

Debate: Does God Exist?

Chris Bolt vs. Ben Wallis

2010 Aug 19

Document: first edition, 2011-02-24

1 A note on this document

This transcript strives to be accurate, and for the most part it is. However, there was some difficulty with Chris Bolt's opening statement. In particular, we have two problems: First, quotations are not always clearly demarcated in the audio, which means I have had to make my best guess on where to identify them as such in text. Second, some proper names are unknown to me, which means I have had to guess their spelling, and in which case I put the name in [brackets] (I also use brackets where I am unsure of what has been said). At some later date I hope to revise this document to correct these errors.

2 Opening Statement: Chris Bolt

I want to begin by thanking my opponent, and the moderator, as well as my wife [Carrie] for providing me with the time to prepare for this debate. I want to thank my lord and savior Jesus Christ in whom we as believers have redemption, forgiveness of our sins, and all of the blessings which belong to us in Christ Jesus. The Triune God of Scripture—of Christian Scripture—I argue for tonight speaks in a self-authenticating Word, so that there is no way of arguing for faith in God upon the basis of anything other than faith in God. Ultimately, I know that God exists because he's told me so, and it is foolish to believe otherwise. I will attempt to spell this out philosophically from my apologetic.

All varieties of the non-Christian world view presuppose that intelligible human experience can be accounted for autonomously, experience being made sense of independently of God and his revelatory Word. The transcendental argument for God takes some general principle or operative feature of human experience, for example science, logic, morality, reason, human dignity, etc., and argues that the existence of the Christian God is the necessary precondition of the given general principle or operational feature. God is then proven indirectly by demonstrating the impossibility of the contrary.

Since Romans 1 teaches a universal belief in God, if the Christian world view is true, then agnosticism is contradictory and thus false. But let's assume for

the sake of argument that agnosticism is true, and Mr. Wallis really does not know whether or not God exists:

- If God exists, then everyone knows that God exists;
- Mr. Wallis does not know that God exists;
- Therefore, God does not exist.

Mr. Wallis's position of agnosticism assumes at the outset that God does not exist. But this is atheism, not agnosticism. For agnosticism to both be and not be agnosticism is a contradiction. Mr. Wallis's agnosticism, if true, entails that it is false. Therefore it is false. Mr. Wallis either knows that God exists, or he knows that God does not exist, so that he cannot rest peacefully on some allegedly neutral agnosticism during the course of this debate. Unfortunately, Mr. Wallis, along with me, finds atheism untenable. He must therefore affirm theism.

Contrary to the Christian world view, the implication of agnosticism is that facts, objects, and subjects of knowledge can exist apart from God. Agnostics try to avoid making a positive statement concerning ultimate matters, but simultaneously affirm a universally negative statement. Mr. Wallis has, according to Cornelius Van Til, already given one of the two possible answers to every question of epistemology that may be asked. One definite thing the agnostic says about ultimate reality is that God does not exist. Agnosticism is hence not open-minded, but closed-minded on the subject of the existence of God, and thus it is both psychologically and epistemologically self-contradictory. But in order to affirm the self-contradictory-ness of agnosticism, the agnostic must prove the non-existence of God. However the agnostic needs every fact prior to proving the non-existence of God, or even commenting concerning the nature of any fact, since one fact may influence others. The agnostic will never get all of these facts in. The agnostic makes mutually-exclusive statements about ultimate reality, being open- and closed-minded, but has no basis upon which to understand this contradiction. Mr. Wallis might affirm that contradiction is simply meaningless, but this assumes that there is something other than meaninglessness.

To summarize and complete the argument, agnosticism is self-contradictory because Christianity is true. Agnosticism is self-contradictory if anti-theism is true. Van Til writes, "the anti-theistic conception of the self-contradictory presupposes the theistic conception of the self-contradictory for its operation." Therefore, agnosticism presupposes the existence of God. If God exists, then he created and hence caused us, our minds, and the world that we know with our minds, and the way that they all work. On this presupposition our conceptual scheme is automatically in touch with and corresponds to objects of experience with God as the connecting link. If we deny this view, then there's nothing to connect the [unintelligible] to God. But God is the connecting link between everything else. What is left is a loose and disjointed epistemology. There are, in this case, random objects of knowledge not connected together by God's creative, sovereign, fore-ordaining Word. There are not objects connected to the

mind of man and his conceptual scheme. By definition, this world view cannot answer the skeptic, because it begins with a separation between the mind and objects in the world. Since God has not been brought into the picture at the start, we have what we might call an egocentric predicament. On the other hand, there is no egocentric predicament for the creationist.

The Scottish skeptic David Hume pointed out in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* that it is the common practice of humans to assert and act upon propositions pertaining to that of which they have no experience by way of singular predictive inferences and inductive generalization. Matters of fact can be conceived of as being completely opposite to what they are without generating any contradiction. For example, that the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition and applies no more contradiction than the affirmation that it will rise.

Hume asked, “what is the nature of that evidence which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory”—? Hume contends that all such inferences are drawn because the individual believes particular things about cause and effect relationships, and proceeds to remove *a priori* thinking as a possible source of the knowledge of cause and effect by explaining that when an individual has an object presented to him for the first time the causes and effects of that object may not be known even when examined closely. This places great weight upon the authority of experience, and it should be asked whether or not experience provides [a] firm foundation for all our reasoning about matters of fact. Thus Hume writes,

When it is asked, *What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact?* the proper answer seems to be, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect. When again it is asked, *What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation?* it may be replied in one word, Experience. But if we still carry on our sifting humour, and ask, *What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience?* this implies a new question, which may be of more difficult solution and explication.¹

No object in the empirical world provides any sensible qualities by which the powers of objects themselves which produce these sensible qualities may be known. There is no immediately apparent reason why we would think that like sensible qualities have like natures. No knowledge exists which would justify the assumption that there is a connection between the sense data given off by an object and the insensible powers of that object. These qualities may be found together with a certain nature over and over again in experience, but the assumption that the two are somehow connected is an unwarranted leap in thinking.

[Al Muscraive] explains: “Hume’s objection is that inductive arguments are logically invalid. The truth of the premises does not guarantee the truth of

¹Hume, 4.2; 28.

the conclusion. It is possible for the conclusion to be false even though all the premises are true. The conclusion does not follow from the premises.”

