; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:15), concerning his death for the sine of the world, and concerning the nature of man and of history.
6. It follows from the preceding that men are to regard all biblical assertions bearing on the philosophy of history as revealed truth, and to judge all human attempts at historical interpretation on the basis of their harmony with scriptural revelation.²⁰

CRITICISM OF THE POSITION. Montgomery’s position and the position of empiricist apologetics in general suffers from split allegiance. Montgomery as a Christian arrives at the correct induction from the facts of history, but is his correct answer a result of a Christian tampering with induction as he goes along? In other words, on one hand Montgomery is apparently a faithful Christian loyal to the Word of God, but on the other hand he is also trying to be faithful to a philosophy of induction that denies the Word of God.

As a Christian Montgomery is confident of his inductivism. He defends it with these words:

In Christ God truly entered the human sphere; and if this is the case, the human events of His life objectively display His deity and are not adequately explainable apart from it. Such factual and interpretative conclusions will certainly arise when Jesus’ life is subjected to the investigative techniques applied to other historic events.²¹

Montgomery here shows that his confidence in inductivism is grounded in his prior Christian allegiance. On the Christian basis inductivism works; indeed, it is the only way to understand what has happened in history.²²

As an apologist and historian, however, Montgomery does not appeal to a biblically grounded inductivism. He explains:

Apologetics is directed to *unbelievers*—to those who by definition do not accept God’s Word as divine utterance. here the focus must be on *their* needs, and the starting point has to be the common rationality (the inductive and deductive procedures) which all men share. If we insist that non-Christians begin in our sphere of Christian commitment, we ask for the impossible and vitiate all opportunity of reaching them.²³ (Emphasis original)

While focusing on the needs of non-Christians, Montgomery changes hats and takes a new role, descending to the non-Christian view of induction. He agrees with the non-Christian:

In a contingent universe, there are an infinite number of possible philosophic positions, and even the fallaciousness of infinity-minus-one positions would not establish the

²⁰ *Where Is History Going?*, p. 35.

²¹ “The Place of Reason”, *His Magazine*, (Feb., 1966, p.12).

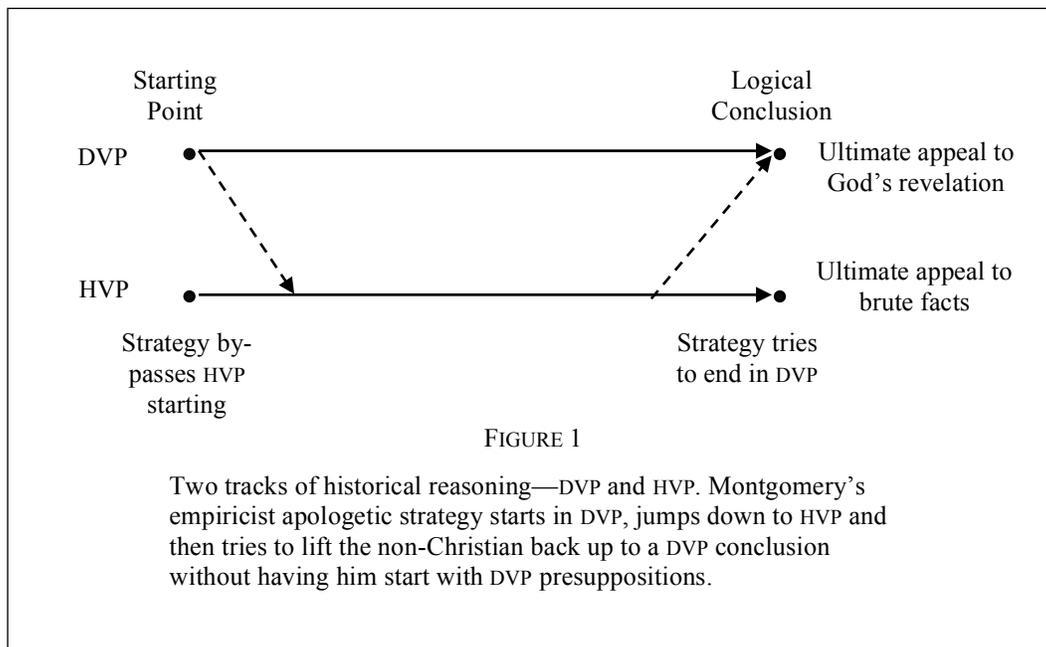
²² See remarks by another Christian historian W. Stanford Reid, “Subjectivity or Objectivity in Historical Understanding?” in *JA*, p. 419.

²³ “Once Upon An A Priori”, p. 391.

validity of the one that remained (unless we were to introduce the gratuitous assumption that at least one *had* to be right).²⁴ (Emphasis original)

Montgomery accepts the non-Christian view of induction which conceives of the universe as emanating from chance. That there is one right view available in history is merely a “gratuitous assumption.” What Christian can agree with these propositions? Montgomery thus sets aside his Christian convictions at the very start of his apologetic encounter with the non-Christian.

Figure One diagrams Montgomery’s apologetic strategy. The top line depicts an inductive argument based upon clear biblical presuppositions: the universe of historical facts is not contingent; it is the created order of Cod. There is available in history one right view, the body of special revelation given in the Bible. Because of these truths, men can accomplish an inductive search for historical truths, making their ultimate appeal to God’s revelation. The bottom line, in contrast, depicts an inductive argument based upon humanistic presuppositions: anything can happen in a universe conceived as the product of pure Chance. There may, in fact, be no right view available to man. The entire universe of historical experience may be one big mystery. Men must make their appeal to the ‘brute facts.’ Montgomery as a Christian, of course, really believes in the top line, but as an apologist he drops down to the bottom line (first dashed line in Figure One) and argues for a while along that line trying to deflect the non-Christian upward to the top line (second dashed line in Figure One).



To understand better Montgomery’s apologetic strategy as depicted in figure One, the reader can review the first three points in Montgomery’s six-point validation of Christianity mentioned earlier. These three points purport to establish the historic credibility of the Gospel records, the dependency of Christ’s God-claims upon his coming resurrection, and attestation of the resurrection to Christ’s deity. Each of these three points, however, involves coming down from the top line in Figure One to the bottom line and thus accepting the validity of the non-Christian’s presuppositions.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 388.

The first point supposedly moves the non-Christian out of his bewildering position amid “a cacophony of conflicting religious claims” and focuses his attention upon Christianity’s Gospel records. How is this accomplished? Why should the bewildered non-Christian choose the Christian Bible out of the vast array of other religious literature in the world, e.g., the Koran, the Vedas, and the Buddhist Scriptures? As a Christian Montgomery knows why. He knows the second conclusion of the seven biblical examples given in Chapter One: “Unbelieving men already know in advance of the gospel that God exists and that they have fallen under His Judgment because of their sin.”²⁵ The non-Christian ‘recognizes’ God in the Christian story. As an apologist, however, Montgomery dips down to the bottom HVP line of the non-Christian pretending that God is *not* clear to the non-Christian, that the non-Christian indeed is honest in his claim of innocent ignorance.

To illustrate his conception of the non-Christian’s position Montgomery tells the engrossing parable of the Shadoks and Gibis, two populations each with an inerrant Bible that wholly conflicts with the other’s Bible.²⁶ According to Montgomery, each civilization can do nothing except appeal to supposedly neutral facts to decide which one, if either, has the true religion. By conceiving of the Christian and non-Christian in this fashion Montgomery virtually denies what as a Christian he must affirm, viz., the ‘advance recognition’ of God in the non-Christian. At his very first point, therefore, Montgomery has compromised and weakened his apologetics by granting to the non-Christian that he truly is ignorant when God says that the non-Christian is not ignorant. God says that the non-Christian is willfully suppressing knowledge of Him (Rom. 1:18–32). One should not and cannot, therefore, appeal ultimately to supposedly neutral facts.

The second point in Montgomery’s validation of Christianity insists that Jesus rested his claim to be God in human flesh upon his coming resurrection. This insistence is not altogether true. Jesus’ resurrection claim was a prophet’s claim that his was the Word of God and would come to pass (cf. Deut. 18:15–22). The resurrection claim, therefore, is set firmly inside the Old Testament framework. The truth of the Old Testament Word of God is the presupposition of the resurrection argument. Only if men had believed the Old Testament would they believe Jesus’ words rightly even after the resurrection did occur.²⁷ Montgomery, as a Christian student of the entire Bible operating on the top line of Figure One, appreciates the force of Jesus’ resurrection claim, but as an apologist he omits this crucial Old Testament undergirding of that claim. He thus allows the non-Christian to persist in his rejection of Old Testament revelation along the bottom line. Instead of appealing ultimately to God’s Old Testament revelation, Montgomery appeals ultimately to the lone fact of Christ’s resurrection.

The third point of Montgomery’s validation purports to prove Jesus’ deity on the basis of the resurrection event. If the non-Christian has not been challenged to abandon his presuppositions by the first two points, how can the resurrection prove Jesus’ deity? If the non-Christian still thinks he is innocently ignorant, if he still deprecates fifteen centuries of Old Testament revelation, in short, if he still is consciously moving along the bottom line of Figure One, why should he now jump off his track and come up to the Christian position. As a Christian Montgomery knows that the resurrection evidences Jesus’ deity (cf. Heb. 1:1–4). As an apologist, however, who drops down to the non-Christian’s viewpoint without demanding wholesale change in his HVP presuppositions, Montgomery has no real reason to argue from the resurrection event alone to the deity of Christ. Van Til points out that the non-Christian still solidly entrenched in his HVP presuppositions can accept the historic fact of the resurrection but then can turn around and say:

²⁵ See Chapter One, p. 6.

²⁶ “Once Upon An A Priori”, pp. 383–85.

²⁷ See Chapter One, p. 5.

To tell you the truth, I have accepted the resurrection as a fact now for some time. The evidence for it is overwhelming. This is a strange universe. All kinds of “Miracles” happen in it. The universe in “open.” So why should there not be some resurrections here and there? The resurrection of Jesus would be a fine item for Ripley’s Believe It or Not. Why not send it in?²⁸

To a person moving along the bottom line of Figure One, the resurrection does not attest to Christ’s deity; it only attests to the strange things that can happen in a contingent universe. When one appeals ultimately to supposedly neutral facts, that is what he is ultimately left with--neutral facts.

Reymond is right when he concludes the following regarding empiricist apologetic strategy:

Any argument for Christianity that begins with a “creaturely constructive fact” is, at best, only a probability argument that permits men to believe that they can reject what actually is God-revealing data and still be honest men—true to their best insights. At worst, it is an argument that requires a universe governed by Chance in which there never can be of “one truth” inasmuch as every event including even Christ’s resurrection, is a unique contingency that means nothing.²⁹

The empiricist strategy, therefore, popular though it is, does not adequately challenge the non-Christian. In fact, empiricist strategy often works only because the non-Christian fails to remain true to his own HVP presuppositions. In such cases, however, the newly regenerated Christian is left with latent unbelief lurking in the yet unchallenged presuppositions of his heart. He has been won to Christ under a partial delusion that the Christian and non-Christian share ultimately a common ground of historical experience which can be interpreted neutrally. Thus his repentance has not been sufficiently comprehensive.

Rationalist Apologetics. The evangelical philosopher Gordon H. Clark epitomizes what is called rationalist apologetics. Clark has deeply influenced many of today’s leaders in apologetics such as Carl F. H. Henry and E. J. Carnell.³⁰ Francis Schaeffer is another who has pieces of a highly rationalist apologetic in his strategy.³¹

THE POSITION. Clark insists that Christianity be presented to the unbelieving world with valid argument. Valid argument, for him, begins and ends with a rationally consistent set of propositional statements. He has little patience with inconsistent and illogical arguments. He writes:

People are frequently convinced by the flimsiest of evidence and the most glaring of fallacies. If it is justifiable to use an argument merely because it serves some practical purpose, would not evangelism be reduced to utter sophistry? Any evidence or fallacy could be used, if only it were convincing to the person addressed. And this would remain the case even when the evangelist himself knew that his arguments were inherently unsound. The confusion arises from the unwillingness to see that an argument is either valid or fallacious. There is no third possibility. And in choosing arguments there is no substitute for valid logic.³²

²⁸ *Defense of the Faith*, p. 240.

²⁹ Reymond, p. 158.

³⁰ See the accounts in Carl F. H. Henry, “A Wide and Deep Swath”, in *The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*, pp. 11–21.

³¹ See Thomas V. Morris, *Francis Schaeffer’s Apologetic: A Critique* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976).

³² “Apologetics”, p. 150.

Clark insists that valid logic conforms to the law of contradiction, i.e., that a statement or proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same way. This law of contradiction, according to Clark, is the common ground shared by all men. If any man tries to deny the necessity for the law of contradiction in thought and speech, he is forced to use the very law itself in trying to deny it. Says Clark, “One cannot write a book or speak a sentence that means anything without using the law of contradiction. Logic is an innate necessity, not an arbitrary convention.”³³

The Christian apologist, Clark reasons, ought to use a rationalist strategy of apologetics by which he presses all claims—DVP and HVP—against the law of contradiction. The law of contradiction has power, he believes, to settle the argument between Christianity and non-Christian secular systems. In 1965 Clark gave his argument for the Christian faith in demonstration of his rationalist apologetic strategy. His three steps are summarized in the following:

1. Secular philosophy with or without presuppositions is a failure. When pure empiricism is used, denying the need for presuppositional equipment, no one can acquire real truth or universal judgments. When presuppositions are used, those selected cannot solve the problems of epistemology, history, ethics, and religion. (By not “solving the problems” Clark means they do not accomplish their goals without violating the law of contradiction.)

