Integration Paper 6yr Draft

(Gilhooly 2019)

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§1. Faculty Member Worldview

As finite creatures, we are inescapably limited with respect to our mental faculties.[1] It is inevitable that certain commitments shape the structure of our beliefs and judgments. Some of these commitments are *given*, that is, they operate as pre-conditions for the possibility of thinking about anything at all. Such commitments are universal because they are necessary for human thought. Other commitments vary because they are produced *a posteriori* from our encounters with the world. Nevertheless, many such commitments are so deeply embedded in our noetic structures that they too shape our analysis of the world. That this process happens consciously is the mark of maturity in our reasoning. Because these commitments (both given and derived) serve as the operative and logical ground for judgments about the world, it is necessary to understand what these pre-conditions are in order to assess the internal consistency of a given worldview. The test of the internal consistency precedes the test for soundness as a matter of methodology. For the purposes of this essay, comments on derived commitments are principally what is in view.

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[1]Deut. 29:29; Job 38:2; Psalm 8:4-6; Psalm 139:6; Romans 6:19.

Beliefs concerning God. I believe that there exists a personal being in every way perfect who has revealed his existence in nature[2] and his character in the Bible.[3] He is the Triune God of the Christian Bible[4] and faith.[5]

Beliefs concerning Man. I believe that men are created, finite beings made after the likeness of God.[6] I believe that all men descend from the first man, Adam,[7] who sinned through his own fault and thus all men inherit his sinful nature.[8]

Beliefs concerning Epistemology. Epistemology is often mistaken for a study of truth. It is, in fact, the study of knowledge.[9] Traditionally, knowledge has been defined as justified true belief, although philosophers still quibble over the details.[10] Regardless, the concept of warrant or

[2]Rom. 1:18-20. "I am filled with amazement when I am told that, in this enlightened age, and in the heart of the Christian world, there are persons who can witness [the] daily manifestation of the power and wisdom of the Creator and yet say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'" Edward Everett, *The Uses of Astronomy*, (Albany, NY: Ross & Tousey, 1856). Yet, this general picture is only interpreted through God's special self-disclosure in Jesus whom we know through the Scriptures. In our encounter with the written word, we discover that the declaration of the heavens can only be regarding "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stele," Dante, *Paradiso* 33:143-145. cf. Psalm 19:1-5.

[3]Deut. 1:5, 31:9-13. "God's revelation of himself in a book in many ways means that exegesis is life." Michael B. Shepherd, *Textuality and the Bible*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016): 38.

[4]Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14. "Denn das new testament ist nicht mehr denn ein offenbarung des alten." D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesammtausgabe: Schriften. 65 vols. to date. Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883. See William M. Marsh, *Martin Luther On Reading the Bible As Christian Scripture: The Messiah in Luther's Biblical Hermeneutic and Theology*. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), esp. 154-161.

[5]Hence, the summary claim of Western and Eastern Christianity is united in this understanding: West: "Christianae religionis reverentiam plures usurpant, sed ea fides pollet maxime ac solitarie quae cum propter universalium praecepta regularum, quibus eiusdem religionis intellegatur auctoritas, tum propterea, quod eius cultus per mones paene mundi terminus emanavit, catholica vel universalis vocatur. Cuius haec de trinitatis unitate sentential est: 'Pater,' inquiunt, 'deus filius deus spiritus sanctus deus.' Igitur pater filius spiritus sanctus unus no tres dii." Boethius, *De Trinitate* I.1-5. See John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 66-95. East: "τῆς ὑγιοῦς πίστεως … τῆς εἰς Πατέρα, καὶ Υἱὸν, καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, τὴν μίαν θεότητά τε καὶ δύναμιν." Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 1.7. See Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

[6]Gen. 1:26; 2:7; 2:18-24; 5:1-2

[7]Gen. 2:7; 5:3-32; Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 5:12-14; Acts 17:26

[8]Gen. 5:3; Rom. 5:12-14

[9]"Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowing and other desirable ways of believing and attempting to find the truth." Linda Zagzebski, *On Epistemology*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009): 1; "Epistemology … the theory of knowledge and justification." Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*. (London: Routledge, 1998): 1. "The theory of knowledge–or *epistemology* (from the Greek, "the science of knowing")–inquires into the nature of knowledge and justification of belief." Louis P. Pojman, *The Theory of Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 3rd edition. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2003): 1.

[10]See Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), ch. 13; Edmund L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (1963): 121-123; Ernest Sosa, "The Analysis of

justification is now widely considered to be that thing (whatever it is) that makes the difference between true beliefs and knowledge.[11] Of course, it is presupposed by nearly everyone that it is possible to have true beliefs, that is, to hold in mind certain propositional statements that, in fact, correspond to the way things are.[12] It is in the defense of this presupposition that non-philosophers often confuse truth with knowledge. Something can be true independent of our knowing it, but we cannot know anything that is not true.