Reasoning invalidly is not reasonable at all; it is irrational. However, everyone reasons inductively. The conclusion is that humans are irrational. Popular attempts to avoid this conclusion seek to reject one or more premises of the argument which properly represents Hume’s view. A potential answer proposed by Hume is to base solid and satisfactory reasoning about matters of fact using past experience as the standard of future judgment through the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past. There is a very serious problem with this supposition, though: it begs the question! Hume writes,

We have said that all arguments concerning existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect; that our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience; and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past. To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.²

Hume continues:

...all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities. If there be any suspicion that the course of nature may change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion. It is impossible, therefore, that any arguments from experience can prove this resemblance of the past to the future; since all these arguments are founded on the supposition of that resemblance.³

It does not matter that in the past there have been regularities in nature. What matters is whether or not we have reason to believe that it will continue to possess them in the future. An appeal to the past regularity of nature is no solution to the problem, nor is an appeal to the properties of objects; for these properties may change without warning from their sensible qualities. Bertrand Russell writes,

...if we are to know of the existence of matter, of other people, of the past before our individual memory begins, or of the future, we must know general principles of some kind by means of which such inferences can be drawn. It must be known to us that the existence of some one sort of thing, A, is a sign of the existence of some other sort of thing, B, either at the same time as A or at some earlier or

²Hume, 4.2; 30.

³Hume, 4.2; 32.

later time, as, for example, thunder is a sign of the earlier existence of lightning.⁴

If the need for some underlying principle in terms of which such inferences may be drawn is not met, then people are unable to make any inferences beyond what is present to the memory and senses. Answering Hume on this is not only no small feat, it's also no inconsequential philosophical problem. Bertrand Russell explains that

On our answer to this question must depend the validity of the whole of our expectations as to the future, the whole of the results obtained by induction, and in fact practically all the beliefs upon which our daily life is based.⁵

It may be argued that science as well rests upon inductive reasoning. Thus Russell:

The general principles of science, such as the belief in the reign of law, and the belief that every event must have a cause, are as completely dependent upon the inductive principle as are the beliefs of daily life.⁶

The point is that both reasonings concerning everyday matters, as well as scientific reasonings, are undercut by Hume's problem of induction. Bertrand Russell writes, the inductive principle is

incapable of being *proved* by an appeal to experience. Experience might conceivably confirm the inductive principle as regards the cases that have been already examined; but as regards unexamined cases, it is the inductive principle alone that can justify any inference from what has been examined to what has not been examined. All arguments which, on the basis of experience, argue as to the future or the unexperienced parts of the past or present, assume the inductive principle; hence we can never use experience to prove the inductive principle without begging the question. Thus we must either accept the inductive principle on the ground of its intrinsic evidence, or forgo all justification of our expectations about the future.⁷

Nelson Goodman describes the typical writer's response to this problem:

At this point, if he is tired, he concludes that the principle must be accepted as an indispensable assumption; or if he is energetic and ingenious, he goes on to devise some subtle justification for it. Such

⁴Russell, Bertrand. *Problems of Philosophy*, chap 4., "On Induction."

⁵Russell, chap 4.

⁶Russell, chap 4.

⁷Russell, chap 4.

an invention, however, seldom satisfies anyone else; and the easier course of accepting an unsubstantiated and even dubious assumption much more sweeping than any actual predictions we make seems an odd and expensive way of justifying them.⁸

Accepting the uniformity of nature by virtue of its being indispensable is to concede to [Hume] twice over: first in that Hume formulates this assumption as a possible answer and shows that it does not solve the problem because it is unsupported regardless of its alleged necessity for inferences; and second, in that the idea that this assumption has been necessary for past inferences does not require that it be necessary for future inferences, which runs into Hume's problem again.

If a counter-argument to Hume's problem is based upon reason, it is reason which is readily apparent to the most ignorant and stupid peasants, nay, infants; for all of these improve by experience and learn the qualities of natural objects by observing the effects which result from them. For example, a young child does not place his hand near the flame of the candle after being [pained] by one in the past. The reasoning employed by this child, if there is reasoning involved, cannot be said to be beyond the capacity of an adult to understand. With this observation, Hume appears to successfully end the sophisticated ramblings of philosophers on the problem of induction:

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? A simple one; though, it must be confessed, pretty remote from the common theories of philosophy. All belief of matter of fact or real existence is derived merely from some object, present to the memory or senses, and a customary conjunction between that and some other object.⁹

Whether or not induction is reasonable is a separate question from whether or not people reason inductively, and why it is that they do so. Hume does not doubt that people can and must reason inductively, or that there is cause for it; this does not solve the problem. Bertrand Russell draws this distinction, as well. He writes:

We have therefore to distinguish the fact that past uniformities *cause* expectations as to the future, from the question whether there is any reasonable ground for giving weight to such expectations after the question of their validity has been raised.¹⁰

Russell writes:

The man who has fed the chicken every day throughout its life at last wrings its neck instead, showing that more refined views as to the uniformity of nature would have been useful to the chicken.¹¹

⁸Nelson Goodman, *Fact Fiction and Forecast*, fourth edition (1983), ISBN 0-674-29070-4, pp61-2. <http://books.google.com/books?id=i97.LdPXwrAC>

⁹Hume, 5.1; 38.

¹⁰Russell, chap 4.

¹¹Russell, chap 4.

Now, what does all this have to do with theism? Well, that great epistemologist Alvin Plantinga writes,

Hume pointed out that human beings are inclined to accept inductive forms of reasoning and thus to take it for granted, in a way, that the future will relevantly resemble the past... As Hume also pointed out, however, it is hard to think of a good (noncircular) reason for believing that indeed the future will be relevantly like the past. Theism, however, provides a reason: God has created us and our noetic capacities and has created the world; he has also created the former in such a way as to be adapted to the latter. It is likely, then, that he has created the world in such a way that in fact the future will indeed resemble the past in the relevant way). (And thus perhaps we do indeed have a priori knowledge of contingent truth: perhaps we know a priori that the future will resemble the past.) ... This argument and the last argument could be thought of as exploiting the fact that according to theism God has created us in such a way as to be at home in the world.¹²

And philosopher-theologian James Anderson puts it like this:

- If theism is not the case, then one cannot account for the uniformity of nature presupposed by inductive reasoning;
- If one cannot account for the uniformity of nature presupposed by inductive reasoning, then beliefs based on inductive reasoning are not warranted;
- Beliefs based on inductive reasoning are warranted;
- Therefore, theism is the case.