2. The Word of God is an available presupposition. Since all secular starting points have failed, one ought to consider starting with the Word of God. The verbal revelation of the Bible provides a sufficient axiom from which one may deduce one’s philosophy.

3. The verbal revelation of the Bible solves the problems of epistemology, history, ethics, and religion. It distinguishes truth from error. It preserves intelligibility. It banishes mysticism, emotionalism, and despair. And by it men receive the Reason of God, that is, God Himself.³⁴

CRITICISM OF THE POSITION. Clark’s rationalist apologetic strategy suffers in some respects from the same split allegiance that occurs in Montgomery’s empiricist strategy. Clark, however, is far more careful than Montgomery to admit his Christian starting point as he reasons through his position. Only when Clark becomes enmeshed in the details of argumentation does he dip down to the HVP level and allow principles which contradict the Word of God to complicate the discussion.

As a Christian Clark starts with God. He grounds in God’s essence his confidence in the law of contradiction. Valid thinking is possible only because of God. Clark says:

God must be accounted sovereign. It is his decree that makes one proposition true and another false. Whether the proposition be physical, psychological, moral, or theological, it is God who made it that way. A proposition is true because God thinks it so.³⁵

Thus Clark refuses to ‘prove’ God exists. Beginning principles or axioms can never be proved or demonstrated. Clark chooses God as his beginning principle instead of trying to demonstrate God exists on the basis of prior principles. In an oft-quoted remark Clark explains: “Instead of beginning with facts and later discovering God, unless a thinker begins with God, he can never end with God, or get the facts either....”³⁶ Moreover, Clark insists that a person chooses Christianity only because God first chose that

³³ *Religion, Reason and Revelation* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 149.

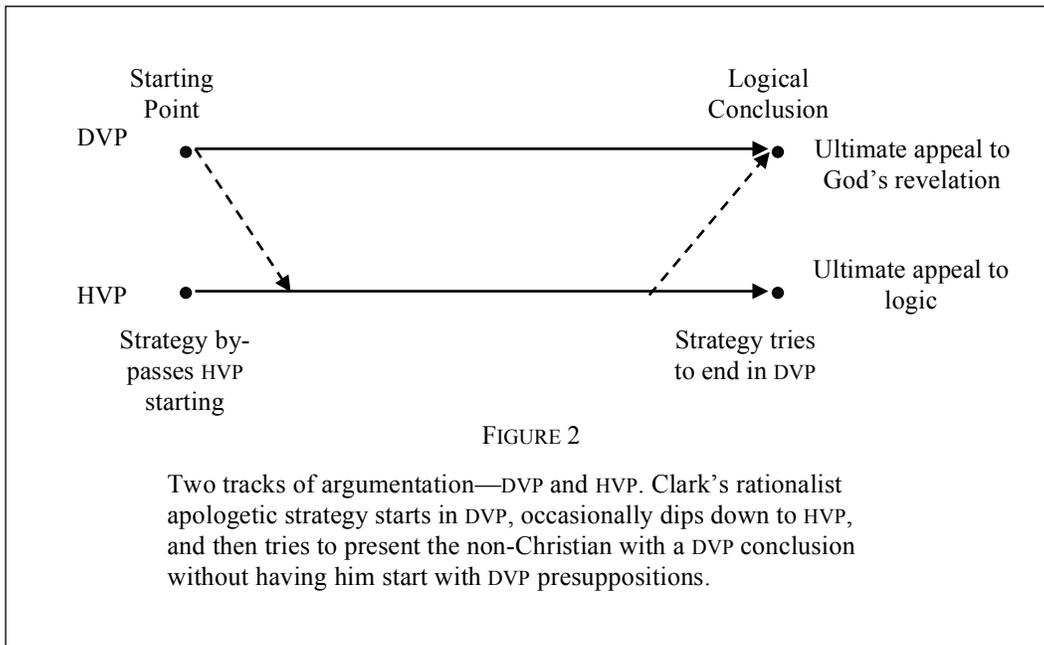
³⁴ See his three essays in his *Festschrift* mentioned above; “Secular Philosophy”, “The Axiom of Revelation”, and “Several Implications”.

³⁵ “Axiom”, p. 66.

³⁶ *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1946), p. 38.

person and made him accept Christianity by His Spirit.³⁷ Clark, the Christian, therefore, is not really an autonomous rationalist.

As an apologist and philosopher, however, Clark at times appeals to the law of contradiction as a neutral and sufficient authority existing between Christian-and non-Christian. In a discussion with the non-Christian Clark begins with the law of contradiction and sometimes argues as though application of that law *alone* will show up the falsity of any HVP system and reveal the truthfulness of the DVP system. The following analysis of his three steps will demonstrate that his argument sounds as if “this HVP system is false because it is internally self-contradictory, and the DVP system is true because it is internally consistent” rather than “this HVP system is false because it is externally contradictory to God’s Word, and the DVP system is true because it is externally consistent with God’s Word.” In other words, Clark sometimes appeals to the law of contradiction as his final authority when the Word of God alone ought to be the final authority.



In a fashion similar to that of Figure One, Figure Two pictures Clark’s apologetic strategy. Along the top line everything is subordinate to the Word of God; on the bottom line everything is subordinate to the law of contradiction. Whereas in Figure One the bottom line depicted an *empiricist* HVP argumentation, in Figure Two the bottom line depicts a *rationalist* HVP argumentation. Clark’s strategy thus begins in DVP, subordinating the law of contradiction to the Word of God, but then proceeds in a way not clearly different from HVP rationalism which tries to subordinate the Word of God to the law of contradiction.

Clark’s three-point apologetic presentation illustrates Figure two. Clark’s first point is that non-Christian philosophies are false because they are internally self-contradictory. Clark claims to know in advance that every non-Christian scheme will fail at some point and expose an internal contradiction.³⁸ Clark is limited mentally, however, like all men. How then can he know that every conceivable non-Christian system will ultimately fail in its logical structure? He knows this truth because as a

³⁷ *Three Types of Religious Philosophy* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1975), p. 123.

³⁸ *A Christian View of Men and Things*, p. 31.

Christian he knows that God thinks logically and, therefore, God's Word is ultimately logical. As a Christian he also knows that man is made in God's image and has innate knowledge which is certain to conflict with man's HVP schemes. Clark's use of logical reasoning in this regard, therefore, is correct but only because of his Christian presuppositions.

As an apologist, trying to get on the level of the non-Christian, Clark does not mention why the logical approach will *inevitably* work. His argument does not clearly mention Christianity until the second step. Thus, at the first step the non-Christian is left thinking that it is the magic power of the law of contradiction itself that ultimately decides truthfulness and falsity. The non-Christian, unless he is extremely sharp-sighted, will not notice that Clark imports Christian truths into his law of contradiction during his first step when he refutes all the available non-Christian systems. Clark has to bring Christian truths into his argument unannounced at this early point because the law of contradiction by itself is insufficient. Poythress has demonstrated that Clark's refutation of non-Christian thought secretly appeals to more than just the solitary law of contradiction:

What does [Clark] mean by "consistency"? What would it mean to test a system for consistency? It means using the law of contradiction. But what is the law of contradiction? An attempt to spell this out will result in a (question begging) Christian view of contradiction (cf. Van Til) or a platitudinous truth: "A statement cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same way." But this platitude is not enough to show that non-Christian systems are contradictory. It is not enough that is, unless some kind of nontrivial content is once more poured back into "true", "false", or "some way".³⁹

When Clark presses the non-Christian with apparent contradictions in his HVP system, the non-Christian can insist that the two contradictory propositions are to be understood in different "senses." The non-Christian will respond in this way just as the Christian responds to anti-Christian attacks upon the Trinity and the Hypostatic Union of Christ by claiming that the apparent contradictory elements are to be understood in different "senses." Poythress rightly notes:

If this method of evading contradiction can be used here to defend the Trinity and the Hypostatic Union, then the non-Christian will proceed to claim that different "senses" or "ways" are involved every time he is caught in a supposed "contradiction." *Hence spelling out the implications of "sense" or "way" virtually involves an acceptance or repudiation of the Christian faith.* (Emphasis supplied).⁴⁰

Therefore, the law of contradiction by itself is insufficient to judge systems; it must be supplemented by the world view involved.

Thus, although Clark begins and ends with the proper truth in refuting non-Christian systems, he does so only by masking over his Christian presuppositions during his use of the law of contradiction. He does not directly confront the non-Christian with the Word of God. The non-Christian is left still thinking in terms of the ultimate sufficiency of the law of contradiction. He might even reason, "I know all non-Christian systems so far have suffered internal logical failure, but I have faith that in the future a non-Christian system will appear without internal logical contradictions." In other words, from the non-Christian's point of view, unchallenged as he remains regarding the sufficiency of the law of contradiction, Clark has only demonstrated the failure of particular instances of non-Christian thought;

³⁹ Vern S. Poythress, *Philosophy, Science and The Sovereignty of God* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publications Co., 1976), pp. 170f.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

he has not demonstrated the failure of the whole underlying principle of rationalistic non-Christian thought in general.

The second step in Clark's apologetic strategy is to assert that Christianity or, more properly, the Word of God is an available axiom to replace non-Christian starting points. Immediately one ought to notice that Clark is not saying "the Word of God *provides* an axiom," but "the Word of God *is* an axiom." This second step of Clark's argument involves a more serious difficulty than his first step. In his first step the problem is simply that he uses, unannounced to the non-Christian listener, the law of contradiction with imported content from Christianity. In his second step, however, Clark imports into his argument actual non-Christian ideas of truth and knowledge.

Clark defines truth and knowledge as only the propositions of Scripture and those secondary propositions deducible therefrom. He reasons that all sensory experience is imperfect; sensory experience, therefore, does not shape truth in *any* way. Since rational propositions can be deduced perfectly, truth must be confined solely to rational propositions. The only rational propositions, however, that can be true are those which are eternal and immutable. The truth, therefore, must be confined to what God has revealed of His mind. Hence Clark defines truth and knowledge to be biblical propositions and their logical derivatives.⁴¹

This view of truth and knowledge, however, is in trouble on biblical grounds. How does God reveal His mind? Does He not use sensory experience in historic revelation? Reymond exposes Clark's problem:

He is...as slow to hear the clear Scriptural testimony regarding the validity and necessity, of sense experience for knowledge as he is quick to use Scripture to justify deduction. This is too bad, *for everywhere Scripture presupposes and assumes without question the significant and essential contribution that sensory experience makes in the acquisition of knowledge...* The very fact that God's revelation comes to men propositionally in Scripture presupposes the validity and necessity of God-created (Ex. 4:11; Ps. 94:9; Prov. 20:12) sense experience. How otherwise, as we have noted, would anyone be aware of the mere *fact* of Scripture?⁴² (Emphasis original)

The editor of Clark's Festschrift calls Clark's deprecation of sensory experience "Idealism, pure and simple."⁴³ Clark's view, therefore, defines knowledge and truth in Idealist rather than biblical terms.

Returning to Clark's second step in his apologetic argument, then, one can observe how he places Christianity or the Word of God before the non-Christian exclusively in rationalistic and Idealistic terms. Clark here seems to deny the fifth conclusion of the seven biblical examples mentioned in Chapter One: "One can use evidences from history, whether the miracles of Israel or the wisdom features in the creation design, to awaken unbelievers to the character of God and the sinfulness of men."⁴⁴ For Clark the Word of God does not really include "evidences from history." He restricts the Word of God to the thought life alone, not to life at *every* point. In fact, however, everyday historical experience does mean something to most people, whether Clark defines it as knowledge or not. If God's Word is not related to historical experience, it is not related to most of man's experience.

The third point in Clark's rationalist apologetic strategy carries forward the weaknesses of his first two points. At the first step he does not confront the non-Christian with the real reason why the law of contradiction excludes any possible HVP scheme. The non-Christian is left still believing in the

⁴¹ "Axiom", pp. 89–91 and Ronald Nash, "Gordon Clark's Theory of Knowledge", in *The Philosophy of Gordon Clark*, pp. 139, 162–75.

⁴² *Justification of Knowledge*, p. 111f.

⁴³ Nash, p. 139.

⁴⁴ Chapter One, p. 6

sufficiency of the law of contradiction as the ultimate judge of all claims. At the second step Clark presents the non-Christian with, an Idealistic version of the Word of God. He is left still believing that sensory evidences do not point to God so clearly that man is without excuse. At the third step Clark asks the non-Christian to accept the Christian position because it solves at least some of the major problems in a consistent fashion—not ultimately because God’s Word says so but ultimately because Christianity *so far* is the best available problem-solver.

Clark recognizes that the law of contradiction cannot always be applied to each and every system. Some systems may exist that are unknown. Within the lifetime of the thinker other systems may not readily yield up telltale inconsistencies. Thus Clark writes:

The coherence theory cannot be applied with final satisfaction-unless one is omniscient. Since life is short and since the implications of various propositions have not been exhausted, there may remain false positions whose absurd conclusions have not yet been deduced.⁴⁵

What does he suggest one do? One ought to minimize skepticism, maximize meaning, and maximize comprehensiveness of problem-solving to choose the right-system. “Such a choice,” Clark says, “is the result of a long course of study to organize one’s universe.”⁴⁶ Hence he puts Christianity before the non-Christian as the best available “organizer” known so far to man rather than as God’s final Word.

