

Intelligent Design Leaders Promote a Naturalistic Worldview

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Part 1: The Finite Gods of Paley and the Modern ID Movement

William Paley famously opens his book *Natural Theology* by describing a man walking across a heath. Coming across a watch on the ground, he sees that it has a complicated mechanism and concludes that it must have had a designer.¹ The watch is the star of this opening scene, but there is another character that should not be overlooked. Paley argues that the watch is designed by contrasting it with a stone he stubbed his toe on prior to finding the watch. He says about the stone: “for anything I knew to the contrary it had lain there for ever.”² The implication of Paley’s story is that the stone does not bear evidence of being created by an intelligent designer. Yet any Christian must affirm that God made the stone. It did not eternally lie there without a maker. To limit God’s activity to the complicated aspects of creation, reflective of God’s wisdom though they are, denies the sovereign Creator of *all* things taught in the Bible. Paley’s design argument, at least without augmentation of some kind, gives us a finite god. And with a finite god we get a naturalistic worldview because the impersonal forces of matter are more ultimate than a finite god. The man walking across the field should infer design by some intelligent designer in the watch, but he should also see that the stone was made by an intelligent designer because knowledge of any fact is possible only because all facts are created by an absolute God, as I will explain more fully below.

Belief in finite gods undermines the scientific enterprise. Nancy Pearcey remarks,

¹ William Paley, *Natural Theology* (New York: American Tract Society, 1881), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 1.

[F]inite gods do not create the universe. Indeed, the universe creates them. . . . [I]n a polytheistic worldview, the universe itself is not the creation of a rational Mind, and is therefore not thought to have a rational order. . . . And if you do not *expect* to find rational laws, you will not even look for them, and science will not get off the ground.³

In a famous statement Alfred North Whitehead argues that it was the Christian idea of a rational God's creation and control of the universe that provided the foundation for the rise of science in the West. He says,

The inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner . . . must come from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God . . . My explanation is that the faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology.⁴

³ Nancy Pearcey, "Christianity Is a Science-Starter, Not a Science-Stopper," *The Pearcey Report* (9/22/2005), http://www.pearceyreport.com/archives/2005/09/post_4.php. This reveals the mistake of atheists like Richard Dawkins who claim that atheism is on the opposite end of the theological continuum from polytheism with Christianity in the middle, because Christianity denies all gods but one, and atheism just denies one more. Atheism and polytheism are both children of the naturalistic worldview, and Christianity stands opposed to the naturalistic root of both their views.

⁴ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 12-13.

Phillip Johnson, William Dembski and other leaders in the ID movement say that the strategy of ID is to attack the assumption of naturalism in the scientific community.⁵ Yet, William Dembski says that “The intelligent design movement is linked both conceptually and historically to British natural theology.”⁶ As we just saw with Paley’s analogy of the stone and the watch, the design argument can be stated in a way that implicitly affirms the naturalistic worldview.

So we must ask, do the Intelligent Design leaders escape the problem of Paley’s design argument? Unfortunately not. Despite their stated goal of undermining naturalism, they explicitly affirm the possibility of a finite god. Their attempted *neutrality* on whether the intelligence that designed life on earth is finite or infinite, we will see, is actually a *negation* of the infinite view of God held by Christians and is an implicit affirmation of the naturalistic worldview.

In an ode to Johnson’s leadership in the ID movement, William Dembski writes, “The ID movement is a big tent and all are welcome. Even agnostics and atheists are not in principle excluded. . . . I’ve seen intelligent design embraced by Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, agnostics and even atheists.”⁷ And in another book he writes,

⁵ Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 13.

⁶ William Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science & Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 16.

⁷ William Dembski, preface to *Darwin’s Nemesis: Phillip Johnson and the Intelligent Design Movement*, ed. William Dembski (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 17, 20.