Thank you.

3 Opening Statement: Ben Wallis

Thank you, Mr. Knapp. Thank you, Mr. Bolt. I do appreciate being here today. I thank you both for the opportunity to come participate in this debate. It's enjoyable for me to do so, and I fully expect it to be enjoyable for everyone involved.

The topic for today's debate is, "does God exist?" Of particular interest, given Mr. Bolt's position, is the question, does the Biblical God Yahweh exist? Despite earnest seeking, I don't know the answer to either of those questions. I can't find any reason to suppose that God exists, and so I don't believe that He does. But notice that unbelief is not quite the same as disbelief. I do not deny that God exists, and I don't take the position that God does not exist. I'm an agnostic, in particular, of the negative atheist variety, by which I mean that I neither believe nor disbelieve that there is a God.

¹²Plantinga, ???.

This kind of agnosticism is easy to misunderstand, and so I think it prudent to clarify an important point: My statement of unbelief is not a claim about probabilities. So, for example, it would be incorrect to say that I thought there was a 50% chance that there is a God. But it's not that I think that a value of 50% is too high or too low. I'm just as unwilling to say that there's a 10% chance that God exists, or a 90% chance. For I am unable to meaningfully interpret such probability values, much less specify proper assignments. I simply don't have access to any epistemic perspective in which I could talk about appropriate levels of expectation that some God exists. All I can do is acknowledge that I have no reason to prefer one alternative over another. I just don't have sufficient information to say anything about probabilities.

As an agnostic, I can't disprove every God hypothesis, and I don't claim to. What I'm interested in doing instead is looking closely at the reasons Christians and other theists give for holding to their God-belief. I want to know, are they good reasons, or are they flawed in some way? I've spent a great deal of time investigating theist arguments, especially traditional philosophical approaches. I've read material on the Kalam cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, arguments from miracles and from prophecy, various historical and probabilistic arguments for the Resurrection, arguments from morality, knowledge, and desire—the list goes on. Without exception I have found these arguments to be deeply flawed. They don't prove the existence of God, nor do they make the existence of God more plausible. They just don't work at all.

Still, it's possible that some argument out there really will do the trick, and show after some fashion that God in fact does exist. So I'm always on the lookout for an argument like that—an argument that works. Mr. Bolt claims to have such an argument, and I expect to spend the bulk of this debate considering it. If he convinces me, then I will change my position from agnosticism to theism. Hard as it may be to believe, I am an open-minded person, and so that scenario is a real possibility, however unlikely. On the other hand, if I find his arguments to be lacking, then I hope to clearly communicate my objections to them, and explain why I think those arguments don't work, either.

That Mr. Bolt is a presuppositionalist apologist means he uses a particular method to defend the Christian faith from external criticism. We have heard some of this already, and undoubtedly we shall hear more soon, but whether or not one is familiar with presuppositionalism, I think it helpful to take the time to remind ourselves just what we're dealing with. Presuppositionalism stands quite apart from the domain of traditional arguments for the existence of God. So, for example, a strict presuppositionalist tends not argue that, say, the universe has to have a first cause. Nor do we usually hear much from presuppositionalists about arguments from miracles, or from the alleged design of biological life. This may come as a surprise to some, but the strictest presuppositionalists tend to reject evidentiary approaches, and so traditional arguments like the ones I've mentioned have little place in their repertoire.

One form of presuppositionalism I shall address today is quite popular among Reformed and Calvinist apologists, at least on the internet. They understand that beliefs and positions are normally justified through various principles of

reasoning, and so they look to see what hidden assumptions might lie behind our use of them. Can we justify those assumptions, and, if so, how should we go about it? Is it even possible to justify them? After all, if we justify something, then we need to use reason, right? Yet if we use some principle of reasoning to justify our use of that principle, then are we not guilty of circularity? On the other hand, if we start off not using at least some basic principles of reasoning, then how are we ever going to justify anything?

Presuppositionalists recognize this problem, and argue that in order to make sense of the world, we must begin with certain assumptions, or, presuppositions. In particular, they claim that in order to justify our use of the various principles required for reasoning we must presuppose the following: that there exists an unembodied mind which created the universe and everything in it using supernatural powers, and which is committed to guaranteeing that the principles of reasoning we use will hold true. Now that's quite an assumption! What is the apologist's basis for such a grand claim? In what way does he justify that bold and far-reaching presupposition? In fact, I don't think he can justify it. Instead, he will try to find cracks in my own position, and falsely suggest that if I cannot justify my assumptions, then we should all get on board with his alternative assumption that the Christian God exists.

Of course, I certainly agree that we don't start things off with a blank slate. As adults, we bring all kinds of assumptions to the table whenever we talk about anything. Yet it seems to me a very strange notion that, in order to justify those assumptions, we should presuppose the existence of a supernatural creator-deity. After all, if we trade in one set of assumptions for another, then in what sense have we escaped the problem of starting off with assumptions? This is a serious flaw in the presuppositionalist approach, and it's something I've never seen satisfactorily addressed. Mr. Bolt will have to resolve this difficulty if he wishes to make his case.

Now that I've explained my position on the existence of God (and on presuppositionalism in general), it's time to look at some of the specific argument Mr. Bolt gave in support of the existence of God. I should make it clear up front that, as I anticipated based on my past experience with Christian apologists, Mr. Bolt did not present any arguments in his opening statement which I haven't seen before in some form or another. I do not find his argument persuasive, and so I'll spend the remainder of my own opening statement explaining why I think it is that it's flawed. Please keep in mind that I may not have time to address everything in this segment of the debate. However, I will make every effort to address whatever I miss here in the rebuttal segments.

The issue I'll address here regards induction. Mr. Bolt claims that without appealing to the Christian God, we haven't any rational justification to suppose that the universe will continue to behave according to the regularities that we have observed thus far. Roughly speaking, induction is the principle that, if we find something has always or usually been true in the past, then it's reasonable to expect it to continue to be true in the future. So, for example, the laws of physics, as far as we know, have held for nearly the whole history of the universe. Using induction, we infer that those laws of physics will continue to

hold, at least in the foreseeable future.

So, how do we justify using that kind of inductive inference? It's tempting to say that induction has always worked for us in the past, and so we can expect it to continue to work for us in the future. Unfortunately, that kind of argument itself uses inductive reasoning, and if we use induction to justify induction, then we will be guilty of circularity.