The Biblical worldview offers an easy defense of the claim that we can know something, namely, that God made us to live and work in the world and to know him. Non-theistic views can offer no defense of our claim to be able to know anything at all, because *knowing* as opposed to *believing* requires that the proposition in question actually be true. Human reason left to its own devices contains the resources to discover this helpless situation as philosophers of different periods have continually insisted. In fact, this requirement of the transcendent for the existence of truth (and therefore knowledge) is one thing that Aristotle, Descartes, and Nietzsche seem to agree on.[13] It is a feature of Pre-Socratic and some stripes of contemporary philosophy that they are given to radical skepticism about our ability to know, but such cannot be a feature of a biblical worldview.

'Knowledge that P,'" *Analysis* 25 (1964): 1-8; Alvin Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing," *The Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1967): 355-372.

[11]Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate.* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

[12]Of course, truth is not universally defined in terms of correspondence, often understand as an identity theory (e.g., Thomas Baldwin, "The Identity Theory of Truth," *Mind* 100: 35-52, or Julian Dodd, *An Identity Theory of Truth*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). Other accounts include coherence (H.H. Joachim, *The Nature of Truth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), Ralph Walker, *The Coherence Theory of Truth*. (London: Routledge, 1989), and James O. Young, "A Defense of the Coherence Theory of Truth," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 26: 89-101.), and pragmatist, which is most often associated with William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," *Pragmatism* (New York: Longmans, 1907): 197-236, but also Charles Sanders Peirce. See Patricia Ann Turrisi, ed., *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997).

[13]Aristotle, *Meta* XII: 5-7; Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*. (Paris: Cerf, 1987-192): i.151; Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. W. Kaufman. (New York: Vintage, 1968): 480.

§2. Correlation between Scripture and Philosophy[14]

The bulk of structural human reasoning is perfectly consistent with a biblical worldview.[15] Patterns of logic and inference, for example, are affirmed as pre-conditions of thought and because the Bible teaches us that God made us to live and work in the world. However, there are some 'philosophies' so-called that are inimical to certain commitments of the biblical worldview.[16] These philosophies sometimes make use of reasoning that is perfectly consistent with a biblical worldview but which leads to conclusions that are not. Below, I give an example of the work in the discipline of philosophy that is consistent with a biblical worldview, and I give two examples of types of arguments that are not. Finally, I give brief examples of redeemable accounts to the extent that they are redeemable. Of course, simply designating certain philosophical systems as OK because they are congruent with the Christian worldview and others as bad because they are not is not really the work of philosophy. Such categorizing is merely worldview analysis which resembles philosophy to those outside the discipline because it emphasizes some of the same goals, such as internal consistency and conceptual clarity. I teach this process in the introduction to philosophy course as a normal part of developing the intellectual abilities of the students. However, the work of philosophy involves more than mere worldview analysis.

The bedrock for establishing the relation between Scripture and philosophy (or any subject) from a biblical worldview is a commitment to the truth of the Scriptures. The litmus test for theories in philosophy is quite simply whether their truth is compossible with the truths of the

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[14]The discussion in this section is similar to the discussions that characterize portions of the course in Introduction to Philosophy. As such, they can be seen as an application of the methods and means outlined for achieving the goals and objectives in §5. Hence, I will elaborate less on lecture and discussion techniques there than I would otherwise.
[15]For concurring opinions, see J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*. (Colorado Springs, NavPress, 1997), Mark W. Foreman, *Prelude to Philosophy*: *An Introduction for Christians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003). One might also look as far back as John Calvin, *Institutes* II:2:15, or even Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* I.4.
[16]But, can we say that such is philosophy? Proverbs 1:7.

Bible. If yes, then proceed to analysis according to the normal dictates of reason. If no, then reject the view and explain why it ought to be rejected.

Philosophy is uniquely positioned to succeed in this analytic task because it concerns itself both with the nature of human reflection and argumentation as such as well as the human attempt to give a comprehensive account of the whole. In contemporary philosophy, the Kantian distinction between *Schulbegriff* and *Weltbegriff* helps to make this clear.[17] Not only is philosophy complete with its own taxonomy, terminology, and concerns, but also it concerns itself with educating the public regarding its axiological, metaphysical, and epistemological insights into the nature of the human person and his society. The Biblical worldview tells us that any optimism that such an account is possible in merely human terms is a false hope.

Logic (Accepted)

Nevertheless, there are whole fields of philosophical inquiry that are consistent with a biblical worldview, such as logic. Logic is the study of reason and inference. In a broad sense, it is the study of argument.

Now, there are many good arguments whose conclusions most everyone does not like. Here's one:

(1) Nothing moves in an instant.
(2) But, time is completely composed of instants.
(3) So, nothing ever moves.[18]

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[17]Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. A840/B868. These are the "scholastic" and "cosmopolitan" concepts of philosophical inquiry.