Clark’s rationalistic strategy of apologetics, like the empiricist strategy of Montgomery, starts from DVP presuppositions but along the way makes compromises with HVP that weaken its final effect. The non-Christian is thereby not challenged to repent across the entire spectrum of his life and thought; he is left believing in the finality of experience or reason rather than God.

Authoritarian Apologetics. The final of the three apologetic strategies is the authoritarian strategy. *Unlike the other strategies the authoritarian strategy is largely the product of Cornelius Van Til*, a man intimately acquainted early in his career with two streams of apologetics. One stream, which he called the “traditional approach,” was the antecedent of the empiricist and rationalist strategies discussed above. The other stream was developing in the thought of certain Dutch thinkers such as Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck.⁴⁷ Van Til chose to improve and refine the latter stream because he believed that the traditional approach by its flirtation with HVP presuppositions defeated itself before it started. Van Til has strenuously objected ever since to any compromise whatsoever, active or passive, with the presuppositions of HVP. His influence has been considerable through both his writings and the students who studied under him while he taught at Westminster Theological Seminary.

THE POSITION. According to Van Til, the common ground between Christian and non-Christian and the object of ultimate appeal in persuasion can be neither historic facts as the non-Christian understands them nor reason as the non-Christian thinks it exists. Writes Van Til:

To look for a point of contact with the unbeliever in the unbeliever’s notions of himself and his world is to encourage him in his wicked rebellion and to establish him in his self-frustration... The natural man is under the self-imposed delusion that he is “free,” i.e., independent of the control and counsel of God, and that the “facts” about him are also

⁴⁵ *A Christian View*, p. 32.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ See Van Til’s own account in his book *The Defense of the Faith*, pp. 260–99.

“free” in this way. He may pretend to be “open-minded” and ready to consider *whether* God exists. But in being so “neutral” he commits the same sin as Adam and Eve.⁴⁸

Adam and Eve, says Van Til, originally sinned by trying to start from a non-existent “neutral” position in which God’s Word did not have inherent self-attesting authority. Faced with one proposition from God (“in the day thou eatest thereof [from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die”, Gen.2:17) and an opposite proposition from Satan (“Ye shall not surely die,” Gen. 3:4), Adam and Eve chose an independent testing method to see whether God’s Word was true.

Adam saw Satan’s point. “You are right, Satan, I must first decide whether such a God as often speaks to us (1) knows what the ‘good’ for us is, (2) controls history so that he can determine what will happen if we disobey him, and (3) has the right to demand obedience from us. After I decide these issues, and if the answer is ‘yes,’ then I shall obey him. Certainly not before.”

But by taking to himself the right to decide these issues, Adam had already decided them—in the negative. If God is such a one as knows the “good” for us, controls whatsoever comes to pass, and has the right of unquestioned obedience, then man obeys his word because it is *his* word. Adam, in disobedience, became a “free” man.⁴⁹

The implications for apologetic strategy of Van Til’s idea are tremendous. God, because of who He is, can never speak without ultimate authority. Moreover, since He has created the universe and man’s very method of knowing that universe, God is the presupposition underlying even the idea of “proof” itself. It is the height of folly, therefore, for man to seek some higher ground from which to judge whether God exists or whether His Word is true. Such higher ground does not exist (except in man’s apostate imagination). Thus historical experience and rational thought cannot be used as devices which ultimately judge the truthfulness or falsity of DVP. DVP is not dependent upon them; by virtue of creation they are dependent upon DVP. The appeal ultimately is to authority, God’s authority, which is recognized in man’s God-consciousness.

The common ground, therefore, to which ultimate appeal is to be made, according to Van Til, is the God-consciousness of man. Van Til insists:

The point of contact for the gospel, then, must be sought within the natural man. Deep down in his mind every man knows that he is the creature of God and responsible to God. Every man, at bottom, knows that he is a covenant breaker. But every man acts and talks as though this were not so. It is the one point that cannot bear mentioning in his presence...

Every man is made in the image of God and has impressed upon him the law of God. In that fact alone [the Christian apologist] may rest secure with respect to the point of contact problem. For that fact makes men always accessible to God. That fact assures us that every man, to be a man at all, must already be in contact with the truth. He is in so much contact with the truth that much of his energy is spent in the vain effort to hide this fact from himself.⁵⁰

Van Til even prohibits the Christian apologist from accepting the non-Christian’s diagnosis of his own problems. The Christian does not merely give the answer to the non-Christian’s question; the Christian

⁴⁸ “My Credo”, in JA, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 5f.

⁵⁰ *Defense of the Faith*, p. 94.

first redefines the question before he gives the answer. In criticizing Francis Schaeffer, for example, Van Til comments:

Schaeffer allows that the modern man, though not a Christian, has the right problematics but that he heeds the Christian answer. But no man has the right problematics unless he formulates it in terms of the Christian answer. No man emerging from a bottomless ocean of chance can even ask who he is and what the world is. He simply cannot identify himself.⁵¹

Van Til's positive presentation of the Christian faith may be summarized in three steps as follows:

1. God has created the universe and all facts in it. Thus there are two levels of existence—the Creator and the creature. Thus there are two levels of knowledge—the Creator's and the creature's. Thus the Creator is known by the creature in a creaturely way. God, in other words, has revealed Himself to man clearly and truly but what Van Til calls “analogously.”
2. Everything, every fact and every reasoning process, is what it is solely because of its place in God's plan. Nothing can be known, therefore, unless it is known in regard to its place in God's plan. Neutral facts and autonomous reason do not produce true knowledge because they deny the all-encompassing nature of God's plan.
3. Knowledge and truth, therefore presuppose God's Word. To deny God's Word is to deny truth and thus every HVP system destroys itself. The only “proof” of the Christian position, then, is that unless its true is presupposed there is no possibility of “proving” anything at all.⁵²

CRITICISM OF THE POSITION. Van Til is a healthy corrective to the other apologetic strategies, for he reminds Christians that nothing is ever gained, indeed much harm is done, by actively or passively accepting HVP presuppositions during discussion. Van Til's strategy, however, is not without its weaknesses. Whereas the previous two strategies suffered from split allegiance, the authoritarian apologetic strategy suffers from lack of development and imprecision in terminology.

Its lack of development in generating specific approaches on particular issues has caused many of its followers to avoid apologetic discussion completely. Years ago fellow Calvinist J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., complained, “Many young men have been impressed [by this strategy] with the idea that it is improper to present evidences and reasons to the unsaved man.”⁵³ More recently Clark Pinnock called Van Til's strategy *fideism*.⁵⁴ Authoritarian apologetics seems to teach at times that because one cannot use historic facts or logical argumentation with the non-Christian, one ought just to preach the Word devoid of apologetic discussion.

Such an impression, however, is a misunderstanding of Van Til. He has readily acknowledged that he has not developed his position philosophically,⁵⁵ exegetically,⁵⁶ or historically.⁵⁷ One man can do

⁵¹ “The Apologetic Methodology of Francis Schaeffer” (unpublished classroom syllabus; Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, n.d.), p. ii. In fairness to Schaeffer, it must be said that at points he readily states that the natural man *cannot* define his problem apart from God's Word. See *The God Who Is There*, p. 130.

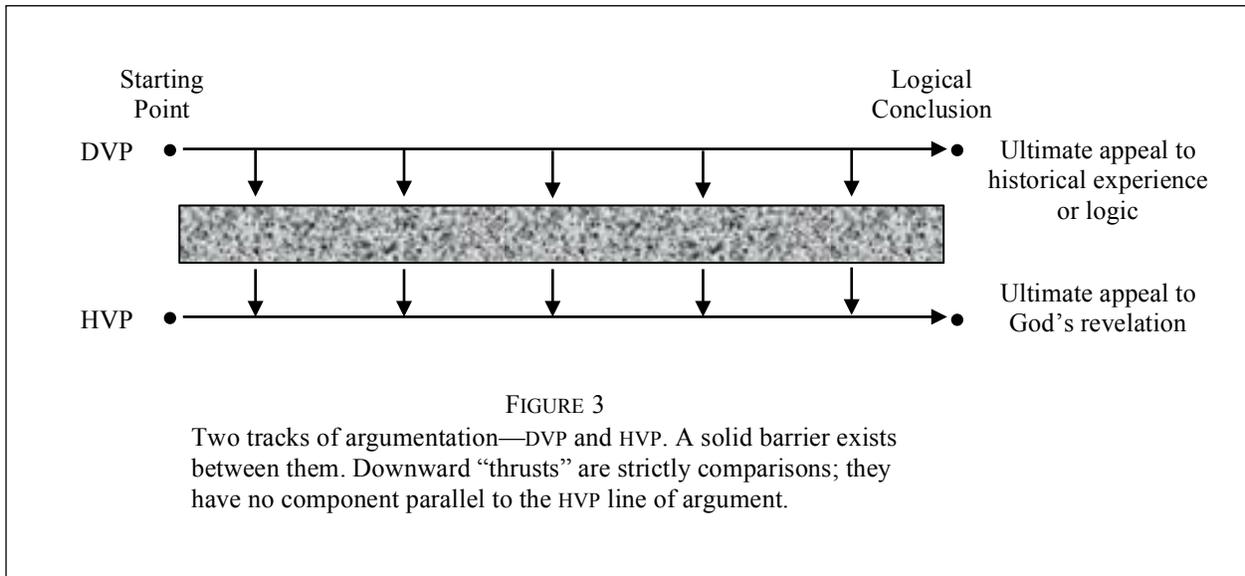
⁵² See especially his essay “My Credo,” pp. 3–21.

⁵³ *A Christian View of Being and Knowing* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication House, 1960), p. 176.

⁵⁴ “The Philosophy of Christian Evidence,” in JA, pp. 420–25.

⁵⁵ To fellow Calvinist Stoker's request for philosophical development Van Til responded, “I leave that to you,” in JA, p. 73. To another critic Van Til admitted, “One of my greatest faults has been to deal with very general and basic thrusts of a movement without giving adequate attention to details” in JA, p. 319f. See also his reply to Rushdoony, JA, p. 348.

only so much. Van Til has struggled to set forth the basic idea of authoritarian strategy, and that is his grand accomplishment. It remains for other men to carry out in specific areas the implications of his central idea. Fortunately, this further development is being done.⁵⁸



Authoritarian apologetics, therefore, is not a brand of *fideism*. Argument is called for, but it is argument from a DVP perspective against every point of the HVP world view. Temporarily, of course, for the sake of argument, the Christian may *consciously* and *publicly* adopt HVP presuppositions, but he does so only to discredit the implications of HVP, not to prove directly there from the Christian faith. Figure Three pictures the situation. If the Christian wishes to work along the bottom line he moves from HVP premises to HVP implications, cutting off the use of any imported capital from the DVP position by the non-Christian. Again, the Christian may wish to work along the top line, moving from DVP premises to DVP implications and striking downward point by point to make comparisons between the two systems. In so doing the Christian is appealing to the God-consciousness inside the non-Christian which testifies that the top line is the real truth.

Besides the criticism of lack of development, Van Til’s strategy has received criticism of imprecision and internal confusion. This criticism may be illustrated by referring to Van Til’s three steps mentioned above. In his first step Van Til states that the creature knows God only analogously. Unfortunately, the term *analogy* has a technical sense in philosophy which refers to a theory of knowledge worked out largely by Thomas Aquinas during the Middle Ages. Such a theory of knowledge is wholly unacceptable to Bible-believing Protestants.⁵⁹ Does Van Til intend to build on Romanist theory? He arouses suspicions further by his statement, “We dare not maintain that [God’s] knowledge and our knowledge coincide *at any single point*.”⁶⁰ (Emphasis supplied) Van Til seems to take a position

⁵⁶ To Berkouwer Van Til replied, “The lack of detailed scriptural exegesis is a lack in all of my writings. I have no excuse for this,” in JA, p. 203.

⁵⁷ “I would...engage in historical apologetics. (I do not personally do a great deal of this because my colleagues in the other departments of the Seminary in which I teach are doing it better than I could do it.)” *Defense of the Faith*, p. 199.

⁵⁸ See, for example, *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective*, ed. Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, P.O. Box 67). See also Jay Adam’s efforts in clinical psychology.

⁵⁹ See discussion in Clark, “Apologetics,” pp. 159–61.

⁶⁰ *The Text of a Complaint*, Minutes of the Twelfth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1945, p. 14.

which would lead to a total barrier between God and man in knowing, i.e., total skepticism. Clark replied:

If God knows all truths and knows the correct meaning of every proposition, and if no proposition means to man what it means to God, so that God's knowledge and man's knowledge do not coincide at any single point, it follows by rigorous necessity that man can have no truth at all.⁶¹

Clark insists that the proposition, for example, "David was King in Israel" must mean the same thing to God that it does to man or man can know nothing whatsoever of God.⁶²

Van Til does seem to be imprecise, but his critics appear to misread him on this point. First, Van Til does not use the term *analogy* in the same fashion as Aquinas; he uses it simply to denote the creaturely nature of man's knowledge.⁶³ By his use of the phrase "coinciding at any point" Van Til means that God's and man's knowledge remain infinite and finite, respectively. In His omniscience God does not view single propositions in isolation from everything else in His mind. God's viewpoint is that of eternity in which there is no sequence of thoughts or propositions. "David was King in Israel" is a proposition expressing a creaturely *temporal* viewpoint. From the viewpoint of eternity, however, David was, is, and will be simultaneously king in Israel. God in eternal omniscience can simultaneously 'view' all moments of history. Man, on the other hand, knows truly only on a creaturely, finite level. His knowledge *corresponds* to God's knowledge, but it does not *coincide*—is not identical—with it. Man's knowledge is a finite replica, a projection of God's knowledge.⁶⁴

Van Til's second step also leads to confusion in some minds. If nothing can be known as it is truly except as it is known in the context of God's plan, and if God's plan cannot be exhaustively known by man, then it follows that nothing can be known exhaustively. In Particular, on the creaturely level there may arise apparent contradictions or paradoxes. Van Til, therefore, refuses to use the law of contradiction as a final court of appeal. Does Van Til, then, allow that God's Word being creaturely revelation will exhibit contradictory doctrine? If he does, then how are believers to determine falsehood? How can tests like those in Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:20–22; Galatians 1:6–9; and 1 John 4:1–3 operate?