This is a well-known issue in philosophy, and it's called the problem of induction. Mr. Bolt thinks he has a solution, which is to invoke the existence of the Christian God. Apparently this God wants us to be able to go use induction, and so he guarantees that it will hold, at least in most cases. Of course, as I mentioned before, I don't regard this as a solution at all. If we want to justify our assumptions, for example the assumption of induction, then it won't do to invoke new assumptions, unless those new assumptions are themselves justified. In other words, it doesn't help us to trade in one unjustified assumption for another, because if that's all we do, then we're still going to have unjustified assumptions on our hands.

More than that, though, contrary to what Mr. Bolt claims, induction is quite easily and plainly justified on a secular view. To explain how, consider that my goal in life is to go predict and control my experiences. If I can't do that, then there's nothing left for me to do, because I'm not interested in doing anything else. In order to achieve that goal, however, I have to make plans and develop behavioral strategies which require that my experiences be regular and predictable. Even though I have no guarantee that this will be the case, the only way I know to successfully navigate my experiences is to assume that they do in fact take on predictable patterns. So, whether or not I'm actually able to find those patterns makes no difference whatsoever in my decision to try to predict and control my experiences, because that's the only thing I would ever wish to do.

So that in a nutshell is my justification for induction. In order to go do what I want to do—in order to go navigate my experiences—I have to assume that induction holds. Now, if Mr. Bolt thinks that I can navigate my experiences without using induction, then I'm certainly willing to hear him out, but I don't think that's the case. It seems to me that he's just as committed to induction as I am. Only he thinks he has a better answer to the issue of justification, which is to presuppose the existence of the Christian God. If we opt for that assumption, though, then we come back to what I think is the central problem of presuppositional apologetics: why should we assume that the Christian God exists? According to Mr. Bolt, we must assume that the Christian God exists because the alternative is unjustifiable. However, I've just shown that we do have justification for induction, without appealing to a supernatural creator-deity.

Even if I couldn't articulate my reason for assuming induction, it simply would not follow that assuming the existence of God is thereby justified. It could be that both assumptions are unjustified. The apologist would need a good reason to prefer his assumption that God exists over my assumption that induction holds. Otherwise his assumption would be no less arbitrary than mine.

However, I can't stress enough that my assumption isn't arbitrary at all. Mr. Bolt is mistaken when he claims that I can't justify my assumption of induction without appealing to the supernatural. In fact, I have given a sensible reason to assume that induction holds, which is that I simply cannot avoid assuming induction if I want to go navigate my experiences. So much, then, for induction.

In conclusion, I believe it's clear that the presuppositionalist approach to apologetics is an exercise in giving up on hard questions. Is the problem of induction causing you trouble? Don't worry, just presuppose the existence of a God who guarantees induction! You can't figure out where the laws of logic come from? Then they must come from the Christian God! You're not sure why you have a sense of morality? Then the Christian God must be responsible! I don't think these are serious answers to the philosophical problems we sometimes face. More than that, I think I've done a pretty good job of finding a real answer, so that we don't have to continue to fret over that issues. Even if I'm mistaken, though—even if I don't actually have good answers to those questions—that still doesn't get Mr. Bolt off the hook for having to justify his belief that the Christian God Yahweh exists. If he wants to make a case of induction, then he needs to first show that my justification is flawed, and, second, show that his alternative assumption that the Christian God exists is itself justified. It won't do to simply say we should assume the existence of God if we can't justify assuming induction, because, as mentioned previously, it could be the case that neither of those assumptions are justified. This is a serious deficiency. He's missing crucial steps in his arguments, and he needs to fill those in if he's ever going to make them work. I don't think he can do that, and I know he hasn't done it so far, but that's he must do if he wants to make a convincing case. Thank you.

4 Chris Bolt examines Ben Wallis

BOLT: Alright, thank you Ben. You mentioned a problem of starting off with assumptions. Do you consider starting off with assumptions in any epistemological scheme a problem?

WALLIS: Well, I think we should always question our assumptions. I'm not sure that they've always posed problems, per se. As I said, we always have to start off with assumptions, and so, I mean, that's just an inescapable fact of life. It's a fact of our own consciousness and reasoning, and what have you. And I'm not saying that we should take any assumptions for granted. If we want to turn a critical eye to one of our assumptions, and go question it, and dig at it, and see what we can uncover, that's always a worthwhile exercise. I don't think that that's ever something that we should stop doing just because we want to fence off some off-limits area of our consciousness or something like that. We should always go question our assumptions.

BOLT: Thank you. How would we go about questioning our ultimate assumptions without utilizing our ultimate assumptions?

WALLIS: I'm not sure what you mean by "ultimate" assumptions. I mean,

we have assumptions, but I don't think there's some ultimate assumption that just—unless you mean assumptions that we can't escape. But we should never assume that those—if you'll pardon the pun—we should never assume that those are ultimate assumptions. We should always go question them, to really see if we can't turn them into some kind of justifiable conclusion as opposed to an assumption.

BOLT: Does your understanding of epistemology make room for faith?

WALLIS: That's a tough question to answer, because so many people mean so many different things when they use the word "faith." I think that we should—I don't think that blind faith is ever a good idea. I think that blind faith can be a very bad thing.

BOLT: You stated that in order to do what you want, you have to assume that induction holds. Is that correct?

WALLIS: Yes.

BOLT: Is that true with respect to the future?

WALLIS: I should think so, using induction.

BOLT: Okay, thank you. I'm done.

WALLIS: Thanks.

5 Ben Wallis examines Chris Bolt

WALLIS: Well, first I want to say that that last question made me smile. <Laughs> I wish you could see it. Mr. Bolt, you said in your opening statement that you know God exists, among other reasons, because God "told me so." Can you elaborate on that? I mean, I assume that you're not referring to an actual, audible voice. So, what are you referring to?

BOLT: That's correct. The only reason I used that language really is because it was shorter, in my opening statement. By "told me so" I simply mean that God has revealed Himself in His creation, which includes the world around us. It also includes His creatures, such as I am and such as I believe you are, who are created in the image of God. Also, He's revealed Himself through special revelation, which includes things like His working miracles throughout redemptive history, and of course the Word of God, which is the Bible. Additionally, the *sensus divinitatis*, which is the sense of the divine in everyone.