[18]This is a plainly valid (*modus ponens*) account of an old problem associated with Zeno of Elea (5th century BC) though we do not have record of his giving it in such form. See Maurice Caveing, *Zénon d'Élée: Prolégomènes aux doctrines du continu. Étude historique et critique des fragments et témoignages*. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982). In fact, our accounts actually come from early *testimonia (e.g.,* Aristotle. *Physica* 6.8-9, Diogenes Laertius, *Philosophoi Biol.* 9.72, or Epiphanius, Adversus Haereses, 3.11.) The stock interpretation of the paradoxes is that they served to support Zeno's teacher Parmenides in his contention that plurality was an illusion. Plato, *Parmenides* 126A-128E. See discussion in Gregory Vlastos, "Plato's Testimony Concerning Zeno of Elea," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 95 (1975): 136-162.

(3) *seems* wrong. But, showing why it is wrong – that is, turning the icky-*seems*-feeling into some reason – is difficult. Students, in particular, hate this argument. Generally, the boldest members of the class offer a few retorts before the class demands that I reveal the trick. After all, there must be some simple solution to this puzzle. Rabbits don't really come of hats.

But, of course, (1 – 3) is a good argument because it is valid, i.e., the conclusion must be true just in case the premises are, or, put another way, it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false. Of course, (3) is also false. But, that means that an argument can be valid – can be a *good* argument – even though the conclusion is false.

There are also bad arguments whose conclusions are true. Consider:

(4) If it is not raining, then we have class outside.
(5) We have class outside.
(6) Therefore, it is not raining.

(4 – 6) is a bad argument – even though it is an argument that almost every thinks is sensible at first glance. The trouble is, folks don't think the argument is sensible because (6) follows from (4) and (5).[19] Folks think the argument is sensible because they assume that (4) entails:

(7) If it is raining, then we do not have class outside.

But, (4) does not entail (7), and (4 – 6) is a bad argument. We can illustrate the fallacy easily. Consider this structurally identical argument:

(8) If you have a gazillion dollars, then you have one dollar.
(9) You have one dollar.
(10) Therefore, you are a gazillionaire.

If only. This is the formal fallacy that we call affirming the consequent.

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[19]In fact, they can't think that because (6) doesn't follow from (4) and (5).

It is likely that someone who asserts (4) would also assert (7), but that does not mean that (7) is entailed by (4). The premises in (4 – 6), however, do not lead to (6). Even if (4) and (5) are true, that does not tell us anything about the truth of (6). Suppose that it is true that:

(11) It is raining.

That proposition tells us what the weather is like. Suppose that it is true that (4). That proposition tells us what is true just in case a particular condition obtains. In this case, the condition is that it is not raining. In fact, (4) is logically equivalent to:

(4') It is raining outside or we have class outside.

(4') is a disjunction, which means that it will be true just in case *at least one* of the disjuncts is true. The two disjuncts are (a) it is raining outside and (b) we have class outside. (5) tells us that (b) is true. But, if one of the disjuncts is true, the whole disjunction is. So, if (5) is true, then (4) is true – no matter what the weather is. (4 – 6) is a bad argument because the truth of (4) and (5) tells us nothing about the truth of (6).

Nevertheless, most everyone infers from (4) that we will *only* have class outside if it is not raining – but that's a different proposition with a different logical structure. The fallacious inference is easy to make, however, because our reasoning is usually sloppy unless it is rebuked to form. Our beliefs are mostly the same way. Humans often casually hold inconsistent beliefs.[20]

In any case, the (4 – 6) argument shows that an argument can be invalid – can be a *bad* argument – even though the conclusion is true. It also shows that an argument can be deceptively bad, i.e., can be bad when everyone thinks it is not. (6) can be true (and often is true) when (4) and (5) are true, but it doesn't follow from (4) and (5). So, some good arguments are bad and some bad arguments are good. Only a philosopher could love that sentence.

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[20]It's almost as if our noetic structures are warped in some way (Gen 3; Rom. 1).

This little lesson is used to show students that there is more to reasoning well than approving or disapproving the result of the reasoning. It also shows that reasoning well requires some effort. Reasoning well requires saying exactly why the conclusion you like is true (or likely or plausible) and how people can know. It also requires saying exactly why the conclusion you do not like is false (or unlikely or implausible) and how people can know. Of course, those requirements require lots of practice. Introduction to Philosophy is really just an examination of various answers to 'big' questions, in which we analyze why anyone might think those answers are true and whether we think so too.

Throughout the course of the semester, we discuss a representative sample of big questions, try to explain what the conclusions are, why people might hold to one view or another, what the consequences of holding certain views are, what weaknesses or limitations each view may have, etc. One of the most interesting observations about philosophy is that philosophers agree on very little. One thing they agree on, however, is that there are very few knock-down arguments in philosophy (probably none in metaphysics). Without some prior commitments, the viewpoints might be a palette of options from which to paint the canvas of one's worldview. Professional philosophers aim for consistency in their selection of views and arguments – but lay people frequently do not – not because of intellectual weakness necessarily but because of sloth or distraction or sin. Logic and reasoning are part-and-parcel of our interaction with the world. They are necessary pre-conditions of understanding or adopting a worldview. So, we accept the principles and train ourselves to use them well.