But the designer is also compatible with the watchmaker-God of the deists, the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* and the divine reason (i.e. *logos spermatikos*) of the ancient Stoics. One can even take an agnostic view about the designer, treating specified complexity as a brute unexplainable fact. Unlike scientific creationism, intelligent design does not prejudge such questions as *Who is the designer?* or *How does the designer go about designing and building things?*"⁸

This raises some questions. If atheists can embrace intelligent design, how is this defeating naturalism? If atheists can embrace intelligent design, why should Christian apologists use it to argue against atheism? If belief in a rational God that created all things is the historical foundation of science, why do ID advocates see themselves as being scientific by being non-committal to the existence of God? By allowing for finite intelligence as the ultimate source of information, the ID leaders are conceding that an ultimately non-rational world, controlled completely by impersonal, material forces, can account for the existence of those finite intelligences that created life on earth. They are conceding to the reasonableness of the naturalistic worldview. Atheistic evolutionists like Francis Crick, Carl Sagan, and Richard Dawkins say that aliens could have created life on another planet, which was then transported to earth.⁹ Dembski would require a greater involvement of the space aliens in the creation of life on earth, but Dembski's big-tent view of ID is basically the same worldview as those atheists.

⁸ Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 252.

⁹ Directed panspermia is the view that advanced civilizations on other planets deliberately spread life to earth. See Carl Sagan and Iosif Shklovsky, *Intelligent Life in the Universe* (San Francisco, CA: Holden Day, 1966); Francis Crick and Leslie Orgel "Directed Panspermia," *Icarus*, Vol. 19 (1973), http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/SC/B/C/C/P/_/scbccp.pdf; Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Evolution from*

Biblically, we should remember that “the God” (*ton theon* – Rom. 1:21), not Plato’s demiurge or the Stoic *logos*, has been “clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20). *If you don’t find “the God,” an eternal, sovereign Creator, in your study of creation, then you’re doing something wrong.* In one chapter in his book *Intelligent Design*, Dembski puts aside his deference to finite gods and considers the implications for ID in terms of the Christian worldview. In this chapter he says, quite rightly, “Naturalism is idolatry by another name. We need at all costs to resist naturalistic construals of *logos* (whether *Logos* with a capital *L* or *logos* with a small *l*).”¹⁰ But, in that case, the ID tent is not big enough to accept naturalistic *logoi*, like Stoicism, Plato’s demiurge, and space aliens.

The ID leaders also concede to the naturalistic worldview in terms of their definition of science. Dembski says that “Scientific creationism’s reliance on narrowly held prior assumptions undercuts its status as a scientific theory. Intelligent design’s reliance on widely accepted scientific principles, on the other hand, ensures its legitimacy as a scientific theory.”¹¹ He says that scientific creationism’s narrowly held, unscientific prior assumptions include “a Creator who originates the world and all its materials.”¹² So once again, how is ID defeating naturalism if it can explain the universe without a Creator?

Dembski says that ID is scientific because it relies on “widely accepted scientific principles.” Likewise, Stephen Meyer argues for the “methodological equivalence” between ID

Space (Touchstone, 1984). Richard Dawkins supports the view in his interview in the documentary *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, DVD, directed by Nathan Frankowski (2008; USA: Premise Media Corporation).

¹⁰ Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 226.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹² *Ibid.*

and naturalistic evolution.¹³ This simply allows sinful men to vote to kick God out of science. The ID advocates have chosen to sit in the seat of scoffers (Ps. 1:1) by sharing that same contempt toward creationists that atheistic evolutionists do. Truth is not determined by majority vote, even a majority vote among scientists, especially in a godless age such as ours in which the majority of the scientific community pride themselves on their godlessness. As I'll explain more fully below, certain widely accepted scientific principles exclude the Christian worldview and actually undermine the possibility of science, so these widely held principles should be rejected by all rational, scientifically-minded people.

Dembski claims that science excludes a Creator by definition: "More than rearranging a pre-existing universe, creation originates the universe itself. Consequently creation lies beyond the remit of science."¹⁴ But this is just begging the question of naturalism, at least a methodological naturalism. The only intelligent designer that this definition allows into science is a finite intelligence within the universe. Why should Dembski define science to exclude the Creator? What if a transcendent Creator is exactly what is needed to explain design? If so, Dembski's definition of science prevents scientists from offering the true explanation for nature and prohibits them from giving God the glory due His name.