Again Van Til seems to express himself awkwardly. He affirms the ultimate rationality of all truth because God is ultimately and perfectly rational. There cannot be, therefore, any real contradiction in truth.⁶⁵ What Van Til means by his talk of paradox is the limitations of man's logic. He writes:

I am not interested in *apriori* deductive systems. I have argued on a number of occasions against various people to the effect that the biblical "system of truth" is based upon the exegesis of the authoritatively given truth content of Scripture. When exegesis seems to lead into so-called "antinomies" such as the relation of the all-controlling sovereignty of God to the freedom or responsibility of man, I simply admit that I cannot logically penetrate the situation. The Bible teaches God's sovereign electing grace. It also teaches the universal offer of the gospel. I cannot logically comprehend the relation between

⁶¹ "Apologetics," p. 159.

⁶² "Axiom," p. 76f.

⁶³ Gilbert B. Weaver, "Man: Analogue of God," JA, pp.321–27.

⁶⁴ Perhaps the situation might be visualized by a photograph of an object. The photograph is two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional object. There is no coinciding, no identity, between two and three dimensional items, although there is correspondence. The two-dimensional image 'truly' represents the three-dimensional object within the limitations of two-dimensional existence. A more biblical illustration is a temple. God's way of salvation can only be represented by an earthly temple, but the way itself isn't the temple—even Israel's temple whose pattern came from God according to 1 Chronicles 28:11–12 (Acts 7:48–49). See also John 1:18 and 1 Timothy 6:16.

⁶⁵ *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1969), p. 38.

these two, but this fact does not lead me to a denial of either one of them. The “system” of Scripture which I develop takes both elements as “limiting concepts” of one another...

Extreme Calvinists think they can show that the teachings of the Bible can be related to one another in a logically penetrable system. When they construct their logical system, they virtually destroy the significance of historical factuality and with it the significance of the Christian story.⁶⁶

On the creature level, in other words, two propositions might resist every attempt to bring them logically together. One does not face a direct contradiction in such a situation because one could see a direct contradiction only if the two propositions were brought logically together. Thus neither a contradiction nor a consistent harmonization would be possible in such a case. As long as this paradoxical condition is limited to the creaturely level and not extended into the Creator, rationality is preserved.

Finally, Van Til’s third step as it is stated is too imprecise for working in a given situation. Just how much DVP must be presupposed in order to undergird knowledge in the non-Christian? Presumably the amount of DVP known and suppressed among the heathen varies from culture to culture. This third step would have much more impact if it were made specific in given situations.

In summary three apologetic strategies have been examined. The *empiricist* strategy focused attention upon the historic evidences, but at the same time makes some compromises that render it logically impotent to show the full truthfulness of the Christian faith. The *rationalist* strategy focuses attention upon the consistency of argumentation, but it, too, makes compromises that weaken its testimony to the non-Christian. The *authoritarian* strategy focuses attention upon man’s God-consciousness, and although it does not make compromises, it suffers from insufficient development.

A SUGGESTED STRATEGY

The remaining section of this chapter will propose a biblical strategy, adopting those features of the three strategies discussed above which fit with the biblical materials examined in the first chapter. Again, one must remember that these are features of *strategy*, not *tactics*. These features are general in form because they are to be used in all tactical situations.

Rational Argumentation. All except fideists agree that rational argumentation is necessary and desirable.⁶⁷ “Rational argumentation means an argument which reasons and uses historical data in a non-contradictory way within the DVP context. This principle fits the third conclusion from the biblical materials in Chapter One: “God uses vigorous confrontation to cause a change of heart in unbelieving men.”⁶⁸ The implication for everyday Christian work is that if a situation warrants a presentation of the Christian faith, it warrants a *good* presentation. The Christian ought to show how seriously he takes his faith by insisting upon the best available climate for rational discussion. In so doing the Christian apologist assures himself that his work will be a valuable means to convict men.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ JA, p. 399. See the reference in the second framework pamphlet to Goedel’s Theorem in which true propositions cannot always be logically linked together.

⁶⁷ See Chapter One, pp. 9–10.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁹ C. S. Lewis points out that Christians are to defend the historic faith, not their personal religious view of that faith: “A clearly maintained distinction between what the Faith actually says and what you would like it to have said... forces your audience to realize that

Ultimate Goal. If the previous discussion on the three apologetic strategies does nothing else, it ought to convince the reader of the importance of firmly fixing in his mind the apologetic *goal*. The goal in apologetics is not ultimately proving the truthfulness of Christianity. To be sure, the non-Christian is not being asked to believe something false; he is being asked to repent. Treating apologetics as the attempt at proving Christianity to the otherwise ignorant is itself a compromise. Such a view of the apologetic goal compromises God's own evaluation of the sinner's problem of rebellion.⁷⁰ Concentration upon trying to prove Christianity to the non-Christian leaves him with an excuse for not becoming a Christian. Such an approach denies that God's revelation is constantly clear to the non-Christian.

The authoritarian apologetic strategy of Van Til rightly refuses to make such a compromise. The Word of God from the very beginning of the apologetic task must define the problems and control all methods being used. To affirm the ultimate goal of apologetics as repentance toward God rather than as demonstration of Christianity's truthfulness is simply to affirm the ultimacy of the first commandment (Matt. 22:37).

Attack HVP. By the first two principles of this suggested strategy, one learns that a biblical apologetic must involve rational argumentation to precipitate true repentance. A prominent feature of this rational argumentation in the Bible is a negative strike at unbelief, an attack on HVP, ridiculing it in a carefully reasoned way (see, for example, the Chapter One examples of God and Job in Job 38–41 and Elijah and Israel in 1 Kings 18). The Bible calls HVP *vanity* and ascribes it to man's rebellion (e.g., Eph. 4:17–19).

In everyday work, therefore, the Christian must attack HVP. He must never leave the non-Christian unscathed in the kingdom of darkness. He must convince the non-Christian that he is not fooling the Christian and most of all, he is not fooling God, with his vanity. The unbeliever must feel the force of the Christian claim that the Christian, too, once believed in such vanities but has since given them up. The Christian knows the essentials of the non-Christian position.

Helps are available to the modern Christian apologist. When the HVP is an empirical variety, Clark's trenchant criticisms are most effective. On the empirical basis with a universe truly contingent in which anything is possible there is chaos. No knowledge is possible, including empiricism. When the HVP is a rationalistic variety, one ought to recall man's inability as a finite creature to erect infinite standards of truth. One may, *for the sake of this negative argument only*, accept HVP presuppositions in order to draw out the vain implications of unbelief.⁷¹

Present DVP. The positive side of the rational argumentation to produce repentance involves presenting the content of God's Word in a consistent DVP fashion. Empiricist and rationalist presuppositions, therefore, ought not to be used as they were in Figures One and Two above. Facts and historical evidences assume significance because all of history is under God's sovereign decree, not because history is contingent. Everything and anything is *not* possible. The law of contradiction is useful to sort out and arrange God's revelation, *not* to stand in judgment over God's Word, thus suggesting the possibility that God 'might' after all have spoken a contradiction. During this positive argument one may *not* assume any HVP presuppositions.

GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS. The positive DVP presentation begins in the universe of the Bible, the real universe. In this real universe every man is a Son of Adam, bearing Adam's image. Every man knows

you are tied to your data...that you are not just saying what you like." in "Christian Apologetics," *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 90.

⁷⁰ See second conclusion, Chapter One, p. 6.

⁷¹ For help see all the works listed in footnotes 2–8 above. Schaeffer's discussion in *The God Who Is There*, pages 119–30, is very helpful here.

something of God the Creator, mankind's sin, and God's judgment upon sin (Rom. 1:18–2:16).⁷² The exact content of a particular individual's God-consciousness presumably varies with his cultural and individual background. In deeply pagan cultures one must look carefully at their myths, looking for traces of Genesis 1—11. As Van Til observed regarding the pagan Plato:

In the history of philosophy, we can see something of the way in which this revelation from God to man (Gen. 1—11) . . . has been used. The myth conception of Plato's philosophy is very instructive on this point. As Paul Elmer Moore has pointed out. Plato sought to solve the problems of life first of all by philosophy and, if he failed there, he would turn to mythology and theology as a second best. This shows that what was once of the highest moment to man is now relegated to something of less significance. That which was once received as bearing the greatest possible authority. inasmuch as it bore the direct impress of God, is now relegated to something that is uncertain, and may be accepted or rejected, as one sees best.⁷³

Plato 'knew' in his God-consciousness that the myths had an authoritative basis.

In another vein Montgomery has suggested that God-consciousness can be observed at work in literary symbolism. God-consciousness, he hypothesizes, might be suppressed into the subconscious mind:

But its eradication from the psyche could never occur. Under these circumstances redemptive knowledge would surface not in direct fashion but by way of symbolic patterns--visible not only to the sensitive psychoanalyst, but also to the folklorist whose material "bubbles up" collectively from the subconscious of the race. Literature in this special sense could therefore reflect the Christian story in an objective sense and trigger conscious acceptance of it. Is this perhaps the background of Paul's literary appeal on the Areopagus: "As certain of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17: 8)?⁷⁴

Hence so-called standard symbols that recur in widely varying cultures may well be related to man's suppressed God-consciousness.

Whatever a particular non-Christian knows about God and God's moral demands upon him, this residual God-consciousness acts as a 'Trojan horse' and a 'fifth column' in his heart. Try as he might, the non-Christian can never eradicate this God-consciousness. It is always there bearing silent witness to the truthfulness of the Word of God being preached to him.

The positive presentation of DVP, therefore, ought to begin with the Bible's own analysis of the unbeliever, i.e., in the depth of his heart he already knows the basic truth of his creaturehood and his sin to which the Gospel is the answer. Never should the Christian apologist take at face value the non-Christian's pretense of genuine ignorance of God's existence and judgment.

CREATOR-CREATURE DIFFERENCE. Knowing that every unbeliever has a consciousness of God in the depth of his heart, the apologist first stresses the Creator-creature distinction. God must be set off from His creation. The apologist must talk of God's essence over against man's essence as the Word of God explains both; he must demonstrate man's utter dependency in contrast to God's complete independency. In some situations, contrasting eternity and time might illustrate this Creator-creature

⁷² See second conclusion, Chapter One, p. 6.

⁷³ *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, p. 97.

⁷⁴ *Myth, Allegory and Gospel*, ed. John W. Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1974), p. 26. God consciousness has always been present to mankind since Adam according to Isaiah 40:21.

distinction. In other situations, contrasting God and man as ethical-law makers might illustrate the point. In still other situations contrasting God and man as prophets of the future might illustrate the distinction. Whatever the particulars, an understanding of the Creator-creature distinction is the prerequisite of the Gospel.

MORAL REBELLION. The second topic to discuss with the non-Christian is man's moral rebellion against God. The Bible can and must define clearly man's problem. His problem is not boredom, limited creature-hood, tensions, or the fifty-seven other varieties of sin-substitutes in today's gospel preaching. Man's problem, defined biblically, is his rebellion against God's all-encompassing authority in every area of his life. If the apologist has done his job in the negative step, attacking HVP, he can bring up at this point specific instances where the non-Christian has tried to cover up the truth in his HVP system. In dealing with historic reliability of the Bible, for example, the critic sets up standards he would never use on other literature. The more specific the instance, the more convicting its power.

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST. The third topic for the apologist to stress is the work of Christ as atonement for sin. He ought to advance to this third topic, however, only if the non-Christian appears to have grasped the first two topics: the Creator-creature distinction and sin. Only if he understands these prior truths can the non-Christian appreciate redemption. Paul in Acts 17, it will be recalled, never got to this third step because his pagan audience rejected the first two steps. Specific illustrations of redemption abound in the Old Testament, for instance the sacrificial lamb; the Christian ought to use such concrete Old Testament illustrations again and again to teach Christ's redemption. These illustrations were God's way to prepare Israel for the atoning Messiah and Christ's way to establish Communion on the Old Testament foundation of Passover as an everlasting memorial to His work.⁷⁵

CHALLENGE OF FAITH. The closing topic of the positive DVP presentation is the necessity of faith. Since faith can never be observed except in its effect upon behavior, the apologist will have to await the subsequent changes in the non-Christian's life to have any real assurance that a true work of regeneration has occurred in his heart. Nevertheless, though it takes time for faith to show itself, he ought to proclaim clearly the moral urgency of repentance. The sixth conclusion to the biblical examples in Chapter One reads: "In a confrontation one ought to remind the unbelievers that God's gracious program is a sovereignly certain one that cannot be stopped."⁷⁶ Although this appeal ought to be done with a gracious spirit, it ought to be done.⁷⁷

With this closing challenge of faith the discussion on a biblical apologetic strategy has come full circle. The rational argument has terminated in the goal of a demanded repentance. The argumentation has avoided importing empiricist and rationalist presupposition alien to the Christian message, yet it has used empirical and rational content.