Atheism (Rejected). As far as I know, most of what I have described as essential components of an Introduction to Philosophy course – lectures on reasoning and treatments of the 'big' questions – would be the same no matter where students took the course. What distinguishes philosophy at

Cedarville is the component of biblical integration. We have unique prior commitments that ought to influence how we answer the big questions. These commitments are Christian commitments, and the central one under discussion here is the view that the Bible is inerrant. Well, not just inerrant. Anyone can write an inerrant book. All one needs to do is write a tautology on every page. But, the Bible isn't merely a recitation of statements that happen not to be false. We believe it is the Word of God – therefore, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative. The Spirit is able to teach us about God and his creation and our place in it through the Bible. The Bible does not, however, teach us how to reason *per se*. And, of course, anyone can reason well about some (perhaps many) matters. That's why pagans can do mathematics. But, the big questions that we ask in philosophy require something more than mere reasoning for a satisfying answer, and providentially the Bible offers more than mere reasoning.

When we begin to ask the big questions – like, is there a God?, does truth exist?, can we know anything at all?, can doctors end people's lives? – the Bible provides constraints on the sorts of answers that could be right. The truths of the Scripture become a kind of path (as is promised after all, Psalm 119:105) to guide the students as they navigate the big questions. Here is the simplest example of what I mean.

Take the question whether God exists. The Bible says, Yes. Actually, the question does not really come up. The existence of God is simply presupposed. Right on the first page, God is there making stuff, the God who *just is* there (Genesis 1:1). In any case, the Biblical worldview certainly holds that God exists (among many other things). So, on that particular question, only those arguments whose conclusions are "God exists," have any chance of being true. In some cases, biblical integration is a simple as that. Our worldview helps us know that certain arguments must be either invalid or unsound. Of course, students very often want to stop there, i.e., they want to

say, "The Bible denies that," and go for a grilled cheese sandwich. But, stopping at that point is not really biblical integration because the work of reasoning has been cut far too short. We aren't learning to reason merely to satisfy our own curiosity or even merely to be right about some big questions. We are also learning to reason because it helps us to understand God and ourselves and to defend our faith. Frankly, it hurts our witness to expect less (1 Peter 3:15).

This is helpful because – as our little lesson showed – we can be easily confused about which arguments are good and bad in the logical sense (i.e., which arguments are valid and which invalid). We can also be confused about which arguments are sound. Here's a good argument that lots of people think is sound.

(12) If God existed, then children would not die of cancer.
(13) Children do die of cancer.
(14) God does not exist.

Christians know that (14) is false, as was said. So (12 – 14) is an argument that we will want to reject.

But what *reason* can we give to reject it? As I mentioned, one option is to say: "the Bible denies that." On the first day of class, that is usually the response that I get. Of course, that is not an argument even though it is true. You can rebut all the world's assaults on God with "the Bible denies that." You may even be right. But, you will not be giving reasons for your belief in that case. I tell my students, "In philosophy, we try for arguments when we can." Philosophy really has two basic uses for the Christian life: one is to provide conceptual resources to strengthen our faith and our understanding of God and his word (i.e., the intra-mural use of philosophy in theology); the other is to defend the faith. Defending the faith comprises showing that attacks on the faith are not necessarily true or showing that the consistency of the Biblical worldview makes it more rationally appealing than competing systems. Responding to (12 – 14) under the guise of

philosophy is usually understood as an exercise in defense. So what argument can we give to reject (12 – 14)?

Recall that there are two basic reasons that any argument might be worth rejecting. The first is that it might be a bad argument, i.e., it might be possible for the conclusion to be true even though one, both or all of the premises is false. In such a case, the conclusion might be true, but we will have been given no reason to think so from the argument. If (12 – 14) is a bad argument, then we will have been provided no *reason* to think (14) is true even if (*per impossibile*) it was true.

(12 – 14) is not a bad argument. It has the form called *modus tollens*, which is always valid. Because we know that it is valid, we know how to show that it is unsound. Recall that a valid argument is one in which the conclusion must be true if the premises are true, i.e., one in which it is impossible for the conclusion to be true and the premises false. Notice that the condition is the truth of the premises. If the premises are not true, then the conclusion may be (often will be) false. At least, the argument will no longer show that the conclusion is true.

We know (from the Bible) that the conclusion is false, and we know (from philosophy) that there can be no demonstration against something true. We also know (from philosophy) that the argument is valid. We also know (from philosophy) that the only way a valid argument – a good one – can have a false conclusion is if at least one of the premises is false. All that is left is to show which one. Showing that one (or more) of the premises is false is the second reason that any argument might be worth rejecting. So, we must investigate the premises, (12) and (13), and see what reasons there are to disbelieve them. Notice our goal is not really to see *if* there are reasons to disbelieve them. Given that the argument under consideration is valid but unsound on the Biblical worldview, one of them must be false.

