

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Ayn Rand, 1905-1982

John W. Robbins

*On March 6, novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand died at her apartment in New York City. Rand, a Russian immigrant, influenced thousands of people – particularly college students – through her many books expressing her ethical and political ideas. She is correctly regarded as one of the moving forces behind the contemporary libertarian movement. In 1974, Answer to Ayn Rand, a comprehensive analysis of her philosophy, was published. Below are excerpts from the last chapter, "The Philosophy of Objectivism."*

In *Who Is Ayn Rand?* Nathaniel Branden boasted: No one has dared publicly to name the essential ideas of *Atlas Shrugged* and to attempt to refute them. With the publication of this book, that statement no longer stands. The clarification and refutation of Rand's ideas attempted in this book have proceeded simultaneously; in large part, their clarification is their refutation.

Rand once summarized her philosophy while standing on one foot; we might do the same, summarizing the logical conclusions of her premises:

Metaphysics: Indestructible Matter

Epistemology: Skepticism

Ethics: Hedonism

Politics: Anarchism

Her metaphysics, as I have carefully documented, consists of a belief in the primacy of indestructible matter. Her epistemology, sensation plus abstraction, leads only to skepticism, not to knowledge. Chapter two is a digest of the many ambiguities and difficulties in Rand's epistemological theory which concludes with Branden's admission that even though all the evidence might point to a specific conclusion, one can never be sure. The next bit of evidence may overturn the conclusion. This, of course, is skepticism.

Rand's ethics, being founded on an amoral choice, not on the "facts of reality," results in hedonism. Then her entire ethical edifice collapses because she has built it on a non-existent bridge across Hume's gap.

Her politics, deriving from her theory of the sovereign individual, leads straightway to anarchism, not to a society or state, but to a "voluntary association of men acting only in their individual self-interest."

It is indeed indicative of the bankruptcy of modern American philosophy that Rand's Objectivism could go so long unchallenged and be so fervently accepted by so many. Like Plato and Aristotle, she has sought to confute the sophists, only to originate a philosophy that confirms the perennial sophistry of secular philosophy. *Philosophia perennis* is, ultimately, but futile speculation designed to show

that man and man's mind are indeed autonomous and independent of their Creator. Secular human philosophy, like secular theories of history, is cyclical: It turns from great theoretical systems giving a comprehensive view of reality to critiques of these systems, which critiques then result in skepticism. When the depths of skepticism are reached, some new philosopher erects another magnificent edifice of human thought, only to have that edifice eroded by the logical criticisms of other scholars, resulting in a new skepticism. So the cycle turns, from the sophists to a Plato, from Plato to the sophists; from the sophists to a Thomas, from Thomas to the sophists; from the sophists to a Spinoza, from Spinoza to the sophists; from the sophists to a Kant, from Kant to the sophists; from the sophists to a Hegel, from Hegel to the sophists. One might conclude that secular philosophy is but the history of failure; that men who try to erect a Tower unto Heaven, are soon scattered upon the earth unable to understand each other.

The cyclical nature of the history of philosophy is, of course, extremely oversimplified as presented here; but then this book is not designed to be a text on the history of philosophy; it is merely a critique of one of the latest figures in the cycle of secular philosophy. A student of philosophy might soon question why all secular philosophies have failed to withstand logical scrutiny, why the cycle of epistemological optimism and pessimism has existed for well over 2000 years. The reason can hardly be because of the superstructure of the various philosophies that are so diverse as not to furnish a common explanation. One ought to examine the infrastructures of the various philosophies, and there one finds a common element: the autonomy of man's mind. All secular philosophies share the axiom of autonomy, the belief that man's unaided intellect can arrive at knowledge. Objectivism is no exception. Yet the repeated failures have not resulted in a repudiation of this axiom, only in more determined efforts to reach knowledge *via* man's own efforts. Lessing's famous alternative, between accepting truth from the hand of God as a gift and eternally searching for, but never finding, truth, is the alternative faced by all thinkers and all secular thinkers have chosen an eternal, endless, and futile quest, just as Lessing

did. The choice as outlined by Lessing is a choice that must be made by all men. Shall I accept revelation or not? Is the Bible the Word of God or not? Non-Christian philosophers (and some inconsistent Christian philosophers) have chosen the futile search. Many believe that the search is not futile at all (particularly the inconsistent Christian thinkers, like Thomas), but will one day succeed. Unfortunately, after two and one-half thousand years of searching, no man has yet established truth *via* his unaided intellect. Objectivism has not changed that fact, for it shares the axiom of autonomy with other secular philosophies. It, too, will be eclipsed by a new surge of skepticism, and rightly so, for it has furnished no good reasons for believing in the ability of the human mind to create a system of knowledge.