WALLIS: Thanks. It seems like you want to say that agnosticism assumes atheism. I want to make it clear very quickly that I don't assume God doesn't exist. I don't know. But, can you elaborate a little more on that? Because that just doesn't seem right, that agnosticism should assume atheism.

BOLT: Sure. And I don't mean to put words in your mouth. That's not claiming that you claim anything like that, but rather that it is the conclusion that I seem to draw from what you've stated your beliefs are. In Romans 1, and in other places in Scripture, the Bible teaches that there is a universal belief in God. So, if the Christian world view is true, then, well, everybody believes in God. So if God exists, everyone knows that God exists. You state that you do not know that God exists. If we assume that agnosticism is true, your position,

we would have to assume that you do not know that God exists. Therefore, in the syllogism there, God does not exist. That would be, I believe, the assumption that would be in your reasoning. The existence of God is epistemologically and morally a presuppositional issue.

WALLIS: So, I'm hearing from you that you think that I do believe that God exists, and I'm just saying and behaving as if—I'm saying that God may not exist, and I'm behaving as if he may not exist, despite the fact that really I do know that God exists. Is that a correct characterization?

BOLT: It is correct that I believe that, in their heart of hearts, everyone believes that God exists.

WALLIS: What is the difference between "in their heart of hearts" and ordinary belief that we talk about in everyday language?

BOLT: Sure, I apologize for the poetic language. Belief in God is a first-order belief of everyone, every human.

WALLIS: But what is the difference between that kind of belief and the ordinary belief that I talk about when I say that I don't believe that God exists?

BOLT: I believe that when you state that you do not believe that God exists, that is a claim based upon a second-order belief that you have concerning your first-order belief in the existence of God.

6 Rebuttal: Ben Wallis

Thanks.

Even though it relies on deeply flawed arguments, I understand some of the appeal of the presuppositionalist approach. It's very tempting indeed to think that if some claim is unjustified, then its negation must be justified. But this isn't so. We need, I think, to emphasize this important but apparently easy-to-miss distinction between truth and justification. In short, observing that some statement, say, P , is unjustified is not the same as saying P is not true or even that it is probably not true. To find an example of this distinction, we can take a look at the Gospel of Thomas. Now, we're not sure when it was completed. Some scholars argue for a mid-to-late-first-century date, while others argue for a second-century date. But whenever it was completed, we don't know the exact year. Now, consider the claim that the Gospel of Thomas was completed in an odd-numbered year. Is that claim true? Well, who knows? It was either completed in an odd-numbered year or an even-numbered year, but we have no way to say which is true. Without additional information, we have no reason to privilege one alternative over the other. So, I think it's fair to say that we are not justified in assuming that the Gospel of Thomas was completed in, say, an odd-numbered year.

Now, here's where things get strange. The presuppositionalist model suggests that if we aren't justified in assuming some claim, then we are justified in assuming its negation. So, for this example, we've observed that we would not be justified in assuming the Gospel of Thomas was completed in an odd-

numbered year, and, by the presuppositionalist suggestion, that means we're justified in assuming it was completed in an even-numbered year. But that's clearly absurd. In fact, we do not get to assume that a claim is justified just because its negation is unjustified. Yet the presuppositionalist, although he may not realize it, needs just that kind of fallacious inference in order for his argument to work out. Otherwise it won't matter if some secular position leaves us unable to justify, say, induction. The presuppositionalist is missing a crucial step, here: if he's ever able to show that induction is unjustified on a secular view—which, let's remember, he has not done—he still needs something to get us from there to the point where we can conclude that God exists.

I'll say a little bit more about induction: First, just to reiterate from before, the reason I use induction is because I want to go navigate my experiences, and, in order to do that, I need to assume that my experiences have predictable patterns. Now I'd like to look at the issue from a slightly different perspective, though: in particular, I want to emphasize that I really wouldn't know what to do with myself if I was to avoid using induction. More importantly, I don't think Mr. Bolt knows either. He would be just as unable to deal with avoiding induction as I am. If he thinks that there's some way to live our lives without induction, I'd be happy to hear him out, but I don't think he does. I said before that Mr. Bolt is just as committed to induction as I am. Let me add that even if Mr. Bolt lost his God-belief, he would still be committed to induction, not because he has rational secular justification for it, but because nobody seems to know how to navigate his experiences without assuming that induction holds.

The idea here is that we want to be actors in the world, doing everything we can to improve the quality of our experiences. However, in order to do that, we need to make plans for the future, which seems utterly impossible without using induction. And I'm not talking just about long-term plans, here. For example, someone might suggest that we could avoid assuming induction by living in the moment, on a whim. So, instead of going to work so that we can pay our bills, we spend all our money eating, drinking and being merry, as if the world was going to end the next day. But even just to go and spend money, we need to assume induction. After all, money is an instrument which we use in the physical world, and for physical instruments to function, it's required that at least for some time and in some locality, there be regularities to the behavior of the universe. Even for the simplest of tasks, such as reaching out to grab a morsel of food, it requires that we presuppose certain regularities to our experience. In other words, it requires us to use induction.

Rejecting induction, then, means rejecting planning of every kind. It means rejecting any hope of accomplishing even the simplest of tasks. In short, to reject induction is to paralyze oneself with skepticism. So, to the extent that we don't want to be paralyzed, we simply have to go use induction. And if Mr. Bolt wants to remind us that we have no guarantee induction will hold, I'll be happy to agree; but that won't change the fact that we haven't any alternative.

I've had ample time to consider the problem of induction, and I'm satisfied by my solution. However, I understand that not everyone will feel that way. Although it's hard for me to imagine, what if my solution to the problem of

induction is somehow flawed? What then? Remember earlier that I talked about Mr. Bolt missing steps in his argument. Well, here we have a specific instance of just that. Even if my justification for induction were flawed, it simply would not follow that Yahweh exists. So, when Mr. Bolt invokes the existence of God in order to solve the problem of induction, he needs to present a good reason for doing so. Otherwise the existence of God is just an arbitrary assumption, no better or worse than any other such assumption—but if we’re going to permit arbitrary assumptions, then why not just make induction our assumption, and leave it at that? Why force out a different assumption that Yahweh exists? Mr. Bolt hasn’t satisfactorily answered that question, but he needs to answer it if he wants to make his case. And before he can do that, he needs to show that we need any more reason to use induction than that we want to be actors in the world. So far, he hasn’t been able to do that, either.

