

The Preacher Speaks Philosophy

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The Preacher addresses a crowd, and says, "Jesus the Logos, the Word, is the light of the mind. Whoever follows him will never walk in epistemic darkness, but he will have the light of truth."

Some evidentialists challenge him, "You make the Word its own witness. Your philosophy is circular."

The Preacher answers, "Even if the Word authenticates itself, the testimony is valid, because it contains all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. You do not recognize the Word for what it is, because you judge by human standards. If the Word judges, its judgment is correct, because it testifies for itself, and God testifies for it. God can testify by no one greater than himself, for there is no one greater."

Then they ask him, "If we do not judge by human standards, how will we recognize this God?"

"You do not know the Word or God," the Preacher replies. "If you knew the Word, you would know God also."

Once more the Preacher says to them, "The Word produces a system of knowledge, and you will try to understand or reproduce it, but your philosophy will perish in epistemological impossibilities and logical self-contradictions. What the Word produces, you cannot share or duplicate."

This makes the evidentialists ask, "Will he just make things up or make deductions without using methods of discovery based on human autonomy and human ability, such as sensation and intuition? Why does he say, what the Word produces, you cannot share or duplicate?"

But he continues, "Your philosophy is from below; the Word is from above. Your philosophy is of this world; the Word is not of this world. I told you that your philosophy would die in impossibilities and self-contradictions. If you do not believe what the Word says about itself, your thinking will end in ignorance and skepticism, unable to know anything at all."

"What is this Word? How do you know what the Word is?" they ask.

"Just what I have been telling you all along," the Preacher replies. "I have much to say in judgment of your philosophy. But the Word is reliable, and what I have learned from it, I tell the world."

They do not understand that he is telling them about the Bible, or the intellectual content of the Bible, the revelation of God. So the Preacher says, "When you trace a worldview to

its ultimate principles, then you will know the necessity and exclusivity of biblical revelation, and that it is what it claims to be, and that it contains nothing other than what God has revealed. The one who inspired it stands behind it, because it is the exact expression of his mind."

At this, some claim to presuppose the Bible.

To these presuppositionalists, the Preacher says, "If you hold to the Word as your first principle, then you are really its disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

They answer him, "Our philosophy presupposes the Ontological Trinity and takes belief in God as properly basic. We have never been slaves to another principle. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

The Preacher replies, "I tell you the truth, everyone who places another principle before his knowledge of revelation is a slave to that principle. A philosophy that is enslaved to this foreign principle cannot have a place under the philosophy of the Word. Your philosophy will also die in impossibilities and contradictions. But if the Word sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you claim to presuppose the Word. Yet you are ready to renounce me, because you have no room for what I say to you. I am speaking to you from my principle, and you behave according to your first principle."

"Scripture is our first principle," they answer.

"If Scripture is your first principle," says the Preacher, "then you would begin from Scripture. As it is, you are determined to renounce me, a man who has told you the truth that I learned from biblical revelation. Scripture does not teach you to do this. You are doing the things that your first principle demands."

"We are not irrational and irreverent philosophers," they protest. "The only first principle we have is God himself."

The Preacher says to them, "If God were your first principle, you would agree with me, for my system puts his Word first place. I have not made up my philosophy, but he revealed it. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your first principle, the reliability of human discovery (whether by sensation or intuition), and you carry out whatever this principle demands. It is an epistemic failure from the beginning, unable to contact truth or reality, or contact the revelation that you claim to presuppose, because knowledge from sensation or intuition is impossible. When it produces falsehoods, it does what is natural, for it is false and is the father of fallacies. Yet because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you refute me, or defend your human method of discovery? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who has revelation as the first principle submits to it and excludes all others. The reason you do not submit to it and exclude all others is that you do not have revelation as your first principle."

The presuppositionalists answer him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are insane and arrogant?"

"I am not insane and arrogant," says the Preacher, "but I honor the Word and you dishonor me. I am not seeking vindication for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. I tell you the truth, if anyone rejects sensation, intuition, and other human-centered methods of discovery, but will truly hold to the Word alone as his first principle, he will become invincible."

At this the presuppositionalists exclaim, "Now we know that you are arrogant! The apologists and philosophers that we follow did not claim to be invincible, but you say that if anyone follows your system, he will never be defeated. Are you greater than these apologists? Who do you think you are?"

The Preacher replies, "If I claim to be invincible in myself, my claim means nothing. Scripture, which you claim to be your first principle, is what teaches this approach. Though you do not know Scripture, I know it. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know it and keep it. The apologists whom you idolize rejoiced at the thought of a scriptural philosophy. Now they see it and approve."

"You are not yet fifty years old," the presuppositionalists say to him, "and you know what they thought!"

"I tell you the truth," the Preacher answers, "they laid the foundation for this!" At this, they gnash their teeth and clench their fists, and rally together to destroy him. But the Preacher goes on his way, and continues with the work that God has foreordained for him.