Likewise, Meyer writes, "ID is not based on religion, but on scientific discoveries and our experience of cause and effect, the basis of all scientific reasoning about the past. Unlike creationism, ID is an inference from biological data."¹⁵ Meyer equates secular empiricism with

¹³ Stephen C. Meyer, "The Scientific Status of Intelligent Design: The Methodological Equivalence of Naturalistic and Non-Naturalistic Origins Theories," <http://www.discovery.org/a/2834>.

¹⁴ Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 249.

¹⁵ Stephen C. Meyer, "Intelligent Design is not Creationism," *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 2/9/2006, <http://www.discovery.org/a/3191>.

science. He is accepting a naturalistic worldview in terms of his epistemology. What if empirical knowledge of cause and effect requires the God who speaks in the Bible? How can any Christian say that God is not allowed to speak authoritatively on scientific issues? God created the world. He is all-knowing. How can any *Christian* say that we can ignore God if He gives us knowledge about His creation? Johnson, Dembski, and Meyer identify themselves as Christians. To put it bluntly, *who do they think they are to tell God to shut up and butt out of science?* A god who cannot communicate to man about history and the material world is a “speechless idol” (Hab. 2:18), not the Maker of heaven and earth “who teaches man knowledge” (Ps. 94:10). The mute god would be a finite god, with impersonal matter as the supreme force in the universe; so once again ID advocates leave us with a naturalistic worldview.

Aside from the theological problems, Dembski and Meyer’s definition of science faces the problem that philosophers of science have failed to establish a line of demarcation between science and religion. Hypocritically, Meyer argues against the naturalistic critics of ID by noting that the attempt to find a line of demarcation between science and religion has been a spectacular failure,¹⁶ yet he and Dembski invoke a demarcation rule to exclude God and the Bible.

Part 2: The Failure of Secular Epistemology

The failure of the demarcation criterion is more than a failure to separate science and religion. It includes the general failure of secular epistemology. The ID leaders are standing on sinking sand to rely on bankrupt, secular epistemology to defend ID. The current status of secular epistemology, particularly secular empiricism, is captured by Bertrand Russell’s denial that we can know anything whatsoever:

¹⁶ Meyer, “The Scientific Status of Intelligent Design.”

That scientific inference requires, for its validity, principles which experience cannot even render probable is, I believe, an inescapable conclusion from the logic of probability. . . . To ask, therefore, whether we "know" the postulates of scientific inference is not so definite as it seems. . . . In the sense in which "no" is the right answer we know nothing whatsoever, and "knowledge" in this sense is a delusive vision. The perplexities of philosophers are due, in a large measure, to their unwillingness to awaken from this blissful dream.¹⁷

Russell came to recognize that naturalistic empiricism provides no basis for saying that there is a world at all:

Academic philosophers, ever since the time of Parmenides, have believed that the world is a unity. . . . The most fundamental of my intellectual beliefs is that this is rubbish. I think the universe is all spots and jumps, without any unity, without continuity, without coherence or orderliness or any of the other properties that governesses love. Indeed, there is little but prejudice and habit to be said for the view that there is a world at all.¹⁸

We can go back to David Hume to understand the *reductio ad absurdum* of attempts to justify causation and scientific knowledge on the basis of naturalistic empiricism. Hume saw that with sense impressions as the basis of all knowledge, there is no unity to the world.

¹⁷ Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scopes and Limits* (New York: Clarion Books, Simon and Schuster, 1948), xv-xvi, quoted in Greg Bahnsen, "Pragmatism, Prejudice, and Presuppositionalism," *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, ed. Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976), 243.

¹⁸ Bertrand Russell, *The Scientific Outlook* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954), 98.