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It is easy to see that one of the premises is true because it is a tragic fact of our experience that children sometimes die of cancer. Given our analysis, then, (12) must be false. We know that by disjunctive syllogism. So, now, what is left is to give reasons for thinking that (12) is false. There are many possible approaches to that task. I'll suggest two.

One could show from the Bible (further integration!) that God's existence is not incompatible with the death of children (always tragic) because his self-revelation indicates both that he exists and that children die. So, whatever this argument denies existence to (we could say), it is not the God of the Bible. The larger point is really that (12) has a conception of God that must be coming from somewhere; and, given what the Bible says about God, that 'somewhere' is not the Bible. Whatever (12 – 14) denies, it does nothing to the God of Christianity. On that tactic, we would do well to ask the presenter of (12 – 14) why anyone ought to think that (12) was true.

That might lead to a conversation in which we employ the second approach. Suppose that the presenter says that (12) is true (or at least highly plausible) because a morally perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing being is able, aware, and interested in always preventing children from dying of cancer.

In such a case, we can ask why that must be true. In fact, the skeptical theist response to the problem of evil does just that. It says basically, for all we know, God has a good reason for that to have happened. Of course, the Christian can say more than the mere philosopher on this point, and he should. Our faith cannot be isolated from the rest of our concerns. It is true that there is no obvious logical contradiction between God's existence and the sorts of evils that exist in our world – at least, no one has been able to show that there are logical contradictions. In fact, contemporary philosophy has largely given up trying to show that there are logical contradictions.

But, the Christian philosopher is able to say more than, 'for all we know, there is a response.' The Christian philosopher can say, 'all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose' (Romans 8:28). We have that from the authority of God's word. Of course, that is a Christian response – based not merely on some abstruse modal conceptions of possibility – but based on the relationship that one has to Christ. God has revealed Himself in His Word. When the Christian philosopher employs the living sword of the Bible in his discourse, he does more than what mere philosophy allows. But, he also finds himself able to do more than merely argue that point. He is able to proclaim the Gospel. He is able to show his interlocutor where he can find the fount of living water (John 4:10; Revelation 21:6).

It seems to me, I tell my students, that being able to defend the *possibility of the existence of God* is not terribly interesting. In fact, such a defense is basically effortless. Our arguments as Christian philosophers have to be informed by, embedded with, and caught up in our proclamation. As a rule: no argumentation without invitation. Our defense of our beliefs is often based on a natural theology that does not bespeak the tender truth about how God has called us out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9). Further, it presents at best a thin accounting of who God is because the fullness of his revelation of himself to us is not found in the things that have been made. It is found in his Word (Psalm 19).

Postmodern Metaphysics (Rejected). Consider a second example, this time from metaphysics. Consider the question, is there such a thing as truth? That is, are there objectively true propositions or objectively true moral claims or a real world that is not merely dependent for its existence of the socio-religio-juridico contingent powers that subtly influence our characters? Christianity presupposes that the answer to these questions is yes. Whatever nuance or value the postmodern critique may have to add, at root the basis of the Christian claim is that history has

been unfolding and will continue to unfold in a particular way. God did, in fact, create the world. Adam did, in fact, sin. Christ did, in fact, live a life that fulfilled all righteousness. Christ did, in fact, die an atoning death for the sins of man. Christ did, in fact, rise from the dead. Christ is, in fact, seated at the right hand of the Father. Christ will, in fact, come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. The Christian claim is not that these are merely stories told to serve as a Shibboleth for our barbecues and pot-lucks. The Christian claim is that these claims are objective facts about the world, facts that are true independent of whether any human or any culture thinks them or believes them or acts appropriately in response to them.

It might be obvious – should be obvious – that some things are true. After all, if one asserts the contrary – that there are no true propositions – then one has made a claim that is either true or false.[21] If true, it's false; if false, then who cares? Of course, *that* some proposition is true seems to be trivially true. What we really care about establishing are truths about ourselves and the world and God. Of course, philosophy can establish some facts about these things. Certainly, it can establish plausible arguments for certain viewpoints. It can even show that certain viewpoints are rationally preferable given the evidence for them and their explanatory power, and it can usually show that pagan arguments have nothing to recommend them. But, that the particular propositions of the Christian worldview are *true* is something that the philosopher could not hope to establish *qua* philosopher. Certainly, he can defend them. But, no one comes to be Christian because of arguments. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17).

Redeeming Views. All human inquiry tends toward excessive claims about its unique ability to give complete explanations of reality.[22] Christians should be leery of accepting any

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[21]You could deny this problem by denying bivalence, but down that road there be dragons.
[22]See Joshua Kira's similar observation that "the long history of attempts within philosophy to provide a single and somewhat simple system for examining and describing the world, lead to worldview philosophy as providing one

philosophical system or science for that reason. We must also be leery of avoiding interaction with human philosophies simply because they err. After all, they lack authority and resources to overturn the gospel. Hence, we should adopt a critical appraisal of these systems to find what is useful and good in them. A good starting place is an awareness of their intrinsic limitations. Further, the study must progress in a systematic way in order to build a coherent and not merely eclectic account. Consider three historically significant philosophies as examples.