SUMMARY

In this chapter the discussion has used truths gleaned in Chapter One from biblical examples of DVP-HVP confrontations to evaluate suggested apologetic strategies and to derive one consistent with Scripture. It remains to be seen how such a strategy appears in a given tactical situation--that is the topic of the next chapter.

⁷⁵ One example of how to use the lamb illustration is to show the movie film "Dry Bones" which depicts an actual slaughter of a lamb for those who have never witnessed the real event. The film is available from Christ for the Nations, P.O. Box 24910, Dallas, Texas, 75224.

⁷⁶ Chapter One, p. 6.

⁷⁷ Chapter One, p. 7.

You ought to be challenged to evaluate your own strategy in defending and propagating the Christian faith. Are you unnecessarily weakening your position by letting the non-Christian rest comfortably in his own HVP presuppositions? Are you pressing ultimately for Christianity's truthfulness or instead for repentance in the heart of your hearer?

CHAPTER 3

APOLOGETIC TACTICS

Proper apologetic strategy must be applied in specific tactical situations. Christians will be asked reasons under different circumstances for their faith, but by following a sound strategy they ought to be able to give a proper answer for the hope that is in them. Their answers ought to show clearly the great moral distance between the Christian and non-Christian positions. This chapter illustrates the application of the apologetic strategy discussed in the previous chapter to two specific tactical situations. These exercises in application will expose Christians' need for resources not yet mentioned if they are to handle DVP-HVP confrontations properly.

TWO TACTICAL EXERCISES

The two tactical situations given below depict dialogues between a questioning non-Christian and a Christian. Each exercise will show first an improper approach by the Christian and then a proper approach. The first exercise stresses empirical factors, whereas the second exercise stresses rational factors.

EXERCISE #1. The first exercise pictures the non-Christian asking his Christian friend about his acceptance of the Bible as the sole authority for his faith in the light of historical difficulties. The non-Christian and Christian portions in the dialogue will be identified as NC and C, respectively, and a commentary will be given between the section of dialogue.

IMPROPER APPROACH:

NC: I cannot see why you naively trust the Bible as your sole authority for your life. Surely one as intelligent as you appear to be ought to know the many historical problems uncovered by modern biblical scholarship. What do you do with these findings?

C: I am aware of most of the major problems critics have raised. Tell me, though, the kinds of problems that disturb you most.

The Christian wisely refrains from immediately defending or explaining his position. Instead he gathers data on how his non-Christian friend thinks and shows him that he is genuinely interested in his beliefs.

NC: Oh, there are numerous problems. Obviously the creation account is mythical. The Exodus story is also unreliable.⁷⁸ The idea of a large number of Israelites exiting from Egypt during her most powerful period is out of line with what we know of history. The numerous miracles of Elijah do not square with the real world. I could also mention the virgin birth of Christ as well as his supposed resurrection from the dead.

C: I sympathize with your viewpoint. I can understand why you find my belief in the Bible a bit strange. After all the historic facts do appear at times to conflict with the Bible. The Bible, however, can be proved to be historically reliable.

⁷⁸ Since the creation debate is covered in the second pamphlet, only the Exodus was selected for this illustration.

NC: It can? If you can prove to me that the Bible is historically accurate, I'll gladly take it as my authority, too.

The Christian is getting off the track here. He has fallen for the weaknesses of empiricism discussed in the previous chapter. First, he has agreed with the non-Christian that the facts of history do not testify to the glory of God always and everywhere (cf. Ps. 19:1–4; Acts 14:15–18; 17:26–28; Rom. 1:20). Second, he has begun the impossible task of proving Christianity according to the non-Christian's concept of historical proof. The non-Christian has his own idea of historical reliability, and if God's Word meets this idea, then and only then will he believe. On this HVP basis only probabilistic knowledge is possible because human experience is limited.

C: One can see that the Bible is historically accurate by observing areas where it has been validated. If it has proven itself accurate in some areas, we can trust it in all the other areas. The Exodus is a problem with today's knowledge because we do not know enough about fifteenth century B.C. history. In another related area, however, the Bible has been validated. In the Hittite controversy critics used to accuse the Bible of mentioning a mythical people called Hittites. Eventually archeology found evidence that the Hittites actually existed during biblical times. Thus the Bible has been validated by archeological research in that matter. I simply trust it will be similarly validated in the Exodus matter.

NC: Your illustration of the Hittite matter is interesting. Dr. Gurney, the famous Hittite researcher, once said: "The presence of Hittites in Palestine before the Israelite conquest thus presents a curious problem. So far from explaining it, all our accumulated knowledge of the people of Hatti has only made it more perplexing."⁷⁹ That doesn't sound like the Bible has exactly been validated. All you are saying is that the Hittite discoveries have made the Bible *more probably* true for the while. In the future more data will affect that probability, driving it up or down. In the meantime, all the available data from Egypt renders the whole Exodus account highly improbable. That is why critics have doubted the Old Testament text.

Another error in the Christian's method shows up in this exchange. When he uses non-Christian research material, he ought to set it firmly within the DVP framework. By themselves, the Hittite findings do not validate the Bible, and the non-Christian has caught that point very well. The main error, of course, continues to be that the Christian is trying to prove his position *on the non-Christian's base* and is getting nowhere.

NC: By your own admission the Bible was not clearly true in regard to the Hittite affair until archeology provided additional data. You must, therefore, await the results of modern research *before* you can trust the Bible. Wouldn't it be more direct for you to by-pass the Bible completely and trust modern empirical research as your authority?

I also have a problem with how an event like the Exodus shows God at work. Even if future research demonstrates that the Exodus event actually occurred the way the Bible says it occurred, that does not prove God caused it.

The non-Christian has administered the final blow against the Christian. Not only can the Christian not prove the Bible by empirical standards of proof, but even if he could, he could not then show that God had anything to do with it! Because the Christian has tried to use HVP empiricist strategy in defending his faith, he has missed by a mile the goal of securing repentance from the non-Christian.

⁷⁹ O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1952), p. 59.

PROPER APPROACH: The following dialogue utilizes the strategy presented in the previous chapter. It begins with the same remark by the non-Christian.

NC: Oh, there are numerous problems. Obviously the creation account is mythical. The Exodus event is also unreliable. The idea of a large number of Israelites exiting from Egypt during her most powerful period is out of line with what we know of history. The numerous miracles of Elijah do not square with the real world. I could also mention the virgin birth of Christ as well as his supposed resurrection from the dead.

C: You speak of “what we know of history” and “the real world.” You say that the Bible is unreliable because it conflicts with this “real world.” Could you tell me how you know this “real world”? How can you be so sure that it is true?

The Christian has followed two principles of the apologetic strategy. First, he has decided to confront the non-Christian with his moral rebellion against God. Toward that end the Christian has pointed out that the non-Christian has chosen deliberately a very definite position based upon very specific presuppositions (HVP). Second, the Christian has used the principle of attacking HVP in a reasoned way. A side-benefit of this approach is that the non-Christian will get the idea that the Christian is interested enough in his beliefs to listen carefully.

NC: We know the real world via sensory perception. We have to trust our senses, or we have nothing.

By this point it has become obvious that the non-Christian follows some sort of empiricist approach. He has tried to include the Christian in it with the personal pronoun “we.”

C: Before I became a Christian I thought that way, too. I no longer believe that way, but let me hear your views first.

The Christian has successfully cut off the non-Christian’s attempt to build his view so as to include both of them in it. The Christian has maintained the HVP-DVP distinction (note use of “I” and “you”), and he has let the non-Christian realize that something has caused the Christian to reject this HVP position.

C: (continuing) You have spoken of your perception and my perception.⁸⁰ But your perception and my perception are limited, aren’t they? We cannot stand here and perceive what is going on at another spot or in another time.

NC: Of course, we have to use the observations of many men down through history. Together all observations and experiences are the source of our knowledge of the real world.

C: But tell me how you think these observations ought to be judged. What standards do you use to judge good observations and bad ones?

The Christian has pressed his attack further. He has noted the finiteness of man and asks about the standards of truth the non-Christian uses. The Christian, therefore, is well on his way to expose the HVP presuppositions of his non-Christian friend so that they can make progress in their dialogue.

NC: Well, the standards of truth are pretty obvious. If something is observed that agrees with the observation of others, it probably is true. If only one person sees something, it could be an hallucination. If something directly miraculous is seen, it, too, is an hallucination.

C: Excuse me, why are miracles impossible? If human perception is limited, and you agree it is, then a miracle might just be a new phenomenon not previously observed.

⁸⁰ Another weakness of empiricism not treated here is its failure to account for perception at all. See Clark’s works cited in Chapter 2.

NC: I mean a miracle that is in defiance of natural law: something like your creation or virgin birth or resurrection things.

C: Excuse me again. Where do you get natural law from? If it is used to judge observations, it must precede observations. It must have come from something other than observations.

NC: Natural law has to exist. You simply cannot have knowledge unless there is uniformity in historical and scientific experience. We have to find its patterns in the piles of observational data we have. Otherwise, if natural law did not exist, no knowledge would be possible. All would be chaos. Nothing would be related to anything else. The choice is chaos or natural law.

C: Let me see if I understand you. You are saying that you rely upon observational data. You judge this data by the standard of whether the observational data fit into regular patterns, natural law as you call it. When such observations fit together, then you say you know the real world. Is that correct?

NC: Yes.

The Christian has been a good listener. He summarized the discussion thus far for his own sake and his friend's. He has also spent considerable time learning the shape of the non-Christian's HVP position. He is now ready to present his DVP position in point-by-point contrast to his friend's HVP position.

C: Let me take a few minutes to present my beliefs. Now that I understand a little better your view, I think I can show you more clearly my view.

You asked me how I naively trust the Bible as my sole authority for my life. I used to believe as you do. I used to trust in natural law and human perception as my sole authority for life. I used to think that trusting anything besides these reasonings was foolish. I had some questions, of course, like how I could be sure that natural law really existed, instead of all being chaos and knowledge an illusion. I realized that this faith in natural law was hanging in thin air.

Later, however, God began to awaken me to my rebellion against Him in trusting in natural law and human perception as my final standard. I realized that I was not the Creator of the world; I could not live as if I were God. God created the world according to His own plan. When He spoke, therefore, His words—the Bible—became the absolute authority for all men everywhere. History occurs only because God wills it to occur in a certain way. In my old rebellion I proudly thought that my sole choice was between chaos and my own conception of natural law. I proudly went ahead believing in the insupportable concept of natural law only because it appeared to save me from chaos. But I learned that the only real choice was between starting with God's Word and ending with the only true base for knowledge or starting with myself and ending with chaos or a baseless natural law.

NC: How did you know it was God who persuaded you?

C: I knew it in the same way you know that I am here and you are here. We are creatures of God, made in His image, and we know Who He is. We try to suppress this knowledge. We like to pretend that the facts around us do not testify clearly to His character. We like to pretend that the Bible is not His Word.

The Christian has indicated that he, too, has considered the HVP position and found it badly wanting. He then has shifted the discussion to the positive presentation of DVP. He has begun with the God-consciousness of the unbeliever. He has *presumed* the non-Christian knows God. Faced with the non-Christian's objection of God's identity, the Christian has moved inside the DVP framework, using the doctrine found in creation and the fall. The Christian also has strongly insisted upon the moral character

of the problem with the expressions: “my rebellion,” “live as if I were God,” and “I proudly thought.” The Christian has rightly refused to discuss the matter in morally neutral terms because sin and repentance must be key features of every DVP-HVP confrontation.

The Christian would then outline the four parts of the DVP presentation: the Creator-creature difference, the moral rebellion, the redemption in Christ, and the challenge of faith. He would pursue each single part until the non-Christian adequately understood it. Then the Christian would go on to the next part. Always he would treat the DVP position as *a whole system*.⁸¹

After presenting the whole system in outline, the Christian could return to the matter of the Exodus, using historical evidences as necessary.

C: Since you raised the question about the Exodus, let me address that problem. From my viewpoint, you now understand, I question the entire chronological scheme of ancient history. God’s Word declares that the Exodus occurred in the fifteenth century B.C. It also declares that certain historically visible things happened at that time: Egypt suffered physical plagues, the Red Sea was seriously disturbed, Egyptian military power slipped from visibility for some four or five centuries, and the Hebrews invaded Palestine from the eastern side.

I fully expect archeological research will discover evidence of some or all of these phenomena. I fully expect that such new evidences can be rationally arranged into a revised version of ancient history that will fit perfectly with the Bible. In fact, a non-Christian, Immanuel Velikovsky, has already suggested one such radical revision which claims that archeology has already discovered evidence of the biblical Exodus but has wrongly dated it. You really ought to read his work *Ages in Chaos*: I’d like to discuss it with you.

By treating the Exodus facts seriously, the Christian has shown his non-Christian friend that the facts and empirical observations do count in DVP but not in the same way as they count in HVP. In DVP one begins with the Bible and confirms it by discovering how the facts fit with it; in HVP one begins with one’s own standards and pre-judged facts and then evaluates the Bible.