With that in mind I can turn to some of the peripheral issues that Mr. Bolt raised. Obviously I’ve left my script. And so, when he started off his debate, he talks about the impossibility of the contrary. But that’s not really what he means. It’s not that it’s impossible. It’s that he thinks the secular view—that the non-theistic view—involves some kind of a paradox where we can’t go justify our assumptions. It’s not contradictory—in other words it’s not impossible—that God shouldn’t exist. It just leads to philosophical difficulties—or so Mr. Bolt would have us believe. But of course it doesn’t really lead to philosophical difficulties—not any more than exist for Christian theism, anyway. I mean, as I’ve pointed out, it’s not like Mr. Bolt gets a free pass by saying that, “well, the secular world doesn’t have an answer to this question, so, I have an answer, though, and so I win.” But that’s not how it works. Just because he has some arbitrary assumption that “solves” the problem, that’s not a real solution. Like I said in my opening statement, it’s not a serious answer to those kinds of philosophical questions.

He talked a lot about David Hume, and he said—paraphrasing Hume—he said, “people can and must use induction.” So, I don’t think that he disagrees with me, here, that we don’t have a way out. It’s not like we have an alternative—that we can go stop using induction and make our way through life some other way. That’s not an option. We have to go use induction. And I think that maybe what he’d like to do is to go say, “well, look, sure, we have to go use induction, but we have no guarantee that it will hold.” And so in order to have that kind of an epistemic guarantee we have to assume something else, like, God exists, and He’s making the world have these regularities. Again, I just can’t stress enough that invoking other assumptions isn’t a solution to the problem of having assumptions. If we want to rid ourselves of assumptions, then it’s not going to do us any good to consolidate our assumptions into one big assumption that God exists and He does all these other things. But moreover, we don’t need an epistemic solution. We don’t need to go and say that, “yes, it’s guaranteed that this will happen; I can deductively infer that this will happen.” We don’t need that. It’s quite enough to say, “look, I can’t do anything else.” We’re all locked into this pattern of behavior, and that’s all we can do. We have to cope with that.

So I think that about summarizes my position on induction, and I thank everyone for listening.

7 Rebuttal: Chris Bolt

Alright. Unlike Mr. Wallis, I don't actually have a script. Mr. Wallis stated something to the effect of, "I don't know the answer to these questions. I cannot find any reason to believe in the existence of God." I want to read to you from Romans chapter 1 verses 18 through 25 (ESV):

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Since Romans 1 teaches a universal belief in God, if the Christian world view is true, then agnosticism is contradictory, and thus false. So upon my presuppositions, I have to conclude that agnosticism is false. But we can assume, I suggest, that agnosticism is true, for the sake of argument. Now, once we've assumed that agnosticism is true for the sake of argument, we can offer the following syllogism: *If God exists, then everyone knows that God exists.* Is this premise correct? Well, yes, per the passage I just referred to. Premise (2): *Mr. Wallis does not know that God exists.* Is this true? Well, on the assumption that agnosticism is true, yes. The conclusion, then, *therefore God does not exist,* is correct. But this means that Mr. Wallis's position of agnosticism assumes at the outset that God does not exist, and this is atheism, not agnosticism. For agnosticism to both be and not be agnosticism, which it is in this case since it is essentially atheism, it is contradictory. Thus Mr. Wallis's agnosticism, if true, entails that it is false, and therefore it is false.

Now, I'd also like to call the listeners' attention to the second portion of the argument I provided against agnosticism. Mr. Wallis has thus far not dealt with this argument. Contrary to the Christian world view, the implication of agnosticism is that facts, objects and subjects of knowledge can exist apart from God. I state that this is contrary to the Christian world view because

the Christian world view claims, for example in Colossians 2:3, that all of the treasures of knowledge are hidden in Christ Jesus.¹³ Proverbs 1:7 states that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.¹⁴ You see, in order to know anything one must have faith in God. Now, immediately someone will say to me, “but that means that some people don’t know anything; well that’s absurd!” I agree that that’s absurd. Mr. Wallis is obviously an extremely intelligent individual and, by the way, is equally charitable in my experience. But Mr. Wallis, as he alluded to, believes in his heart of hearts, as I alluded to, that God exists. Again, this is consistent with my world view. It’s consistent with the things that Mr. Wallis has been stating tonight. Because of the transcendental and what it reveals we can know those things—because of what transcendental argument reveals (sorry for the confusion there). But let’s get back to the argument, here. Agnostics try to avoid making a positive statement concerning ultimate matters while simultaneously affirming a universally negative statement. In other words, as Mr. Wallis stated, he’s open minded on the subject. But as I’ve just argued, he’s also closed-minded on the subject. He’s closed minded in that he assumes from the get-go that God does not exist. Otherwise, he would know that God exists, because that’s the claim of the Christian world view. But more fundamentally, Mr. Wallis assumes that God does not exist in that he believes that knowledge and human intelligibility more broadly speaking is possible upon the non-Christian world view. Again, because of the passages I’ve just offered, we can know that this claim is inconsistent with the Christian world view and hence the existence of God.

To quote Cornelius Van Til again, already Mr. Wallis has given one of the two possible answers to every question of epistemology that may be asked: To summarize and complete the argument, agnosticism is self-contradictory because Christianity is true. Agnosticism is self-contradictory if anti-theism is true, as I’ve just argued. Van Til writes, “the anti-theistic conception of the self-contradictory presupposes the theistic conception of the self-contradictory for its operation.” What do I mean there? I mean that contradiction cannot be affirmed in terms of an incoherent or contradictory world view, which agnosticism entails. Therefore agnosticism presupposes the existence of God, because in order to affirm self-contradiction, it must presuppose the existence of God. It can’t presuppose itself, because we’ve already refuted that position.

Getting back to some of the other things that Mr. Wallis stated, briefly: He has stated that there’s no reason to prefer one assumption over another. He refers to having assumptions as a problem. Well, I asked in our cross-examination period about the place of faith in epistemology. Christianity—the Christian world view—provides for faith in our epistemic structure, our noetic

¹³Col 2:1-3 reads (KJV): 01 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 02 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 03 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

¹⁴Pro 1:7 reads (KJV): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

structure. We—as Augustine so famously said—we believe in order that we might understand.¹⁵ We start epistemologically with a belief in the God of Scripture, and from that basis we’re able to justify things like induction. So, it’s not the case that having assumptions is a problem for the Christian, though I would say that it is a problem for the rationalist, the non-Christian, who will not allow faith in an epistemology.