Constructivism. Immanuel Kant teaches that the way things are is unknowable since our noetic structures predetermine our experience on the basis of *a priori* categories over which we have no control. We can know how we know, but we are unable to know if what we know maps on to what is. In particular, this means that we simply do not know what the world is like and can only make claims to knowledge within the system established by the pre-conditions of our thought. Certainly postulates are required on the basis of this situation, namely, the psychological, cosmological, and theological ideas. Because they represent the totalizing structure of experience, these ideas are presumed even though they cannot be known as such. It is not consistent with a biblical worldview to think that we cannot know things about God except as postulates on the basis of our experience so that part of Kant's view will require revision. If we conceive of Kant as giving a merely descriptive account of human experience *sans* revelation, then it is possible to rehabilitate his account into a satisfying model of the source of human knowledge. But, it will no longer be Kant's account by those lights. Further, we can modify his view that we can have no noumenal experience by reflecting on the biblical data that shows us how limited our view of the world really is.

Suppose, for example, that these predetermined structures were predetermined by God so that we could really know the world as he wanted us to know it. In that case, the failure to

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way of speaking about all that is external to humanity." Joshua Kira, *The Whole Life: Concerning the Integration of Philosophy and Theology*, p. 6.

comprehend the fullness of some given object would not indicate that we had comprehended nothing true about the object. Hence, the two aspects reading of Kant's constructivism (though textually unlikely) is a method by which we can unite rationalism and empiricism in a promising way without compromising on our ability to know that God exists through general revelation. Even then, the postulates themselves would still have been sufficient to leave man without moral excuse before God (as Kant indicates), so even on the two worlds accounting we could still make sense of Kant's view as within the broad outline of Christian teaching on general/special revelation (though he would still fall short of Calvin's elegant analysis on that point). In any case, Boethius had already told us that knowledge is had according to the power of the knower – a principle that he adopted from Aristotle. He used this principle to explain how it was that we could rationally defend certain conceptions of our faith (such as God's ability to know our future free choices). We can assimilate Kant's principles in a similar way. The key will be to take what is good in them (typically a descriptive feature based on some observation about the world) and extract it from the larger system.

Existentialism. Even atheist systems can be redeemed in this way. When Sartre writes that we have complete responsibility for our actions and that it is mere cowardice or bad faith that leads us to project the responsibility for our choices to others, he does so on the basis of an implausible and explicitly un-Christian basis, namely, the basis that existence precedes essence. Nevertheless, the focus on lived experience of our moral choices which his viewpoint so poignantly emphasizes was put to use by Gabriel Marcel in a significant philosophical response to the experience of evil from the Christian point of view. I have elaborated his point theologically in my own research.[23] It would strike many as surprising that so ardent an atheist as Sartre could be a conceptual ally for

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[23]John R. Gilhooly, "Mystery and Evil," in *Evil and A Selection of its Theological Problems*, eds. Benjamin H. Arbour and John R. Gilhooly. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017): 96-113.

Christian philosophy, but this is so because his observations freed from some of the implications to which he believes they refer are simply reflections on human nature available to anyone willing to look with some care or attention. Because logic and observation are both accepted by a biblical worldview, many of the essential insights (if not their interpretive and referential categories) of philosophers from many backgrounds can serve as fertile ground for the exposition of Christian philosophy.

Positivism. Even as bankrupt an intellectual system as neo-positivism rightly asks how we can evaluate whether our claims are true and what about them makes them meaningful. The insistence on a certain kind of linguistic analysis, which reduces language to a verification of exact ratios between sensory objects and words is a massive failure of the system. This failure does not show, however, that the basic impulse toward a right accounting of how we use language is not desirable or needful.

If we are firmly grounding our students in biblical truth, then there is no reason to shy away from a charitable and critical engagement with many approaches to truth and learning. Such engagement allows us to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

§3. Commitment to Christian Higher Education

Learning to give an account of human life that is consistent with Christian commitments and is intellectually robust requires some familiarity with argument and with the big questions of truth, beauty, and goodness. My commitment to Christian higher education dictates that I attempt to help the students understand rival positions in the discipline and make biblical judgments about those positions. A secular education would not necessarily recommend any particular position but might rather present them all as a buffet of options from which the students might build their own

worldview. Alternatively, a secular education would attempt to produce a thoroughly desacralized thought-life and, hence, to de-God the imagination of its students.[24] The Christian teacher ought not to shy away from presenting the fullest and most forceful articulations of opposing viewpoints (to do any less is not only cowardly but betrays a dismaying lack of confidence in Christian testimony), yet the defense of the Christian evaluation of those positions should not be left solely in the hands of the students, who may be unprepared to respond to certain arguments given their stage of intellectual and spiritual development. Of course, one cannot ensure that students are always convinced by the right arguments, but it is unbecoming a Christian teacher not to take great care in nurturing the intellectual and spiritual growth of his/her pupils. This is true not only because we must give an account to God for each of our words but also because we are convinced of the truth of our position and care deeply about inviting our students to reflect of the beauty of our God.[25]