One supposes that after the scattering of the builders of the Tower of Babel, those who spoke the same language attempted again to erect other towers, and failed. The antipathy of the human mind to accepting a gift from God, revealed propositional knowledge, is ever present. It is the explanation for the cycle of secular philosophy. Faced with the alternative to accepting knowledge as a gift of God and finding knowledge on his own, the rebellious human being will always refuse the gift of knowledge and seek to erect his own philosophical system, his own Tower unto Heaven.

As a Christian, one can only hope that Objectivism, like all other philosophical facades, will soon crumble, and reveal to the men of the twentieth century the utter futility of secular philosophies. This book has been written with the purpose of speeding the demise of this newest form of secular philosophical optimism, so that men maybe forced to admit that the choice is nihilism or Christianity; skepticism or revelation. The choice is not, as Rand has said, between Communism and Objectivism, for those two philosophies are actually quite similar: Both are materialistic, both are empiricist, and ultimately, both are anarchistic. Rand escaped physically from the Communists in the mid 1920's, but she has never escaped intellectually from the Communists. Rather than being diametrically opposed, Objectivism and Communism share common premises, and attack a common foe,

Christianity. Here the antithesis is unmistakable: God or Matter? Propositional revelation or sensation? God's law or man's whim? Limited government or totalitarian anarchy? Only one system challenges Communism in all its ramifications, and that system is not Objectivism. That system is Christianity.

*One of the ways in which the damned will be confounded is that they will see themselves condemned by their own reason, by which they claim to condemn the Christian religion.*

Pascal Pensees

## The Horror File

### Political Philosophy

*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.*

MOSCOW, May 9 – Evangelist Billy Graham preached a message for disarmament in Moscow's only Baptist church today as a hymn-singing overflow crowd held an extraordinary service behind the police barricades in the street outside.

In his sermon Graham told the 1,000 worshipers that while their first commitment was to Jesus Christ they must also remember that the Bible calls on them to "obey the authorities." Speaking on a major Soviet public holiday – the anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany – he sought to use the memory of U.S.-Soviet wartime friendship for a new joint disarmament effort. "At that time the United States and the Soviet Union were allies against Nazi Germany," he said. "Now we have another common enemy – the possibility of a nuclear holocaust."

At the end of his 45-minute sermon, which was simultaneously translated into Russian, a woman in her early twenties unfurled a banner from the balcony reading, in English, "We have more than 150 prisoners for the work of the Gospel." The banner apparently referred to Baptists who have been imprisoned for preaching and holding services without permission. Another banner, also in

English, was simultaneously raised in the aisle directly in front of Graham. It read, "Deliver those who are driven away to death."

Graham said later he did not read the messages. He also declined to approach about 250 people outside the church, many of whom said they traveled hundreds of miles to hear him speak but could not enter the church without tickets. An aide to the evangelist said privately that Graham did not want to offend his hosts during his one-week visit because "he wants to develop this relationship," implying that he expects to return to the Soviet Union presumably for a preaching tour.

Religious services outside registered churches are forbidden in the Soviet Union, and several believers said a service in a Moscow street had not been heard of since the 1917 Communist Revolution.

The woman who unfurled her banner in the church was detained by plainclothes officers after the service. It was not known whether she was released. The service, originally planned for this evening, was rescheduled for 8 a.m., apparently because that was the time Voice of America erroneously announced it would be held.

During his sermon and later in an address at services at the Yelohovski Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Graham did not mention religious or human rights. Instead, he told the audience, "God can make you love people you normally would not love. He gives you the power to be a better worker, a more loyal citizen because in *Romans* 13 we are told to obey the authorities."

Both churches were heavily guarded with police sealing off all roads leading to them. Hundreds of KGB security agents, mostly young and well dressed, were in the congregation that included a large number of foreigners. Only about one-third of the people were local worshipers; most of them were women. Graham and numerous other churchmen are here for a conference opening Monday that will discuss reducing the threat of nuclear war. The conference is organized by the Russian Orthodox Church, which is paying the bills for more than 400 foreign visitors representing many religious groups from all parts of the world.