Knowledge of your own existence, your memories, the tree you see through the window, the apparent repetition of events that lead you to assume a law of cause and effect relationships in the material world – they are all illusions, reflecting nothing more lasting than any particular sensation that you experience. Applied consistently, this view destroys science – and civilization. Based purely on experience, nothing can be said to exist but the discrete moment. That there are cause-and-effect relationships between various perceptions cannot be known from experience. Any *necessity* that might connect various perceptions is not itself a perception. Abstract concepts like laws and logic are applied by the human mind to perceptions, but they themselves are not perceptions. They all involve continuity over time, but bare experience gives us nothing but the discrete moment. Since we have no experience of the future, experience itself provides no basis for believing that the future will be anything like the past.

Descartes thought that he found an unquestionable truth when he said that “I think, therefore I am.” But Hume found a way to doubt that, because knowledge of the self, the “I,” is undermined by strict empiricism. There is no one perception that lasts as long as the self allegedly does. Consequently, not only does naturalistic empiricism undermine knowledge of the future, it undermines knowledge of the past. Knowledge of the past depends on the continuity of memory and personal identity. But since the discrete moments of sense experience do not provide a basis for continuity over time, knowledge of the past, including one’s own past existence, is inconsistent with the claim that all knowledge is through sense experience. Hume’s empiricism reduces to absurdity. On the basis of it we can have knowledge of neither the external world nor our inner selves, neither the past nor the future. Hume’s view of knowledge does not allow for laws of logic, laws of nature, or repeatability of experiments.

Hume resorted to custom and habit as explanations for our belief in the regularity of nature, but custom and habit themselves presuppose continuity over time, and discrete experience can provide no basis for continuity over time.

It does no good, by the way, to claim that nature is “probably” orderly because probability itself assumes order. We can calculate the probability that a certain number will be rolled with dice only because we do not live in a world of chaos, in which dots might appear, disappear, or become unicorns rather than dots with each roll.

Immanuel Kant saw that Hume’s empiricism could not account for scientific knowledge, so he set out to “save science” from Hume. Kant claimed that the autonomous human consciousness imposes the laws of nature on the unstructured sensations: “Thus the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had we not ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there.”¹⁹ This means that there is no intelligible world beyond the mind of man.

Kant’s approach is self-refuting. The pre-rational “noumenal” realm beyond man’s mind is unknowable; and yet Kant’s explanation of his philosophy requires him to make knowledge claims about the noumenal realm. Causation only applies to the phenomenal world of order that is originally generated by the autonomous human mind, and yet Kant also holds that sensations and the unity of consciousness are *caused* by the noumenal realm. And then there is the problem that Kant’s noumenal self, the principle of unity in human experience, somehow comes into existence out of the chaos beyond the human mind. Cornelius Van Til aptly compared the futile attempts of philosophers like Kant trying to explain human rationality on the basis of an

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), 147 (§ A 125).

ultimately irrational universe to a man made of water, trying to escape an infinite sea of water, on a ladder of water.²⁰

Logical positivists of the twentieth century tried to revive empiricism. They did not have any more success than Hume. The failure of the modernist program resulted in postmodernist relativism, with no objective criterion to distinguish science from religion or even science from superstition.²¹ As Russell came to recognize, naturalistic empiricism provides no basis for saying that there is a world at all.

Part 3: An Explicitly Christian Theory of Knowledge

The ID leaders provide no solution to the failure of secular philosophy of knowledge. Indeed, they join themselves to the failed epistemology of the secularists in order to gain their favor. Even if they wanted to, ID advocates can never conclude with the existence of the sovereign Creator of the Bible by combining evidence for design with the epistemology of naturalistic empiricism. The way out of the problem is the assumption of the creationists that the ID advocates reject: metaphysical and methodological theism, recognizing that science is dependent on God and His revelation, rather than trying reason from a supposedly theologically neutral scientific methodology. Although this approach is a rejection of Dembski's theological minimalism that he calls "mere creation," it achieves one of his goals of a doctrine of "mere creation", which is "A sustained theological investigation that connects the intelligence inferred

²⁰ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, 63.