Regarding the impossibility of the contrary claim, Mr. Wallis has stated that I don’t actually mean “the impossibility of the contrary.” Well, the problem is when the argument is employed that either the accepted operational feature or general principle, in this case the inductive principle, will be contradicted once one denies that God exists, and as soon as I take care of his justification for induction, here, we’ll show that he has in fact denied the original affirmation of the principle of induction. For he must affirm that God exists, which contradicts his own position. So, yes, I do mean the impossibility of the contrary, and to quote Michael Butler,

TAG argues for the impossibility of the contrary (the non-Christian worldview) and not the impossibility of an infinite number of possible worldviews. TAG does not establish the necessity of Christianity by inductively refuting each and every possible non-Christian worldview...but rather contends that the contrary of Christianity (any view that denies the Christian view of God) is shown to be impossible. ...if the negation of Christianity is false, Christianity is proved true. ...the structure of the argument is a disjunctive syllogism. Either A or $\neg A$, $\neg\neg A$, therefore, A .¹⁶

Getting back to Mr. Wallis’s attempted justification for the problem of induction, he said something along the lines of this: In order to do what he wants to do, he has to assume that induction holds. He’s provided a great service to me in going through all of the things that we have to assume induction for in our human experience. But accepting the uniformity of nature by virtue of its being indispensable is to concede to Hume twice over: First in that Hume formulates this assumption as a possible answer and then shows that it doesn’t solve the problem. Why? Because it’s still unsupported, regardless of its alleged necessity for inferences. And second, in that the idea that this assumption has been necessary for past inferences does not require that it be necessary for future inferences, which runs into Hume’s problem again. In other words, whenever Mr. Wallis affirms that we’re all locked into this behavior of induction, which I agree with, I will just respond: we cannot know this.

¹⁵Mr. Bolt seems to be paraphrasing here St. Augustine’s tractate 29.6 on the Gospel of John: “Therefore do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe that you may understand; since, ‘except ye believe, you shall not understand.’ ” Augustine himself appears to loosely paraphrase (perhaps through the Vulgate) Is 7:9, which reads, “And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah’s son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (KJV). <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701029.htm>

¹⁶Butler, Michael. “The Transcendental Argument for God’s Existence” (online article). <http://butler-harris.org/tag>

8 Closing Statement: Ben Wallis

Thank you.

Well, first of all, I hope Mr. Bolt doesn't mind me having some notes that I read from. He said he didn't have a script, but he does have a script. It's just a script that someone else wrote. It's the Bible. And he believes the Bible; he trusts it. And the Bible tells him, according to his interpretation—because of course we all need to interpret texts; no text is self-interpreting—the Bible tells him that nobody really disbelieves in the existence of God. God has shown himself to everyone. His wrath has been revealed, and anyone who claims otherwise, anyone who claims to go believe that God doesn't exist, or claims not to know whether or not God exists, those people must be mistaken in some form or another—maybe not lying, but mistaken nonetheless. But think of what that means: How can it be that I'm mistaken about my own belief or unbelief? I'm not saying that it's impossible, but it strains the imagination at the very least to go say that, “look, you think you believe such and such, but you don't *really* believe it.” Or to say the opposite: “you think you don't believe such and such, but really you do believe it.” Those kinds of claims are difficult to take seriously. I'm not an expert on my own consciousness, but I do think myself qualified enough to go say whether or not I believe in a certain proposition, or in a certain picture of the world. And I can only assure anyone who might be listening that I don't believe in God. It's not that I disbelieve; I just—I don't know whether or not God exists.

Now, Mr. Bolt wants to go say, “well, that can't be right, because Christianity by my own interpretation”—by Mr. Bolt's own interpretation—“entails that everyone believes, and if you claim not to believe then you're contradicting Christianity and thereby contradicting your own agnosticism.” And that seems to be the contradiction he wants to try to go reach. But let me be clear, I'm not saying that I'm uncertain about the existence of every last interpretation of God. I mean, certainly there are interpretations of God that I can rule out. Even though I don't know whether or not there is some kind of creator-deity, I can still rule out the existence of certain gods. In general, these fall into two classes: on one hand, we have God hypotheses which lack meaningful content and are thus in some sense impossible. So, for example, certain formulations of the Trinity are logically inconsistent, whereas other formulations appeal to stipulatively-defined terms, where those stipulated definitions appeal to other stipulated terms, and so on, with these layered definitions eventually terminating in this flurry of theological hand-waving.

Other God hypotheses are what we call *falsifiable*, which means they involve claims about the natural world which can be and in many cases have been tested with evidence. Often, the God hypothesis in question dramatically contradicts the evidence we find. For example, in 1988, over four million copies were sold of a book predicting that the rapture would occur that very year. The author, reportedly a NASA engineer, went on to predict the rapture again in 1989, 1993 and 1994. Needless to say, the evidence has been stacking up against him ever since.

And I don't mean to suggest that these views dominate Christian theology. I don't doubt that it's possible to formulate the Trinity coherently and meaningfully, even if not everyone does that. And I don't know anyone who really believes that the rapture occurred in 1988. But still, there's no shortage of demonstrably false claims about God in the English-speaking world, and the fact that I'm an agnostic doesn't prevent me from challenging them.

And here's where Mr. Bolt's claim about my belief, this is where it comes into play. I mean, he's claiming that I really do believe in God, even if he has to resort to using poetic language to make that point. But I can tell you first hand that I don't! And so that does—it contradicts his version of Christian theism, which I'm sure he thinks is the only version on the table, but I'll let the audience rule on that one. But yes, that does contradict his view of God, absolutely yes. So, if you want to be strict about it, yes, I'm denying that his particular idea of God exists, at least insofar as it includes the idea that I really believe in God—because I know that I don't! This isn't a contradiction. So, I hope that that point is clear. I mean, he says—Mr. Bolt says—that if his version of Christian theism is true, then I'm really not an agnostic, therefore I'm not an agnostic if Christian theism is true—his interpretation of course. Of course, why should we think that Christian theism is true? That's the interesting question; that's the question that we're here [to answer]. If we've answered that question and we want to move on to saying that, “well, now that we know that Christian theism is true, well, what about my claim that I'm an agnostic?” Sure, if we've already established that his version of Christian theism is true, which includes that little clause that I really do believe in God, then yes, my agnosticism is on some level contradictory. But he needs to show that. That's something that he needs to go demonstrate.