Christian education, then, ought to invite students into an inquiry of the world that is framed by core Christian commitments. The study of the nature and purpose of the "frame" is itself a theological and philosophical pursuit. But, the activity within each discipline is not itself overtly theological, except insofar as an element of the regnant theory trespasses beyond the frame established by Christian presuppositions. Noticing the entailments of theory, however, will not itself be a practice that one engages in from within the perspective of the discipline. Hence,

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[24]See, e.g., Auguste Comte, *Cours de Philosophie Positive* vol 1. (Rouen Frères: Paris, 1830), leçon 1: "dans l'état positif, l'esprit humain reconnaissant l'impossibilité d'obtenir des notions absolues, renonce à chercher l'origine et la destination de l'univers, et à connaître les causes intimes des phénomènes, pour s'attacher uniquement à découvrir, par l'usage bien combiné du raisonnement et de l'observation, leurs lois effectives, c'est-à-dire leurs relations invariables de succession et de similitude." Consider more recent (unwitting) examples of this program: "It is a tedious cliché (and, unlike many clichés, it isn't even true) that science concerns itself with *how* questions, but only theology is equipped to answer *why* questions. What on Earth *is* a why question? Not every English sentence beginning with the word 'why' is a legitimate question." Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion.* (Boston: Houghton Miller, 2006): 56.

[25]One could summarize this position as "instruction, ministry, and engagement as the role of the faithful Christian teacher." See Joshua Kira, *On The Whole Life,* 51.

producing robustly Christian thought requires second-order reflections on the purpose and consequences of the special sciences. In other words, Christian education requires philosophy not as an incidental program for certain specialized subjects, but as a central component of the intellectual development of students. Since questions of a philosophical nature, such as the nature of integration itself, are inescapably central to the distinctive nature of Christian education and witness, my commitment to Christian higher education involves a desire to demonstrate to students the importance of situating their study within a broader set of questions that transcend the particular contents of the fields. This process enables one to see in what instances a particular theory or claim in a given field of the special sciences cannot cohere with Christian belief. Hence, Christian philosophy is essential to education precisely because it allows the meta-analysis of inferences necessary to conduct a thorough-going and successful integration of faith, life, and learning. Mastery of a discrete subject matter is not what is question here, so much as increasing insight into the tools and techniques of analysis that philosophy is uniquely suited to provide.

§4. Relationship between Faith and Practice in Teaching and Lifestyle

Any philosopher can defend the idea that there are, in fact, truths and truths that can be known (though some do not think so). But, the Christian philosopher can explain what (who!) grounds these truths and makes them accessible. The Christian philosopher does not do this on the basis of his expertise in argument and the content of philosophy alone. He does this on the basis of what has been revealed by God in His Scriptures, without which no one could have discovered these things through mere rational inquiry and without whom there could be no rational inquiry. Those things that are discoverable point toward God's existence but do not tell us who he is. At best, from philosophy, we arrive at *quia est*, but what we really need is *quid est*. And, only God can tell us who he is. Hence, the pursuit of God in that is modeled in philosophical reasoning must

be symptomatic of the teacher's commitment to Jesus in all areas. Otherwise, the teaching will ring hollow against the backdrop of his life.

In that regard, I think it is important for the Christian philosopher (and, therefore, for myself) to be regularly engaged in the study of Scripture for its own sake and in the life of the Church. I teach a Sunday School class for married couples with a colleague in the Bible department and maintain an active engagement with the members of our class. An increasing distance from the dynamic of the local church would leave me increasingly vulnerable to unhelpful philosophical speculation and would cause my zeal for the proclamation of God's truth to wane. Remaining tethered to the real-life experiences of non-professional theologian-philosophers in the midst of God's church is vital to maintaining a perspective on the values and goals for rational discourse that I wish for my students to embody and achieve. It is also required for the life of obedience that displays the love of Jesus.[26] One of the greatest dangers for the analytic philosopher is that he loses his ability to wield his critical impulses with caution. The robust concerns and affections of the covenant community are a necessary antidote to this danger. To be reminded that one is called not merely to be a thinker but to be a teacher is also helpful in this regard.