²¹ Kai Neilson, "On Being Skeptical About Applied Ethics," in *Clinical Medical Ethics: Exploration and Assessment*, ed. Terrence F. Ackerman and Glenn C. Graber, et al. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987). Larry Laudan, "The Demise of the Demarcation Problem," in *But Is It Science?: The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy*, ed., Michael Ruse. (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988).

by intelligent design with the God of Scripture and therewith formulates a coherent theology of nature.”²² Hopefully this essay will further this goal of his.

The solution to the modern crises of justifying knowledge and rationality is the Transcendental Argument for the existence of God (or “TAG”) formulated by Cornelius Van Til. TAG is an explicitly theistic theory of knowledge, or you might call it, theory of fact; therefore it applies to all facts in the world, whether stones or watches. The argument is that the existence of God, an absolute God who is the source of all that exists, necessarily exists in order for knowledge to be possible. He defines an absolute God as one who is the source of both the unity and diversity of the world. Unity and diversity must be eternally related to each other in the nature of God, because:

1. An abstract diversity is chaos, which is irrational.
2. An abstract unity is a pure emptiness, which cannot be an object of thought either.
3. The two irrational principles cannot be combined to produce a rational world, where human knowledge, intelligible experience, etc. are possible.²³

[Graph: Two Views, Three Options]

Compare Van Til’s approach to Dembski’s description of Complex Specified Information (CSI):

²² William Dembski, “Introduction: Mere Creation,” in *Mere Creation*, 29; also see Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 295, where he suggests a dissertation on the topic of “the logic of explanation connecting intelligent design and the Christian doctrine of creation.”

²³ See, for example, Cornelius Van Til, *Christianity and Barthianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), 204-05; and *A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), 38, 42-43.

(1) Chance generates contingency, but not complex specified information. (2) Laws . . . generate neither contingency nor information, much less complex specified information. (3) . . . [N]o chance-law combination is going to generate information either. After all, laws can transmit only the CSI they are given, and whatever chance gives to a law is not CSI. Ergo, chance and laws working in tandem cannot generate information.²⁴

They both recognize that information cannot be the product of combining chance and law. Just as Van Til affirms that knowledge must be eternal because knowledge can only come from knowledge, Dembski affirms that “Information is sui generis. Only information begets information.”²⁵ Therefore information must be *eternal* according to Dembski’s reasoning. Information requires both order and diversity, or “specified complexity,” as Dembski calls it; and he recognizes that merely adding chance and law cannot produce specified complexity.

Van Til’s phrase that closely parallels Dembski’s specified complexity is “concrete universal.”²⁶ Van Til argues that a concrete universal God is necessary for the possibility of intelligible experience. This means that the unity of experience (i.e. the “universal”) and the diversity of experience (i.e. the “concrete”) must be eternally related to each other. He notes that “Every intellectual effort deals with facts in relations and with relations in facts.”²⁷ As postmodernists have put it, all facts are interpreted facts. Facts without meaning and concepts

²⁴ Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 167-68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁶ Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 42. He uses “absolute,” “concrete universal” and “Eternal One and Many” as equivalent phrases here.

²⁷ Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel* (Nutley, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1977), 37-38.

without content are both meaningless, and the two meaningless notions cannot combine to create knowledge. Every particular fact and every universal that applies to every fact are eternally related to each other in the mind of God. Knowledge can only come from knowledge. Human knowledge must be “receptively reconstructive” of God’s original knowledge; humans are not originally constructive of knowledge as the atheists contend.²⁸ Humans are made in the image of God, thus our knowledge is a reflection of God’s knowledge. Van Til calls human knowledge “analogical,” meaning that human knowledge can be true, being derived from God’s knowledge, but not exhaustive like God’s.²⁹

The difference between Dembski and Van Til here is that Dembski is addressing the narrower topic of information, which applies to a watch but not a stone. Van Til is addressing the broader topic of intelligibility, which applies to any fact, whether a watch or a stone. However, Dembski touches on the issue of intelligibility in his aforementioned chapter where he drops his idolatrous praises of finite gods and sees something of the necessity of the biblical view of God for the possibility of science. He makes this observation that is in harmony with Van Til’s philosophy:

²⁸ Cornelius Van Til, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1974), 126.