Let's see, here. The debate is nearly over, so, I want to take just a moment to thank both Mr. Bolt and the moderator Mr. Knapp for their time and attention. Our time spent together has proved pleasant and stimulating, and I very much appreciate their cordial participation.

In conclusion, as at the beginning of this evening, I remain unable to find any good reason to believe that God exists, despite Mr. Bolt's presentation. In my opening statement, I presented to him what I think is the central problem with presuppositional apologetics: That it seems to me a very strange notion that, in order to justify the assumptions we need for reason and decision-making, we should presuppose the existence of a supernatural creator-deity. After all, I said, if we trade in one set of assumptions for another, then in what sense have we escaped the problem of starting off with assumptions? I told him that this is a serious flaw, and it's a difficulty he must resolve if he wishes to make his case. I also informed him that his argument is missing crucial steps, and I warned him to fill in those steps; otherwise his argument won't function. He needs not only to support his claim that my personal views are somehow problematic, but most importantly, he must connect those alleged problems with my personal views to his conclusion that Yahweh exists. Mr. Bolt has not met these challenges, and that means he hasn't made his case. I understand why he hasn't done so; I don't think it's possible! But he has one last chance, in his closing statement.

I wish him the best of luck.

9 Closing Statement: Chris Bolt

I do want to thank Mr. Wallis for remaining so kind throughout the course of this debate, and trying to deal with a weird presuppositionalist. And I do want to try to address some of the things that he just said as best as I can. How can it be that Mr. Wallis is mistaken about his own belief or unbelief? Now, I don't say this to put down Mr. Wallis at all. As I mentioned before, he could easily run circles around me in terms of mathematics. This is a famous problem in philosophy, the problem of self-deception. It's a self-referential problem. It's been addressed just as much by secular philosophers as it has been by Christian ones, such as Greg L. Bahnsen, who was also a presuppositionalist apologist, and who wrote on this topic for his dissertation at the University of Southern California. One believes P , but has another second-order belief that one does not believe P , due to some other motivation for wanting to reject P . Romans 1, which I read earlier, speaks directly to this in terms of the universal belief in God, and the suppression of this truth because of sin. I'll come back to that topic in a moment.

How is belief in the Christian God justified? Well, upon the basis of God's revelation itself. When God made a promise to Abraham he swore by Himself because there was none greater by whom to swear. One of the things that God's revelation tells us is that it is the fool who believes in his heart that there is no God. Now, that's not name-calling, even though I understand that often it's used as such, in bright capital letters, in bright pink capital letters in chatrooms on the internet. That's speaking to the reasoning of an individual. As Paul wrote in Romans 1, the person who wants to suppress the truth becomes futile in his or her own reasoning. It's impossible to justify such basic assumptions as we make in our everyday lives and reasoning, such as logic and science and morality and these types of things. Now, I know that I did not offer arguments specifically pertaining to logic and morality and what not, but we focused upon the problem of induction, a famous philosophical problem.

Turning to the other arguments that I offered, I did not only show that agnosticism presupposes God on the presupposition that God exists, but also upon the presupposition that God does not exist in terms of agnosticism. Indeed that's how I framed the entire argument. I only mentioned twice I believe that agnosticism is self-contradictory upon the Christian world view.

In terms of the other argument that I offered immediately after this, which speaks to the issue of conceptual scheme[s], recall that I stated that, for the Christian everything is connected, and that God is that connecting link. God brings together the subjects of knowledge and the objects of knowledge and other objects of knowledge. He brings those together with other objects of knowledge. It's all a part of the plan of God. Now, Ben concedes this to me hypothetically in some of the things that he's written on his blog, especially with respect to his fascination and pretty decent philosophical reasoning with

respect to God's control over His creation. How is Mr. Wallis to know that his conceptual scheme corresponds to the objects of knowledge? How can he be sure that there's anything outside of the mind at all? Remember, Mr. Wallis is starting from himself in terms of his reasoning. How will he understand personal identity when all he ever has are ever changing particular thoughts? How can he know that there are other minds? How can he know that one object of knowledge is connected to another? Why should he assume that there is any connection between anything at all to begin with? When Mr. Wallis rejects the self-attesting Triune God of Scripture, he starts with himself, and attempts to erect a Godless philosophy with the multitude of epistemologically-failed problems. Certainly there are items necessary to his conceptual scheme, but that doesn't show it's true, or corresponds to the way reality really is.

Recall his response to the problem of induction: Regarding induction, he believes that he has to use it if he's going to be an actor in the world. So, even though he can't prove that it will hold true, he must use it. But I repeat again that this is just to concede to Hume. Hume and me and Mr. Wallis all agree that induction is necessary, as Ben has framed it and explained it. It's necessary for a whole host of things in our everyday lives and in science. Hume formulates the assumption that we must use induction as a possible answer, and shows that it does not solve the problem because it's unsupported regardless of its alleged necessity for inferences. But also, the assumption that it has been necessary for past inferences does not require that it be necessary for future inferences, which runs into Hume's problem again. So, again, Mr. Wallis would say that we're all locked into this behavior of induction. Well, we cannot know that on the non-Christian view of things. Why? Because he does not know that we're locked into this behavior in the future. In fact, in order to affirm that we are is just to beg the question, because he's relying upon experience and making an unjustified leap into what will happen in the future. He's using induction there to justify induction.

There is a distinction between truth and justification, I agree. Observing P is—well, I'll cut that off for the sake of time; I'm getting my time warning, here. But the transcendental argument starts with some given P , in this case induction. Then it states that Q is the precondition for that general principle P . Then it negates the Q and shows that $\neg P$. In this case, that's what has happened. Mr. Wallis has stated that we don't need an epistemic justification for induction, if I remember correctly.

Because I'm pressed for time, here, I'll go ahead and conclude that, remember I referred to the sin by which men suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The Bible teaches that God sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world. He was born under the Law to redeem those who are under the Law. Christ lived a perfect life. He died on the cross for sin, He was buried, and He was raised again in accordance with the Scripture. All of those who repent and trust in Christ in whom are hidden all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge will not perish but will have eternal life. I thank you, too, listeners, for listening tonight, and I would hope and pray that you would look further into these things, into these issues that me and Mr. Wallis raised tonight. And again I

want to thank Mr. Wallis, and perhaps we can do this again some time in the future. Thank you.