This first exercise, therefore, has pictured DVP-HVP confrontation involving mainly historical matters. In the improper approach the Christian compromised his presentation by letting himself be forced to play by the non-Christian empiricist rules. In the proper approach the Christian refused to share any common notion between HVP and DVP. Instead he politely contrasted HVP and DVP and therefore presented his non-Christian friend with a radical choice.

EXERCISE #2. The second exercise pictures the non-Christian asking his Christian friend about his acceptance of the Bible in the light not of *historical* difficulties but of *logical* difficulties. Once again the improper and proper apologetic approaches will be presented.

IMPROPER APPROACH:

NC: I cannot see why you naively trust the Bible as your sole authority for your life. Surely one as intelligent as you appear to be ought to know the serious logical contradictions in Christianity. How do you avoid these problems without destroying your intellect?

C: I am aware of most of the problems you call contradictions. Tell me, though, some that disturb you most.

As in the first exercise the Christian wisely refrains from immediately presenting his faith while he learns about his non-Christian friend’s position.

⁸¹ Each doctrine is protected by other related doctrines. See the discussion later in this chapter.

NC: One very glaring problem is the conflict between a totally sovereign God and truly free men. On one hand, if God controls everything that comes to pass, He must control everything men do. If He controls everything men do, and men sin, then God must be held responsible for sin. So if God is sovereign, men cannot be free. On the other hand, if men are truly free, men, not God, must be the cause of their own lives; God cannot control their lives. So if men have free will, God cannot be sovereign.

Now, your Christian religion insists upon both of these contradictory propositions—God is sovereign and man is free.

C: I agree that we ought not to accept anything that we cannot show fits logically together.

NC: You do? If you can prove that God's sovereignty and men's free will fit logically together, then I'll gladly believe the Bible.

The Christian here, as in the previous exercise, has fallen into a HVP trap. He again has agreed that God's Word has no implicit authority; it must pass a man-made test before it ought to be trusted. Moreover, the Christian has also agreed upon a test designed according to the non-Christian's HVP. The non-Christian in this exercise is a rationalist who insists that: (1) one can apply the logical test in a purely abstract way devoid of any presuppositions; and (2) one ought not to trust any system of beliefs unless he can show how all parts of the system fit logically together. Requirement (1) is an impossibility,⁸² and requirement (2) sets the unattainable goal of total logical comprehension.⁸³

C: That God is sovereign and men are free is not a contradiction. God in His sovereignty permits men a freedom of choice. God's sovereignty, therefore, coexists with human freedom.

NC: Excuse me, but you are hiding the contradiction in your word *permit*. What do you mean by it? If you mean God causes men's choice, you are back to total divine sovereignty and a denial of free will. If you mean that God's sovereignty shrinks and lets men choose in complete freedom, you are back to a non-sovereign God.

Here the non-Christian has pressed requirement (1) against the Christian. He expects the Christian to accept his HVP ideas of "total sovereignty" and "human free will." The Christian has so far failed to see that these HVP presuppositions have entered the argument.

C: Look! We cannot expect to understand everything clearly; we are limited.

NC: Limited we may be, but we have only one way to recognize truth: is there logical consistency or not? If we don't respect logical consistency, we can't even talk! Until, therefore, you can tell me how God can be sovereign and man be free, I cannot see truth in what you say.

Now the non-Christian has pressed requirement (2) against the Christian. He expects the Christian to agree that total logical comprehension must precede belief. Again the Christian has failed to recognize his error in playing by HVP rules. The key fault, then, in this dialogue is that the Christian has fallen into using a rationalist strategy in defending his faith.

PROPER APPROACH: If the Christian uses the apologetic strategy recommended in the previous chapter, the dialogue would look something like the one following:

NC: I cannot see why you naively trust the Bible as your sole authority for your life. Surely one as intelligent as you appear to be ought to know the serious logical contradictions in Christianity. How do you avoid these problems without destroying your intellect?

⁸² See discussion in Chapter 2, p. 15–17, with the reference cited in footnote 39.

⁸³ See discussion in Chapter 2, p. 22-23, and in the second framework pamphlet, Chapter 1, on the limitations of reason.

C: Before I can respond to your question, I have to know more about how you think. When you speak of logic do you mean total logical comprehension? Do you mean that unless you see how every point logically fits every other point in a system you will not believe?

NC: Yes.

C: What, then, do you do with the same problem of sovereignty and human choice? I understand you are an avid reader of horoscopes, that you believe in cosmic fate. If cosmic fate determines your every action, then you have no choice and reading horoscopes cannot help you. If, however, you believe horoscopes can guide you to choose wise courses of action, you cannot believe in cosmic fate. It seems, after all, that you have the same so-called contradiction in your position that you find in mine.

The Christian has decided to expose the HVP presuppositions of his non-Christian friend before he answers his challenge. In doing so he is learning his friend's belief-system and will eventually be able to expose the moral choice his friend has made in holding to his HVP. The Christian has already unmasked requirement (2) and has ridiculed it. His friend's HVP cannot meet his own HVP requirement!

NC: I guess I just believe in both at the same time, but I don't see any actual contradiction between fate and free will.

C: Knowing your careful mind, I am sure you do not. But my point is that you required of me something you do not require of yourself. You said that I must not merely show there is not contradiction in Christianity but I must actually show *how* divine sovereignty and human freedom logically fit together. When I pointed out that you have the same problem in your belief you said merely that there was no contradiction. You did not show how cosmic fate and free will worked together.

The Christian has made enough of an attack on his friend's HVP that he can now turn to the positive presentation of DVP.

C: Let me take a few minutes to present my beliefs. Now that I understand a little better your view, I think I can show you more clearly my view.

You asked me how I naively trust the Bible as my sole authority for life. I used to think at times as you do. I used to trust occasionally in the sole power of logical analysis as my authority for life. I had some questions, of course, about how I could dare try to reduce all of life to just logical relationships. It seemed that I really could not totally comprehend all the things I believed to be true, like fate and freedom.

Later, however, God began to awaken me to my rebellion against Him in trusting logical analysis as my final standard. I realized I was not the Creator of the world; I could not live as if I were God. I had to admit that the goal of total logical comprehension is unattainable to a finite creature like Me. In fact, instead of making my belief in God dependent upon my prior logical comprehension, I found that I had to make my belief in logic dependent upon my prior belief in God. Logic works only because God in His omniscience has total logical comprehension. All things, therefore, fit together logically in God's infinite perspective although in our finite perspective we cannot see how this fact is true. In my old rebellion I proudly thought that my sole choice was between no knowledge or total knowledge. But I learned that the only real choice was between starting with God's Word and ending with true but partial knowledge or starting with myself and ending with no knowledge.

As in the previous exercise the Christian has indicated his disillusionment with the HVP position of his non-Christian friend. He has shifted to DVP, presuming the non-Christian knows God. Additionally, he has begun to treat the whole issue in *moral* terms, e.g., “live as if I were God,” and “my old rebellion.” After presenting the broad four-point outline of DVP, the Christian could return to the matter of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

- c: Since you raised the matter of divine sovereignty and human freedom, let me address that problem. From my viewpoint, you now understand, I insist only that the two items not contradict; I do not insist that I wholly comprehend them in their relationship. I trust that divine sovereignty and human freedom are ultimately logical because God teaches both in His Word. Divine sovereignty, biblically, is the Creator’s will, not some impersonal cosmic fate. Human freedom, biblically, is the creature’s responsibility, not absolute freedom. You can see, then, if the terms divine sovereignty and human freedom are understood biblically within the Creator-creature frame of reference there is no logical contradiction. I freely admit I can explain them no further. but I don’t have to.

In this second exercise the Christian has faced a rational challenge from his non-Christian friend. During the improper approach the Christian failed to challenge the HVP rationalist rules which the non-Christian insisted upon. During the proper approach the Christian first rejected this HVP rationalism and then presented DVP.

TACTICAL PREPARATION

The two tactical exercises have shown how necessary adequate training is for the Christian. To avoid improper approaches and succeed with proper ones, the Christian must overcome certain common deficiencies which because of 1 Peter 3:15 every Christian knows he can overcome.

Common Deficiencies. At least three deficiencies are commonly observed in Christian circles, deficiencies which seriously weaken the Christian’s apologetic impact.

UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE FLOW OF THE BIBLICAL REVELATION. Many Christians know parts of the Bible, but few know how all parts of the Bible flow together. Not many believers today, for example, have a good grasp of the Old Testament. Unfortunately for such Christians, the New Testament writers presuppose that their readers know the Old Testament. The New Testament writers repeatedly allude to terms, promises, and ideas of the Old Testament which can be understood only if the reader knows their proper Old Testament context. Moreover, few believers today see the ‘big picture’ of how Genesis leads to Revelation. *One result of this unfamiliarity is a lack of confidence in identifying the biblical position in different situations.*

PIECEMEAL USE OF BIBLE DOCTRINE. Similar to the unfamiliarity deficiency is Christians’ piecemeal use of Bible doctrine. In DVP-HVP confrontations it is foolish to explain and defend one or two DVP doctrines all by themselves. Van Til has pointed out the problem:

The fight between Christianity and non-Christianity is, in modern times, no piece-meal affair. It is the life and death struggle between two mutually opposed life and world-views. The non-Christian attack often comes to us on matters of historical, or other, detail. It comes to us in the form of objections to certain teachings of Scripture, say, with respect to creation, etc. It may seem to be simply a matter of asking what the facts have been. Back of this detailed attack, however, is the constant assumption of the non-

Christian metaphysics of the correlativity of God and man. He who has not been trained in systematic theology will often be at a loss as to how to meet these attacks as long as he has never removed the foundation from the enemy's position.⁸⁴

A principle from the Vietnam War will illustrate the necessity of presenting Bible doctrine as one interlocking system rather than as piecemeal isolated segments. When US B-52 bombers were trying to destroy targets in North Vietnam, they had to penetrate one of the most sophisticated and concentrated air defense systems ever built. To penetrate this system as successfully as they did, each bomber had to fly in a careful relationship with the other aircraft. Only by keeping together in this relationship or formation were the bombers' 'black boxes' able to protect them from enemy anti-aircraft weapons. Lone bombers flying independently of each other could never have made it.

For similar reasons each Bible doctrine needs to be kept in relationship with other Bible doctrines. The doctrine of revelation, for example, cannot be defended from HVP attacks unless it is kept in relationship with the doctrines of creation and divine essence. The resurrection of Christ cannot be defended apart from the doctrines of creation, prophecy, and hypostatic union. Lone doctrines simply cannot be defended independently of the overall system of biblical doctrine.

BIFURCATION OF REASON AND HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE. A third common deficiency among Christians is a false split many of them make between reason and historical experience. They tend to exalt one and diminish the other. On one hand, reason can be so exalted that doctrine is put in careful propositional form and treated independently of the historical situation in which it was revealed. The doctrine of election, for example, is so analyzed (particularly by hyper-Calvinists) that HVP rationalism virtually takes over Christian thinking. No room or consideration is given to historical situations like the call of Abraham from Ur. No question is ever asked about whether one's statement of the doctrine of election fits the story of Abraham's election. On the other hand, historical experience can be so exalted that no general definition of doctrine is ever derived. Detailed studies of the Exodus and other events in early Israel's history can so crowd out doctrinal generalization that HVP empiricism begins to shape Christian thought.

Success in a given tactical situation, therefore, depends upon so training believers that they will overcome these common deficiencies. Toward that end Christians must design a specific training program.

DESIGNING A TRAINING PROGRAM

Certainly today's believer can profit if he studies the results of the training programs in biblical times. These results are most clearly visible in the many biblical speeches. If one observes the inner structure of these speeches in the Bible, he will find that the speakers mention certain key events of the past (or assume their occurrence) again and again. The biblical speech-makers had mastered the flow of biblical revelation from event to event. One will find that their speeches link all the basic doctrines together in a unified whole rather than defend a particular doctrine in isolation from the others. He will also find that such emphasis upon key historic events and doctrine revealed in those events automatically binds together doctrine and history. The following discussion outlines for believers a training program based upon the Bible's own approach; hopefully therefore, it overcomes the three deficiencies mentioned in the previous section.

⁸⁴ *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1971), p. 6 See also previous footnote.

Key Biblical Events. To select the key biblical events for study one need only serve the general emphasis of the Bible. Which events occupy the most space in biblical literature? Which events are most cited by various authors as revelations of God’s truths? Which events are repeated in the great speeches of the Bible? Table One summarizes the key biblical events.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Creation | 12. Kingdom Fall |
| 2. Fall | 13. Exile |
| 3. Flood | 14. Restoration |
| 4. Noahic Covenant | 15. Birth of the King |
| 5. Call of Abraham | 16. Life of the King |
| 6. Exodus | 17. Death of the King |
| 7. Mt. Sinai | 18. Resurrection of the King |
| 8. Conquest and Settlement | 19. Ascension and Session |
| 9. Election and Reign of David | 20. Pentecost |
| 10. Golden Era of Solomon | 21. Separation of Church from Israel |
| 11. Kingdom Decline | 22. [Church History] |

TABLE 1. List of the key events of biblical history. Bible writers discuss and cite these events most. Brackets indicate period which provides perspective to the believer on doctrinal issues.

A training program that majors on these key events would enable Christians to overcome their common deficiency of being unfamiliar with the flow of biblical revelation. Their knowledge of these key events would illuminate, for example, the Old Testament backgrounds of the great New Testament truths. Training in learning the key biblical events of history would produce confidence in identifying the biblical position on issues.