²⁹ Gilbert B. Weaver, “Man: Analogue of God,” in *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*, ed., E.R. Geehan (Nutley, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1971); Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 168; Van Til, *The Reformed Pastor and Modern Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1971), Chaps. 2, 4.

God, in speaking the divine *Logos*, not only creates the world but also renders it intelligible. . . . Einstein claimed: “The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible.” This statement, so widely regarded as a profound insight, is actually a sad commentary on naturalism. Within naturalism the intelligibility of the world must always remain a mystery. Within theism, on the other hand, anything other than an intelligible world would constitute a mystery.³⁰

So, despite all of my criticisms of Dembski, there is hope for him yet.

A Christian theory of knowledge must begin with an all-knowing God as the source of all the facts of the universe and the human mind’s ability to know the world that God made.³¹

Human sense experience and the human mind are part of that picture, but not the whole picture.

To treat either one or both of them as the whole picture would be to make an idol out of an aspect of God’s creation. God is the source of the whole picture, and unity and diversity are equally ultimate in God, as the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity demands. God’s diversity, the three persons, cannot be denied in favor of an abstract unity. There is genuine particularity in God. Nor can God’s unity be denied in favor of a polytheism of three different gods.³²

Here, in the nature of God as the absolutely rational, all-knowing, ontological Trinity we have the solution to the secularist’s problem of knowledge. The Christian does not need to futilely struggle, like Einstein, to explain how an ultimately non-rational universe produced rational, finite creatures able to gain knowledge of their world. Christianity assumes knowledge

³⁰ Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 230.

³¹ Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* (Texarkana, AR: Covenant Media Foundation, 1996), chap. 5 “Revelation as the Foundation of Knowledge.”

³² Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 229.

from the beginning – the eternal knowledge of God. Human knowledge does not have to be a process of rationalizing the irrational, combining blank unity and chaotic diversity. All knowledge exists eternally in the mind of the omniscient God who planned out everything that would happen before there was a world. Facts and their interpretation are eternally determined by the mind of God. We can call this a *revelational epistemology*, in contrast to empiricism and rationalism.³³ However, this revelational epistemology allows for knowledge through sense experience and knowledge of universal laws through reason that can be applied to the changing world of sense experience. Assuming the existence of God, Christians have justification for the repeatability of experiments, for the uniformity of nature, and for the abstract rules of logic and math applying to the changing world of sense experience. Finite intelligence requires an absolute Mind in order to function.³⁴

This view of knowledge is consistent with what scriptures teach us, such as that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7). It is “in your light do we see light” (Ps. 36:9). Rather than “hollow and deceptive philosophy” based on “the basic principles of this world,” the Christian is to recognize that “in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:8). This knowledge cannot be limited to spiritual and heavenly matters; it must be comprehensive, including all creation and all history, because God is the sovereign Creator and Ruler of all things.³⁵

³³ Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, 1, 6-10.

³⁴ James N. Anderson and Greg Welty, “The Lord of Non-Contradiction: An Argument for God from Logic,” *Philosophia Christi* 13:2 (2011).

³⁵ Greg Bahnsen, “The Reformation of Christian Apologetics,” in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, ed. Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976), 208-220.

Philosophically, an absolute God is necessary for the possibility of knowledge of any kind. An absolute God can only speak with absolute authority, and as absolute, that authority must extend to all areas of life, including science. An absolute Bible is entailed by an absolute God. The Bible must be regarded as absolutely trustworthy when it intends to speak literally about physical features of the world and the events of history. Of course, humans can distort God's message; but there is no necessity to it when God has absolute rule over His creatures. And this is not to deny that the Bible can use figurative language and common jargon in the culture that is not meant to be scientifically accurate. If the ID advocates want to argue that Genesis 1 is meant by its author to be a poetic depiction of atemporal truths rather than a literal record of creation, that's another issue; although I would disagree with them.³⁶ The leading ID advocates that I quoted don't want the Bible to speak with *any* authority on scientific matters, regardless of whether the Bible teaches a young earth or if it allows for billions of years. Since God knows more than any human can ever know, being the source of all knowledge and all facts, scientists are rationally obligated to fit observations to conform to the teachings of Scripture. Therefore, *if* the Bible teaches that God created the world in six literal days about six thousand years ago, ID advocates and all other scientists are rationally and morally obligated to conduct their scientific investigation controlled by that assumption.