Perhaps because of his prominence in the United States, Graham is regarded as a star attraction at the conference. He has been allotted 20 minutes for his speech instead of the 10 minute slots all other churchmen were allowed. He also is being driven around Moscow in a Chaika limousine while the others are shepherded around in a fleet of buses. In contrast with the somewhat austere atmosphere at the Baptist church, Graham spoke at a splendid service in the Yelohovski Cathedral with bearded bishops in rich vestments led by Pimen, patriarch of all the Russians, in attendance. It is unclear whether Graham plans to see six Russian Baptists who took refuge in the U.S. Embassy here more than three years ago. They are seeking to emigrate on grounds that they were victims of religious persecution. There are 500,000 Baptists in the Soviet Union, many of whom are members of unregistered and therefore illegal congregations. Moscow's official Baptist community numbers about 5,000.

– *The Washington Post*

### **Theology**

*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.*

The Mansfield Kaseman case – of a Presbyterian minister overwhelmingly welcomed by National Capital-Union presbytery (with a larger proportion of PCUS votes than of UPCUSA votes) – is about to be put to rest with a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Piedmont of the UPCUSA. Opponents of Mr. Kaseman, who refuses to affirm most of the central doctrines of the Christian faith, appealed his reception from the United Church of Christ (perhaps the most liberal of the major denominations in America) for the second time to the top appeals court in the UPCUSA.

The heart of the commission's lengthy decision was to the point: "[The Presbytery of National Capital-Union], after careful deliberation, acted reasonably in determining that Mr. Kaseman's answers to (questions) about the Trinity were sufficient in depth and meaning to satisfy their query." Of singular importance in the whole affair was the Commission's own reflection upon the doctrinal position of the United Presbyterian Church USA.

The statement calls for careful pondering: "The arguments presented by both parties to this case force us to recognize that there are several valid ways of interpreting the creedal symbols and the confessions of our faith. Theological pluralism is a reality which is both desirable and present in our midst. Whether one begins his/her quest for truth with faith and experience as the path that leads to knowledge (creedal or otherwise), or whether one begins the quest with knowledge (creeds) that leads to faith, is not an important issue. There is room in the church for both approaches to reality and for the honest differences of opinion that will result. Tolerance is called for – tolerance, sympathy, understanding and mutual respect and love in Christ. Mere differences in methodology of Bible study, in theological investigation and in opinions need not divide or polarize the church. Jesus Christ and the realities of the Christian faith are far too big and broad and gracious to be confined within the limits of human thoughts and creeds. We must be instructed and guided by the creeds in our quest for truth, but we must not stop with that. Led by our living Lord we must go on and find and test and confirm the creeds in our own ways – in our own experience, if we as a church and as individuals are finally to know the truth that will set us free forever. This is the approach which Mr. Kaseman has chosen to follow. National Capital-Union presbytery has attested to its validity. The commission believes that it is valid and in accord with the basic tenets of our Reformed tradition."

– *The Presbyterian Journal*

### **Epistemology**

*To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth – and not I only, but also all who know the truth – because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever.*

Can one really be satisfied with Robert Reymond's assertion (with Gordon Clark) that reality conforms to the law of noncontradiction when the Bible is so full of seeming paradoxes wherein a thing is both A and non-A, e.g. God is both three and one, Jesus is both man and God, the Bible is both the word of God and the words of men, etc. Finally, can one

maintain an ontological qualitative distinction between God and man and reject an epistemological distinction between God and man? We think not. First, a fact exists and has meaning in its total context which only God can know. Therefore, only God can truly know a fact.

– Leonard J. Coppes *Blue Banner Faith and Life*

### **Education**

*Then you will know the truth...*

I also include as one of the chief distinctive features of the Christian school that in agreement with what Scripture teaches in regard to the limitations of human understanding and the darkening of the intellect, the school does not hesitate to impart incomprehensible material to the child.

T. van der Kooy,

*The Distinctive Features of the Christian School*

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## Atheism

Gordon H. Clark

Atheists are people who assert that there is no God. They may say that atoms or their component parts in space makeup the sum total of all reality. Whatever the analysis, these people assert that finite physical reality is all there is—that there is nothing else. There are several divisions in this group. One historically prominent group is the Logical Positivists. By an analysis of language, they conclude that theology is not so much false as it is plain nonsense. To them, speaking of God is like saying that the typewriter is the bluish-green sound of the square root of minus one. Theology is not good enough even to be false; it is simple nonsense. Other devotees of scientism are not Logical Positivists. Their theories are called naturalism or humanism, and they would call theology bigoted falsehood. Various political liberals are atheists, and often their socialistic creed attacks theology as a reactionary hindrance to social advancement.