Interconnected Doctrine. Since Bible doctrine is revealed in all of these key historical events as well as in other lesser events, it follows that under God’s sovereignty all Bible doctrine is interconnected within the flow of biblical history. One doctrine cannot be visualized correctly standing alone by itself. A training program that consciously links specific basic Bible doctrine to specific historic events would go far in reminding believers that all doctrines depend upon each other.

Only within the picture of creation and its associated doctrine of God as Creator, for example, could the picture of Mt. Sinai and its associated doctrine of revelation occur. Revelation in any other kind of universe than that one pictured in Genesis 1 and 2 is meaningless. The doctrines of God and of revelation, therefore, interconnect. Treated together each one protects the other against HVP objections. This example of interconnected doctrine illustrates how the properly trained Christian ought to be able to reason across the whole expanse of historic revelation in his defense of the faith and avoid the piecemeal use of doctrine.

The Union Of Reason And History. Christians could also correct the third deficiency, a trend toward rationalism or empiricism in Christian thought, by linking specific doctrines to specific historic events. If this training approach were used, believers would have definite ‘resource pictures’ in their minds with which they could refine their understanding of particular doctrines. The Abraham event cited previously in the deficiency discussion supplies a vivid picture of several doctrines including that troublesome one of election. First, by going back to the historic experience of Abraham’s call out of Ur, one can obtain guidance in stating the doctrine of God’s election. Then, by going back to the *doctrine* of election, one can see the great truth that overarches all *historic experience*, including God’s call to

Abraham, giving it shape and meaning. Union of historic experience and doctrine, therefore, keeps a balance between the extreme errors of, on the one hand, overstressing disconnected historic facts (empiricism) and, on the other hand, doctrinal propositions (rationalism).

A Specific Program. Each of the five pamphlets following this one in the framework series carries out steps in a training program designed around the three components: key biblical events; interconnected history; and the union of reason and history. The key events used are those listed in Table One above. To each event one or more specific basic Christian doctrines are linked. The program does not imply that there is only one ‘proper’ doctrine for each event or that a given event reveals all parts of any particular doctrine. The program implies only that key events and basic doctrines can be linked together fruitfully to strengthen believers.⁸⁵

Gaining skill in using the key biblical events and their associated doctrines will equip Christians to carry out tactical apologetics. Faced with differing DVP-HVP confrontations, Christians trained under this program ought to be able to distinguish DVP from HVP as *total systems*. They ought to be able to think anew each particular doctrine by going back to the associated historic event and to think across the field of doctrine by reviewing the biblical panorama of history. They will more likely remain inside the DVP system while addressing HVP. In short this training program coupled with the apologetic strategy given in the previous chapter ought to make possible sound tactical apologetics.⁸⁶

One secondary advantage of this program is that Christians thus taught will be able to converse intelligently with Christians from other local churches and will be able to comprehend the great Christian classical authors such as Augustine, Calvin, and Luther. No highly specialized vocabulary is necessary in the program.

SUMMARY

While Chapter Two gave the strategy for apologetics, Chapter Three has given an outline of the tactics needed in particular apologetic encounters. The brief tactical treatment has pointed out the need for some changes in biblical training if apologetic strategy is to be successfully applied. Christians have to know how to think through the whole Bible. They have to protect each doctrine with other interconnected doctrines. Finally, they have to steer a course between rationalism on one extreme and empiricism on the other. To meet these deficiencies in present training methods, this framework series suggests a specific training approach.

You have arrived at the point where you ought to see that presenting DVP in a HVP culture demands quality training. If you are to be a proper ambassador for Christ, you are obligated to obtain the best possible training you can. Quality training, in turn, demands time and effort. This pamphlet and the subsequent ones in this series are one way to obtain such training. Why not determine now that you will carefully study them, read the suggested Scripture, and look up some of the bibliographic materials cited? You will find it is worth it!

⁸⁵ In other words, the program is not to be confused with the scholarly discipline of Biblical Theology which is concerned with delineating the exact content of revelation in each historical event recorded in the Bible rather than linking a complete systematic theological statement derived from many events to a particular event.

⁸⁶ Still needed in specific situations will be data given in the many excellent sources listed in the Recommended Reading List in the back of this pamphlet. Such data, if set within the framework suggested in this and subsequent pamphlets, would be extremely useful whether or not it comes from authors unsympathetic with the apologetic strategy followed here.

CHAPTER 4

GIVING THE ANSWER WITH WORKS

The first three chapters of this pamphlet have discussed the problem of giving the answer in words, in a biblically proper apologetic. Another dimension exists, however, in presenting DVP in a HVP world. In addition to DVP words a DVP lifestyle is necessary. In the key reference of 1 Peter 3:15, for example, the non-Christian asks the Christian about DVP because of the Christian's lifestyle (note verses 14 and 16). In fact, this third chapter of Peter's first epistle begins with a very clear reference to the need for a DVP lifestyle on the part of Christian wives married to non-Christian husbands (3:1–6). This section of the pamphlet, therefore, returns to the seven biblical examples discussed previously in order to summarize the principles of communicating DVP with works. A second section follows which uses the principles found in the first section for defining a Christian lifestyle in our present age.

SEVEN BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Although considered previously, these seven biblical examples offer rich insights into how God backs up His Word with appropriate works. Taken together the examples can furnish the reader with a broad set of useful principles.

God To Adam (Genesis 3). When God confronts Adam and his wife with their sin, He comes walking in the Garden of Eden in what apparently is His customary manner (Gen. 3:8).⁸⁷ Although the Fall has now occurred, God continues His policy of periodic visitation to the human couple. The evil of sin does not control God or the situation; evil has not rendered the earth unmanageable for God. God as Creator continues in sovereign control.

As the confrontation proceeds, however, the human couple's nakedness is exposed. Evil has had an experiential effect in their lives. Moral cause-effect has made them guilty before God, and God points this effect out to them (3:11). After God's interrogation, both Adam and his wife are clear in their perception that violation of God's Word has brought about their guilty sensation.

One learns from this example that the degenerative effects of sin are themselves under the laws of God. Far from freeing man from God, evil only increases his dominance by God. God's rule continues as before, but man's activities suffer. Paul summarizes this principle well:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. (Gal. 6:8)

Thus evil may appear chaotic to man, but the chaos never can become ultimate. Because God's Word remains ultimate, it shapes the resulting works of evil.

God To Job (Job 38–41). In this second example God uses His works in creation to correct Job. The universe moment-by-moment is being sustained by God's laws. The design and workings of nature show clearly God's Creatorship and superiority to man.

⁸⁷ This appearance of God is called a *theophany* and apparently is the second person of the Trinity (see fifth pamphlet).

From this second example one learns that God's works in nature reflect His glory to the non-Christian, whether the non-Christian chooses to recognize that fact or not. The very objects man studies as a scientist or artist speak of God's rule.

Moses To Israel (Deuteronomy 32). A third example of works backing up a verbal witness is Moses' own situation when he composed Deuteronomy 32. In this song Moses is warning Israel that any rebellion against God on their part will be met with a God-initiated lawsuit. In fact, the credibility of such a future lawsuit derives from Moses' own rebellion against God. The Song ends with these words:

And Jehovah spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain in Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab ...and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people...because ye trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. For thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither into the land which I give the children of Israel. (Deut. 32:48-52)

Because Moses rebels (Num. 20:10-13), God does not let him enter the land.

The message of this severe action against Moses is clear: if God did that to Moses, He can do it to any lone Israelite or group of Israelites. Moses' final failure to enjoy the long-promised land argued forcibly to all the Hebrew pioneers that God's Word is impartial to all, including those in the highest leadership levels.

Elijah To Israel (1 Kings 18). Elijah's confrontation with Israel over HVP Baalism is a fourth example of works backing up words. Elijah's many miracles, culminating in the grand fire-from-heaven miracle of I Kings 18, substantiate the claims that Yahweh, not Baal, is Lord. Unlike the works shown to Job in Job 38-41 which demonstrate God's design and control of nature, the works that Elijah shows to Israel teach that God can miraculously interfere at will into natural processes. That a creature can have Creator powers as the priests of Baalism claim is an idolatrous assumption.

One learns from this fourth example that God works directly to crumble idolatrous extensions of the creature's powers. Failures and breakdowns of man's idols are works substantiating the gospel claims.

Daniel To Babylon (Daniel 4). A similar work occurs in this fifth example of Daniel's confronting King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is physically and mentally broken until he repents of his pride and idolatry (Dan. 4:31-37). Associated with God's work upon Nebuchadnezzar is the loyal lifestyle of Daniel and his three friends (Dan. 3:1-30; 4:19-27), believers who would remain faithful to God to death. These believers, afraid of neither the king's wrath nor his fiery furnace, live out and speak out the truth.

This fifth example teaches two things. First, it shows the same truth as the fourth example except in a more specific way, viz., God can break an individual's pride with severe physical and mental trauma. Second, it shows the power of fearless believers who literally place their lives in God's hands as they defy evil pressures and refuse to deny the Word.

Jesus To Israel (The Four Gospels). In the sixth example of works giving credence to verbal claims, one faces the morally perfect life of Christ (John 8:46). Critics, therefore, who deny Christ's words have been left with the impossible task of proving that one who was of the highest moral character was a liar or lunatic.

This sixth example teaches that the powerful work of a morally worthy lifestyle deeply strengthens the case of DVP. In the very nature of the case, HVP critics must argue *using some standard of value* that DVP is ‘wrong.’ If DVP adherents, however, clearly show superior moral standards in their lives, this step becomes very difficult. The Apostle after refers to this powerful influence of a godly life upon critics: “So is the will of God that by well-doing you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:15).

PAUL TO THE GENTILES (Acts 17 And Romans 1). The last example selected demonstrates the effect of an aggressively evangelistic lifestyle upon the HVP world. Paul utilizes the works of God in the world by pointing them out to the Gentiles. He points Gentiles to God’s works in nature (Acts 14:17; 17:26–27; 27:35⁸⁸), including God’s shaping of the moral cause/effect evident in degenerative behavior (Rom. 1:22–32). Moreover, Paul sets an example for all the Church in being thoroughly conversant in the works of the unbelievers (Acts 17:28).⁸⁹ Aggressively moving into HVP circles, physically through travel and intellectually through study, Paul pushes HVP critics to the point where they complain that he and other Christians “have turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

Thus from this last example one learns the value of an aggressive attitude toward penetrating HVP strongholds to bring every thought into captivity to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4–5). Christians so effectively demonstrated this lifestyle in the early Church that John Milton recounted in the seventeenth century *Areopogetica*:

[Paul] thought it no defilement to insert into Holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian; the question was notwithstanding sometimes controverted among the primitive doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirmed it both lawful and profitable; as was then evidently perceived, when Julian the Apostate and subtlest enemy to our faith made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning; for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and sciences they overcome us.⁹⁰

It now becomes necessary to summarize from these seven biblical illustrations the lessons learned about witnessing with works. Each of the following principles will help define an effective Christian lifestyle today.

1. The believer’s lifestyle ought to show his complete confidence that God’s Word controls the shape of even evil degeneration. He should not register, therefore, fear or shock at evil-induced chaos. Instead, as God teaching Adam and Paul teaching the Romans, he should study such degeneration in order to point out to HVP adherents the sovereign effect of God’s Word.
2. The believer’s lifestyle ought to show his faith that every item in nature reflects God’s glory as God Himself points out to Job. In this regard the believer must involve himself in studying nature and insist that such study is an act of worship rather than ‘neutral’ and ‘objective’ activity as his HVP fellow students say.
3. The believer’s lifestyle ought to reflect his abhorrence of idolatry. He must studiously oppose all attempts at idolatry whether political, intellectual, or personal just as Elijah and Daniel have done.

⁸⁸ In Acts 27:35 Paul publicly thanks the biblical God for His sovereign deliverance from the storm of the 276 people aboard the ship, only three of whom in the context are identified as Christians.

⁸⁹ His learning in pagan thought can also be seen in the overall structure of his argument in Acts 17. See any good commentary on Acts or send for my tapes on Acts 17 here at Lubbock Bible Church.

⁹⁰ John Milton, “Areopogetica,” *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), xxxii, 388.

4. The believer's lifestyle ought to show sound moral character, not perfection as in Jesus' case, but instead a humility toward God's grace. Much unseen time and effort in building such character is an investment for the day of battle.
5. The believer's lifestyle ought to show an evangelistic, aggressive movement into the strongholds of HVP as Paul has demonstrated. He cannot afford to live merely defensively; he must conquer new ground for Christ.

A PROPER CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

Every aspect of the Christian life involves a doing part and a resting part.⁹¹ The matter of a Christian lifestyle is no exception; it, too, has a doing and a resting part.