³⁶ See Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, eds., *Did God Create in 6 Days?* (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2005); Andrew Sandlin, ed., *Creation According to Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation* (Chalcedon, 2001); Don Batten, ed., *The Creation Answers Book* (Creation Book Publishers, 2007), Chap. 2 "Six Days? Really?" (<http://creation.com/images/pdfs/cabook/chapter2.pdf>) and Chap. 10 "Was the Flood Global" (<http://creation.com/images/pdfs/cabook/chapter10.pdf>). Jonathan Sarfati, "Biblical chronogenealogies," <http://creation.com/biblical-chronogenealogies>.

Additionally in support of Biblical authority in science, since man has rebelled against God, and God rules over all things, then rebellion against God will manifest itself in all areas of life, including science. Romans 1 says that all men “by their unrighteousness suppress the truth” (Rom. 1:18), and that truth specifically includes that nature reveals an eternal Creator. Therefore we would expect that God’s redemptive revelation, the Bible, would give us information to correct the sinful reasoning of men about creation and God’s role in it.

We humans are finite and our minds corrupted by sin. Therefore we would benefit from clear, written information about the origin of the world that an all-knowing God might be gracious enough to tell us. Ignoring God’s word is not a religiously neutral position to take. God doesn’t like it. (Remember the house built on sand in the Sermon on the Mount.) And specifically, *to ignore the information given in God’s redemptive revelation, the Bible, is to implicitly reject the Fall and its noetic effects on man.*

Furthermore, Van Til points out that even before the Fall, God saw it necessary to give man special revelation to properly understand the world.³⁷ Man was never intended to interpret nature apart from special revelation. If even before the Fall man needed special revelation to properly understand the world, how much more after the Fall, when man’s sinful mind suppresses the knowledge of God. Man needs his presuppositions corrected by the special revelation of God. As Calvin famously put it:

For as the aged, or those whose sight is defective, when any book, however fair, is set before them, though they perceive that there is something written are scarcely able to make out two consecutive words, but, when aided by glasses, begin to read distinctly, so

³⁷ Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 69.

Scripture, gathering together the impressions of Deity, which, till then, lay confused in our minds, dissipates the darkness, and shows us the true God clearly.³⁸

The ID advocates protest that they don't need an eye doctor to give them a glasses prescription, and even atheist scientists only need a slight refocus; but they certainly don't need a prescription for those nerdy Bible glasses. But they are as self-deceived as the Pharisees (Matt. 9:12).

Natural theologians are mistaken to appeal to the "book of nature" and "book of scripture" as independent and equal sources of knowledge.

In summary, to be true to science and scripture, ID advocates ought to recognize the necessity of the biblical God for the possibility of any scientific knowledge, whether that is of complex designs in nature or the stone that stubs their toe in a field. Redemption in Christ is redemption unto true knowledge of God and God's world. Christ redeems creation by redeeming human beings to think God's thoughts after Him in respect to His creation. The resurrection of Christ is the resurrection of science! – under Christ's lordship, like everything else in heaven and earth. Our message to non-Christian scientists must be the following, as stated by Van Til:

The non-Christian scientist must be told that he is dealing with facts that belong to God. He must be told this, not merely in the interest of religion in the narrower sense of the term. He must be told this in the interest of science too, and of culture in general. He must be told that there would be no facts distinguishable from one another unless God had made them and made them thus. He must be told that no hypothesis would have any

³⁸ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.VII.

relevance or bearing on these same facts, except for the providence of God. He must be told that his own mind, with its principles of order, depends upon his being made in the image of God. And then he must be told that if it were not for God's common grace he would go the full length of the principle of evil within him. . . . 'Will you not then repent in order to serve and worship the Creator more than the creature?'"³⁹

³⁹ Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 145.