§5. Methods for Communicating in the Classroom

On the basis of these reflections, I have several goals for communicating in the classroom. The first goal is to show the students that I am seriously and fully committed to a biblical worldview and the expression of their principles laid out in the doctrinal statement. This step is necessary so that when I present the opposing viewpoints students will know that my goal is not to dissuade them from the faith but rather to strengthen and prepare them for a world that does not celebrate Christ. It further shows that I am intellectually satisfied with the Biblical worldview, i.e.,

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[26]Hebrews 10:25; John 15:10-12.

having considered the alternatives and indulged in them for many years of my life, I have found the testimony of Jesus to be the one that mattered. My method for achieving this goal is to clearly articulate the goals of the course, share my testimony, and spend the initial class periods discussing the value and necessity of philosophy for the Christian life and witness.[27]

The second goal is to show students that we ought not to be afraid of whatever arguments are presented in philosophy. If the Bible is true, as it is and we have come to believe, then there is no question of some argument showing that it is false. There simply cannot be a demonstration against the truth. Hence, we have no reason to shrink back from any of the philosophies the world has to offer as if they might overturn our faith. Any shrinking back will be due to a weakness or lack of preparation on our part and not because of some weakness in the gospel. We must not be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). My method for achieving this goal is to focus on the structural weakness of opposing worldviews as these become evident in our discussion of competing epistemological and metaphysical systems. In addition, I emphasize the stabilizing role that the theology plays in preventing similar problems for the Christian worldview.[28] Finally, I establish the nature of argument analysis in general so that it becomes clear how to evaluate and criticize an argument on the basis of its inferential structure as well as the contents of its premises.

The third goal is to teach students that the value of philosophy is in the rigor of analysis that it provides. Strengthening our reason (which requires practice!) positions us to dialogue

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[27]By (e.g.) a discussion of what philosophy does for Christian inquiry. See §2.

[28]As Giulio Maspero has recently (re-)emphasized, "la fidelidad de la teología a una epistemología propiamente teológica, lejos de ser un obstáculo, es condición necesaria para la posibilidad del diálogo con las otras disciplinas y, por esto, del servicio que la teología misma puede desarrollar en la universidad." See "Theologia Ancilla Mysterii," *Scripta Theologica* 50.1 (2018): 77-93. (78) See also Edna McDonagh who notes that theology and philosophy, "raise and pursue questions which elude other disciplines, both in their historical origin and development, and in their contemporary vitality and influence." Edna McDonagh, "Why the University Needs Theology," *Hermathena* 181 (2006): 141-148. (148)

maturely with our world and show the internal inconsistencies in pagan thought. This is properly the realm of apologetics. My method for achieving this goal is to connect our ostensibly abstruse discussions about axiology and metaphysics to specific instances in which they relate to our witnessing and apologetic endeavors. For example, we might discuss the inconsistency of holding to a triad such as scientific realism, methodological naturalism, and theism.[29] Or, we might show when the indulgence of self that are present in consequentialist systems are inconsistent with attitudes of self-sacrifice required by the Christian faithful.[30] Or, how deontological systems run afoul of the reason they proclaim when they are unable to establish hierarchies of axiology. Or, how crass commitments to empiricism are admittedly doomed to failure without a theological axiom to under-gird the system.[31] Or, how physicalism denies basic commitments of Christian worldview, such as the possibility of an after-life, and, hence, all major systems of neuroscience, psychology, anatomy, and medicine require conscious assessment and revision by the Christian scholar.[32] Or, how the insistence on the (moral) *tabula rasa* disguises the consequences of original sin for theories of education, social work, and economics.[33] In other words, the method is simply to explain why commitments at a theoretical level automatically inform decisions at the so-called practical level. Hence, if one has not considered the presuppositions embedded in a theory of a special science, one will implicitly affirm them when one adopts the system. The approach that I outlined in §2 in likewise an exemplar case of my method including also comments and examples

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[29]John R. Gilhooly, "Theism and Methodological Naturalism," 4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion, and Education (2018), forthcoming.
[30]See John Hare, *The Moral Gap* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[31]See Markus Gabriel, *I am Not a Brain*: *Philosophy of Mind for the 21st Century*. (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2017).
[32]From the perspective of ethics and theological anthropology, see J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000).
[33]As even the secular accounts sometimes reveal: "I am not sure how far the analysis can be pressed but it does suggest intellectual merits in the traditional Christian gloom [!] about human nature." (179) See Martin Hollis, "Economic Man and Original Sin," *Political Studies* 29 (1981): 167-180.

that I give as a feature of the class every time I teach it. In other words, I show that philosophy is the human discipline that makes the integrative task possible. Hence, it remains of enormous value to all Christian people.

The final goal is to remind them that argument is a fruitful and necessary part of understanding, explaining, and defending the Christian faith – but it is not the gospel. We must be prepared to understand alternatives and make biblical judgments about them, but we must also be prepared to proclaim the good news. Integrating the realities described in God's word into the total package of what our reasoning can discover allows us a more satisfying and complete account of the whole. Much of apologetics is showing how competing accounts that lack God and the truths of Christian theism are less successful. Notice that this does not show that the Christian account is true. Instead, it shows the rational viability of the Christian worldview. However, we don't merely want to show that our view is internally consistent. We are called as Christians to proclaim the truth. Part of our integrative enterprise is to show students that a *telos* of good reasoning and argument is to make Christ known more clearly. My method for achieving this is simply to reiterate the centrality of the gospel repeatedly, including a lengthy discussion of the relationship between faith and reason that continues through the course.