The Doing Part. Some Christians think that God expects them only to witness and win souls to Christ but not to get involved in developing a distinct Christian culture and influence upon HVP society. While it may be granted that the goal *for this age* is not to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth before Christ returns, the *ultimate goal* for history *is* to bring about on earth such a Kingdom.⁹² During the present era Christians must establish a testimony which demonstrates to all men that God's program of salvation in Christ is the same program that is going to culminate in victory over all the earth and over every phase of culture. By trying to sever artificially personal evangelism from a comprehensive DVP testimony in every area, Christians succeed in accomplishing neither. Many years ago Dr. J. Gresham Machen wisely observed why one factor influences the other:

Now it is perfectly true that men must be brought to Christ one by one... And yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that all men are equally well prepared to receive the gospel. It is true that the decisive thing is the regenerative power of God. That can overcome all lack of preparation, and the absence of that makes even the best preparation useless. But as a matter of fact God usually exerts that power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favorable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its roots.⁹³

C.S. Lewis saw the same need for a comprehensive Christian testimony. He wrote:

I believe that any Christian who is qualified to write a good popular book on any science may do much more by that than by any directly apologetic work. The difficulty we are up against is this. We can make people (often) attend to the Christian point of view for half

⁹¹ See the discussion on faith in Chapter 3 of the third pamphlet.

⁹² The relationship between the Church and the Kingdom is discussed briefly in parts of the third and fourth pamphlets and in much detail in the sixth pamphlet.

⁹³ J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," a reprint from *The Banner of Truth* magazine, No. 69, June 1969 by L'Abri Fellowship, Chalet Les Melezes, 1861 Huemoz sur Ollon, Switzerland. Machen gave this speech at the opening of the 101st session of Princeton Theological Seminary, September 20, 1912.

an hour or so; but the moment they have gone away from our lecture or laid down our article, they are plunged back into a world where the opposite position is taken for granted. As long as that situation exists, widespread success is simply impossible. We must attack the enemy's line of communication. What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects—with their Christianity *latent*. You can see this most easily if you look at it the other way round. Our Faith is not very likely to be shaken by any book on Hinduism. But if whenever we read an elementary book on Geology, Botany, Politics, or Astronomy, we found that its implications were Hindu, that would shake us. It is not the books written in direct defense of Materialism that make the modern man a materialist; it is the materialistic assumptions in all the other books. In the same way, it is not books on Christianity that will really trouble him. But he would be troubled if, whenever he wanted a cheap popular introduction to some science, the best work on the market was always by a Christian. The first step to the re-conversion of this country is a series, produced by Christians, which can beat the *Penguin* and the *Thinkers Library* on their own ground. Its Christianity would have to be latent, not explicit: and *of course* its science perfectly honest. Science *twisted* in the interests of apologetics would be sin and folly.⁹⁴ (Supplied emphasis underlined; original emphasis italicized.)

Previous chapters have shown that proper apologetic will understand and then undermine HVP obstacles to the gospel. The Christian lifestyle should also do the same. By aggressively commanding men's attention in every area—biology, geology, physics, mathematics, literature, politics, education, business, economics—Christians provide a reminder to unbelieving men that God is Creator and His laws dominate every phase of life. By publishing works in each field Christians force non-Christians to admit that God's Word makes comprehensive claims.⁹⁵

Every believer does not have to be a scholar. The most effective demonstration of Christian lifestyle is everyday life. The humble lives of Christians in the home, on the streets, on the councils of society have impressed non-Christians repeatedly in previous centuries. Macaulay once wrote about that much maligned group of Christians, the Puritans, the words:

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface...

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics...

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being...

To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence ... Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they

⁹⁴ C. S. Lewis, "on Moving With The Times," *Christianity Today*, xv (March 12, 1971), 537.

⁹⁵ See Recommended Reading List for a few examples.

aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face...

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one of self-abasement, penitence. Gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends... But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle... They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.⁹⁶

In short, the Puritan example shows a Christian lifestyle that is not *loved* by the world but is *respected*. That same Puritan lifestyle gave great salt to the world, providing the basis of political freedom in England by destroying the growing idolatry of the State and giving America the concept that God's laws must shape man's laws.

In response to this sort of aggressive Christian lifestyle the non-Christian will ask a reason of the hope that is in the believer (1 Pet. 3:15). Today, for example, when the non-Christian begins to see Christians replacing centralized State power schemes with limited government ideas, humanistic educational schemes with biblical ones, evolutionary dogma with creationism, and the irresponsible and uncreative work ethic with Christian labor, he will be curious about why the Christians do these things. Then, because the Christians have not allowed the whole collective thought of the nation to be controlled by HVP ideas, evangelization can occur. Then the Kingdom of God will be much closer.

The Resting Part. As Machen correctly points out in his remark quoted above, the work of God is absolutely necessary for any success in Christian work regardless of how well trained a believer is. In this part of the Christian lifestyle there is passivity toward God's sovereign grace. No amount of Christian culture can make men believers. The Father must call (John 6:44), and the Holy Spirit must regenerate (John 1:13).

One may visualize the situation by thinking of the Prodigal Son parable in Luke 15:11–32. The son leaves the father's house with capital given him by his father (15:12). No amount of culture or even verbal counsel can persuade the son to remain. Only after the son dissipates his father's capital and faces adversity does he come to himself (15:13–17). When finally, the son's eyes are opened, then he remembers his father's lifestyle (15:17).

This parable pictures the call and conversion of the unbeliever.⁹⁷ The non-Christian operates in this world only by virtue of the Creator's capital. Until the proper moment arrives, he is impervious to any Christian testimony or verbal message. The Christian must stand aside and rest in the Lord while God arranges the elements of historical experience in the non-Christian's lifestyle. This point, however, does not argue against the importance of a Christian life. When God does eventually call the non-Christian,

⁹⁶ Thomas B. Macauley, *Critical and Historical Essays*, Everyman's Library: No. 225 (London: Dent, 1907), p. 185–87.

⁹⁷ See any good commentary on Luke's style.

He shows him the available Christian testimony just as the son finally see his father's testimony in the parable.

The Christians lifestyle, then, has both a doing and a resting side. On one hand, the Christian actively tries to subdue his environment to bring as far as he can every thought into captivity to Christ; on the other hand, the Christian passively awaits the work of God's call and regeneration in the lives of non-Christians. Somewhere in this process God will lead the stimulated non-Christian to seek an answer from those Christians whose lifestyle he can observe. At this point Christians ought to be ready to give a gospel answer with a biblical apologetic.

SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the necessity of backing up the verbal apologetic for DVP with a DVP lifestyle. Only when the non-Christian can see DVP in action in everyday life can he really see the difference between his position and the Christian position. Such a DVP lifestyle involves comprehensive action by Christians in every area of life from the home to the classroom, from the shop to the government.

Today many Christians across this country are waking up to the great need for a distinctly Christian testimony in every area. In the following Recommended Reading List you can find information about these fellow Christian pioneers. You ought to contact those operating in fields parallel to your interests.

CONCLUSION

The argument of this pamphlet has been that DVP and HVP must be distinguished comprehensively and carefully if Christians today are to have major influence. Private religious experiences, no matter how popular and extensive, cannot do the job. The great missionary task facing the Church is to teach all men everywhere the counsel of God. All men ought to be influenced positively or negatively by the Church. Consequently, Christians need a different approach—one that confronts HVP with DVP in a biblically correct fashion.

From seven selected biblical examples principles have been deduced to evaluate ways of confronting HVP with DVP. The verbal apologetic strategy thus developed maximizes the contrast between HVP and DVP, making it primarily one of moral authority rather than of intellectual or experiential differences. By deliberately deepening the rift between HVP and DVP, this apologetic strategy makes repentance clearly defined.

The third chapter has presented the tactical applications of such an apologetic strategy. After citing various examples, the discussion has concluded that Christians need better training and has proposed a specific training program to sharpen DVP apologetic tactics.

Finally, the fourth chapter has insisted that even a biblically correct apologetic is valueless apart from a definite DVP lifestyle. Such a lifestyle demands great Christian involvement, involvement that has been demonstrated in the past by such Christian groups as the Puritans.

The succeeding pamphlets in this framework series are designed to train Christians for a more aggressive impact on the surrounding HVP culture. By following this approach Christians ought to be able to communicate DVP more clearly into a HVP culture than they could before. They will have learned that DVP must be presented in life and word as a total system also touching every area of life. They will have learned that between the two systems there is no compromise, no demilitarized zone of neutrality, only a lethal holy war.

May the Lord use this and succeeding material to win many for His ultimate victory over evil in history. May many who study therein be led to praise His character, appreciate His works, and study His Word. You can begin by surveying the Recommended Reading List that follows.

Recommended Reading List

Please note that this list is not meant to be complete. Very good works can be found besides these. The serious student will find, however, ample material for his study, particularly if he uses the further bibliographic material mentioned in these works. More books, periodicals, and organizations are listed in later pamphlets of this series. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are works primarily concerned with the positive assertion of DVP into every area of life.

- Clark, Gordon H. *Religion, Reason and Revelation*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961. Recent example of Clark's thought.
- Geehan, E. R. (ed), *Jerusalem and Athens*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1971. Critical discussions of Van Til's thought by leading Christian scholars.
- Geisler, Norman. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976. A new textbook on apologetics by Neo-Thomist evangelical.
- Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co., 1970. An excellent study of the first three centuries of Christianity and how our spiritual forefathers reached their world with the Gospel.
- Guinness, Os. *The Dust of Death*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973. One of Schaeffer's sons-in-law discusses world culture today.
- Lewis, C S. *Mere Christianity*, rev. ed. ppbk. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960. [1943]. Lewis' classic apologetic for Christianity.
- Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co., 1960. First published in 1923. Exposed the issues decades before most men saw where liberal theology was leading the Church. Read in association with his Princeton address cited in Chapter 4.
- MacKinnon, D. M. et al. *Objections to Christian Belief*, ppbk. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1965 [1963]. Good survey of leading humanist thinkers attacking Christianity morally, psychologically, historically, and intellectually.
- Martin, Walter R. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication House, 1965. Includes well-documented chapters on the major cults and an analysis in depth of the whole cult problem.
- McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. San Bernadino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1975. One of two volumes by McDowell that assembles in convenient form vast amounts of apologetically useful materials with bibliographic data. His other work is *More Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, 1976.
- Montgomery, John W. and Altizer, Thomas J. J., *The Altizer-Montgomery Debate*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967. Montgomery and Altizer debate the old God-is-Dead theology.
- Montgomery, John W. and Fletcher, Joseph, *Situation Ethics*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1972. Montgomery and Fletcher debate situation ethics vs. orthodox Christian morality.
- Montgomery, John W. *History and Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964. Montgomery show his apologetic method.

- Montgomery, John W. *Where Is History Going?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication House, 1969. Montgomery shows his whole approach to historical evidences.
- *Morris, Henry M. *Education for the Real World*. San Diego, CA: Creation-life Publishers, Box 15666, 1977. Stresses the necessity for a *biblically-based* education in every area of study, rather than a secular education in a Christian surrounding.
- Morris, Thomas V. *Francis Schaeffer's Apologetics: A Critique*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976. An evaluation of Schaeffer by a philosophy student.
- *Mouw, Richard J. *Politics and the Biblical Drama*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co., 1976. Mouw shows how DVP bears upon politics.
- Nash, Ronald H. (ed.), *The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1968. Critical evaluation of Clark's thought by leading Christian scholars.
- *North, Gary. (ed.), *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, P.O. Box 67, 1976. Essays on DVP in major areas, including a brilliant essay on DVP in mathematics.
- *North, Gary. *An Introduction to Christian Economics*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973. Collection of essays on the contribution of biblical wisdom to monetary theory, taxation, and economic views.
- *North, Gary. *Journal of Cristian Reconstruction*. A quarterly written for the intelligent layman on DVP in various areas of life. Editorial offices at P.O. Box 185, Vallecito, CA.
- Reymond, Robert L. *The Justification of Knowledge*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1976. A professor of apologetics evaluates Warfield, Montgomery, McDowell, Schaeffer, Van Til, Clark and others.
- Rookmaaker, H. R. *Modern Art and the Death of Culture*. London: InterVarsity Press, 1970. A Schaeffer associate comments upon art from a biblical viewpoint.
- Rushdoony, Rousas J. *The Messianic Character of American Education*. Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1963. Essays on all the great thinkers of modern education and how they deny the Scripture.
- *Schaeffer, Francis A. *Art and the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973. Small pamphlet showing the biblical view of art from its occurrence in the Bible.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape From Reason*. London: InterVarsity Press, 1968. Schaeffer's commentary on modern thought. One of his basic trilogy of books.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Back to Freedom and Dignity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972. A Christian response to the growing trend toward biological and psychological manipulation in society.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Hi Is There And He Is Not Silent*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972. Schaeffer's Dallas Seminary addresses on the philosophic position of Christianity. One of his basic trilogy of books.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?* Old Tappen, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1976. The *magnum opus* of Schaeffer which parallels his famous ten-part film series by the same title from Gospel Films. Survey of Western culture from Rome to the present.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who Is There*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968. Schaeffer's outline of his apologetic method. One of his basic trilogy of books.

- Schaeffer, Francis A. *Two Contents, Two Realities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974.
Schaeffer's version of giving the answer by words and works.
- Van Til, Cornelius. "The Apologetic Methodology of Francis Schaeffer." Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, n.d. A mimeographed critique of Schaeffer by Van Til.
- Van Til, Cornelius. *The Defense of the Faith*, 3rd ed. rev. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Co., 1967. Van Til's classic apologetic work which serves as an introduction to his other titles.
- Warren, Thomas B., and Flew, Antony G. N. *The Warren-Flew Debate on the Existence of God*. Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, P.O. Box 1001, 1977. A Church of Christ professor of apologetics debates a famous English atheist professor of philosophy.
- Weldon, John, and Levitt, Zola. *The Transcendental Explosion*. Irving, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1976. A work on the new TM threat.