### *Pantheism and Agnosticism*

It is instructive to distinguish between two forms of atheism, for the second form, pantheism, has the appearance of believing in God very much. It indeed asserts the existence of God, and the theory can be called theology. These people do not want to be known as atheists or as irreligious. But they define God as all that exists. Spinoza used the phrase *Deus sive Natura*: God, that is to say, Nature. Some may use the term *Pure Being*, or theologian Paul Tillich's phrase, *The Ground of All*

*Being*. Thus God is the universe itself. He is not its Creator. Since they say that God is the All, these people are called *Pantheists*.

Logically there is no difference between Atheism and Pantheism. To deny that there is a God and to apply the name *God* to everything are conceptually identical. For example, it is as though I should assert the existence of a grumpstein and try to prove it by pointing to giraffes, stars, mountain ranges, and books: together they form a grumpstein, I would say, and therefore a grumpstein exists. The pantheists point to giraffes, stars, and so on, and say, therefore God exists. Those who deny God—atheists—and those who say God is everything—pantheists—are asserting that nothing beyond the physical universe is real. In Christian language, and in common languages around the world, God is as different from the universe as a star is from a giraffe and more so.

There is actually another variety of atheism, though the adherents themselves might strongly object to being called atheists. Technically they are not atheists, though they might as well be. These are the agnostics. They do not assert that there is a God, nor do they assert that there is no God; they simply say that they do not know. They claim ignorance. Ignorance, however, is not a theory one can argue. Ignorance is an individual state of mind. An ignorant person is not required to prove by learned arguments that he is ignorant. He just does not know. Such a person needs to be taught.

Probably most persons in the United States are atheists of a sort. If one should ask them, they would probably say that they believe in God. But they might as well not believe in God for all the good it does them. Unless someone mentions God to them, they never think of him; they never pray to him; he does not enter into their daily plans and calculations. Their lives, their minds, their thinking are essentially no different from the lives of atheists and agnostics. They are "practicing atheists."

### *The Atheist's Argument*

The reader of this may expect to find a straightforward refutation of atheism. But he may be disappointed, for the situation is somewhat complicated. In the first place, one might accuse the atheist of never having proved that the physical universe is the only reality and that there are no supernatural beings. This would be satisfactory, if the term *atheism* means the argued denial of a Deity. But atheists, like agnostics, shift the burden of proof and say the theist is under obligation to demonstrate the truth of his view; but the atheist considers himself under no such obligation. Atheists usually wobble back and forward. Yet, Ernest Nagel, who may be called a naturalist in philosophy, seems to *argue*: "the occurrence of events [he means each and every event without exception]...is contingent on the organization of spatio-temporally located bodies.... That this is so is one of the best-tested conclusions of experience.... There is no place for an immaterial spirit directing the course of events, no place for the survival of personality after the corruption of the body which exhibits it."

This is an atheistic, not an agnostic, statement. He argues that science has proved the nonexistence of God, but the argument is invalid. No scientist has ever produced any evidence that man's intellect ceases to function at death. Since his methods have not discovered any spirit, Nagel assumes there can be none. He refuses to question his methods. Atheism is not a conclusion developed by his methods; rather it is the assumption on which his methods are based.

The agnostic, however, is not so dogmatic. He shifts the burden and demands theists prove that an omnipotent spirit has created and now controls the universe. This is quite a challenge, and it is one that the Christian is duty bound to face. No Christian with intellectual ability can excuse himself by claiming theology is useless hairsplitting. Peter has warned him otherwise. The "practicing atheists" are really agnostics, and we must preach the Gospel to them—and that God omnipotent reigns is part of the Gospel. But they answer, "How do you know that there is any God at all?" A Christian who knows no theology is ill equipped to answer this question. How is it possible to know God? Is he just a trance, a hunch, an ecstatic experience? Is he so transcendent that we can neither know him nor talk about him? Is he not so transcendent? Note that the Christian apologete, *i.e.*, the Christian evangelist, must have a decently clear conception of God before he can satisfy his inquisitors. He must be knowledgeable in theology.

### *The Wrong Reply*

Now, the answer to the agnostic's very pertinent question is rather complex, and the reader must not expect anything simple. Furthermore, the answer given here will appear unsatisfactory and disappointing to some very honest Christians. For these reasons the present reply to agnosticism will begin with an explanation of how *not* to answer the question. If this seems a cumbersome and roundabout way of going at it, and the impatient non-theologian wants immediate results, it must be pointed out that the initial choice between two roads determines the destination. Choose the wrong road and one ends up lost and confused. Remember Bunyan's Christian and how he looked down two roads, trying to see which one was straight. Then there came along a swarthy pilgrim in a white robe who pointed out to him, with great confidence, which road Christian should take. It ended in near disaster. Therefore we shall begin by pointing out the wrong road.

Now, I do not wish to say that those who recommend the wrong road in the present matter are flattering deceivers whose white robes are hypocritical disguises. On the contrary, a large

number of respectable and honest authors, from Aristotle to Charles Hodge and Robert Sproul, insist that the best and indeed the only way to prove the existence of God is to study the growth of a plant, the path of a planet, the motion of a marble. They support this seemingly secular method by quoting *Psalm 19:1*— "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Therefore we should study astronomy to refute the atheist and to instruct the agnostic. Paul says that God's omnipotence can be deduced from the way a little boy shoots a marble—a thing that has been made. Some stalwart Romanists boast that Paul foresaw and placed his stamp of approval on Thomas' Aristotelian argument.

There are two difficulties with this enthusiastic recommendation. The first is not conclusive, but those who approve of the argument must pay attention to it. The difficulty is its difficulty: It is a very hard method. The second difficulty is its virtual uselessness.

The first difficulty—inconclusive evidence and a hard method to prove—can be best addressed with a few examples. Suppose we can get a microscope and examine the internal phloem of the *Lycopersikon esculentum*. Botany is even worse than theology in its use of long and technical words. We get a clear picture of the internal structure of a plant, but we cannot discover God by a detailed, microscopic look into a tomato. If we carefully observe the motion of the planets, we will see that the squares of their periodic times are proportional to their mean distances from the Sun. If we succeeded in getting this information, we could conclude that God is a great mathematician and that salvation depends on understanding mathematics. Essentially, this is what the ancient Greek philosophical school of the Pythagoreans said. They believed that a happy life after death was the reward for studying arithmetic and geometry.

People hold a somewhat similar view today who think that all the problems of this world can be solved by science. But unlike the Pythagoreans, contemporaries do not believe in a life after death, nor do they think the laws of astronomy can prove there is a God. To change their minds by deducing

the existence of God from the laws of science would be extremely difficult and perhaps impossible. If by some other method we first know there is a God, the study of astronomy might show that he is a mathematician. But we would have to know God first.

However, the mere fact that an argument is difficult and complex does not prove that it is a fallacy. Geometry and calculus may drive students to despair, but the theorems are usually regarded as valid deductions. Contrariwise, when one examines the argument as Thomas actually wrote it, serious flaws appear. In another work, I have detailed some of Thomas' fallacies. One of them is a case of circularity, in which he uses as a premise the conclusion he wished to prove. Another is the case of a term that has one meaning in the premises and a different meaning in the conclusion. No syllogism can be valid if the conclusion contains an idea not already given in the premises.

The conclusion therefore is: The so-called "cosmological argument" is not only extremely difficult—since it would require a great amount of science, mathematics, and philosophy to prove it—but it is inconclusive and irremediably fallacious. This is no way to answer the atheists.

The second difficulty is that even if such an argument were valid, it would be useless. This objection applies more to modern authors than to Aristotle. Aristotle's notion of god was quite clear: the Unmoved Mover, thought thinking thought; and this metaphysical mind has a definite role in the explanation of natural phenomena. But the god of contemporary empiricists seems to have no role at all; mainly because the meaning they attach to the word *God* is utterly vague.

As examples of these arguments, one can mention Yale Philosophy Professor John E. Smith's *Experience of God*; Frederick Sontag's *How Philosophy Shapes Theology*; a few years earlier Geddes MacGregor of Bryn Mawr published *Introduction to Religious Philosophy*. There are many such books; it is not my intention to discuss any of these individually. My point is: When they try to support a belief in god, their arguments are no



better and often worse than those of Aristotle; and if some plausibility is found in them, the reason is that their notion of what god is is so vague and ambiguous that the reader imposes his own definite ideas. In their context, the arguments are virtually meaningless. Furthermore, the vague god of these views is useless. Nothing can be deduced from his existence. No moral norms follow a definition of god; no religious practices are contained in a description of god.

One can have a certain academic respect for an atheist who flatly denies God and life after death. He says clearly what he means, and he uses the term *God* in its common English meaning. One can have almost as much respect for the pantheist, even though he does not use the term *God* in its ordinary meaning. At least Baruch Spinoza and others identify god explicitly with the universe. But what can our reaction be to the view of Professor H. N. Wieman? He insisted on the existence of god, but for him god is not even all the universe—he, or it, is only some part of the universe. Namely, god is a complex of interactions in society on which we depend and to whose essential structure we must conform if maximum value is to be realized in human experience. So? How does this definition of god stack up against the *Shorter Catechism*? Therefore, Christians should be more concerned about what kind of God exists rather than about the existence of God.

### *The Meaninglessness of Existence*

At first it may seem strange that knowledge of *what* God is more important than knowledge *that* God is. His *essence* or nature being more important than his *existence* may seem unusual. Existentialists insist that existence precedes essence. Nevertheless, competent Christians disagree for two reasons. First, we have seen that pantheists identify god with the universe. What is god? —the universe. The mere fact that they use the name god for the universe and thus assert that god "exists" is of no help to Christianity.

The second reason for not being much interested in the *existence* of God is somewhat similar to the first. The idea *existence* is an idea without content.

Stars exist—but this tells us nothing about the stars; mathematics exists—but this teaches us no mathematics; hallucinations also exist. The point is that a predicate, such as existence, that can be attached to everything indiscriminately tells us nothing about anything. A word, to mean something, must also not mean something. For example, if I say that some cats are black, the sentence has meaning only because some cats are white. If the adjective were attached to every possible subject—so all cats were black, all stars were black, and all politicians were black, as well as all the numbers in arithmetic, and God too—then the word *black* would have no meaning. It would not distinguish anything from something else. Since everything exists, *exists* is devoid of information. That is why the *Catechism* asks, What is God? Not, Does God exist?

Now, most of the contemporary authors are extremely vague as to what sort of God they are talking about; and because the term is so vague, the concept is useless. Can these authors use their god to support a belief in life after death? No ethical norms can be deduced from their god. Most pointedly, their god does not speak to man. He is no better than "the silence of eternity" without even being "interpreted by love." Atheism is more realistic, more honest. If we are to combat the latter, we need a different method.

### *The Proper Reply*

The explanation of a second method must begin with a more direct confrontation with atheism. If the existence of God cannot be deduced by cosmology, have we dodged the burden of proof and left the battlefield in the possession of our enemies? No; there is indeed a theistic answer. Superficially, it is not difficult to understand; but, unfortunately, a full appreciation of its force requires some philosophic expertise. A knowledge of geometry is of great help, but it is seldom taught in the public high schools. One cannot realistically expect Christians to have read and to have understood Spinoza; and Protestant churches usually anathematize plain, ordinary Aristotelian logic.

In geometry there are axioms and theorems. One of the early theorems is, "An exterior angle of a triangle is greater than either opposite interior angle." A later one is the famous Pythagorean theorem: the sum of the squares of the other two sides of a right triangle equals the square of its hypotenuse. How theological all this sounds! These two theorems and all others are deduced logically from a certain set of axioms. But the axioms are never deduced. They are assumed without proof.

There is a definite reason why not everything can be deduced. If one tried to prove the axioms of geometry, one must refer back to prior propositions. If these too must be deduced, there must be previous propositions, and so on back *ad infinitum*. From which it follows: If everything must be demonstrated, nothing can be demonstrated, for there would be no starting point. If you cannot start, then you surely cannot finish.

Every system of theology or philosophy must have a starting point. Logical Positivists started with the unproved assumption that a sentence can have no meaning unless it can be tested by sensation. To speak without referring to something that can be touched, seen, smelled, and especially measured, is to speak nonsense. But they never deduce this principle. It is their non-demonstrable axiom. Worse, it is self-contradictory, for it has not been seen, smelled, or measured; therefore it is self-condemned as nonsense.

If the axioms of other secularists are not nonsense, they are nonetheless axioms. Every system must start somewhere, and it cannot have started before it starts. A naturalist might amend the Logical Positivist's principle and make it say that all knowledge is derived from sensation. This is not nonsense, but it is still an empirically unverifiable axiom. If it is not self-contradictory, it is at least without empirical justification. Other arguments against empiricism need not be given here: The point is that no system can deduce its axioms.

The inference is this: No one can consistently object to Christianity's being based on a non-demonstrable axiom. If the secularists exercise their privilege of basing their theorems on axioms, then so can

Christians. If the former refuse to accept our axioms, then they can have no logical objection to our rejecting theirs. Accordingly, we reject the very basis of atheism, Logical Positivism, and, in general, empiricism. Our axiom shall be, God has spoken. More completely, God has spoken in the Bible. More precisely, what the Bible says, God has spoken.