

pervasive relativism in our world, I propose that there are two basic ways to recognize truths valid for all people of all times, all places, and all possible cultural backgrounds. First, by analysis of meaningful knowledge and of responsible moral conduct, people discover absolutes of general revelation. Second, by verification and disverification, people discover and interpret the absolutes of special revelation.

In speaking of a verificational way of knowing, I am not limiting myself to the narrow verifiability criterion of logical positivists. Rather, I refer to a criterion like that of Edward John Carnell and Francis Schaeffer In *Testing Christianity's Truth-Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics*.¹ I expounded Carnell's approach at length. Here I seek to interpret and apply his hypothesis-verification approach to the problem of relativism answering the view that people cannot know any objectively valid truth.

Some essays seek to carve out an atom of material for consideration and then split the atom. This chapter, for better or worse, seeks in brief compass to sketch a synthetic perspective of a vast amount of material. I shall consider first, principles derived from general revelation that make verification of specific realities possible, second, verification of the content of special revelation, and third, the use of the verificational criteria in the interpretation in Scripture.

General Absolutes Discovered by Analysis

Is it possible for two people on different sides of a religious question ever to arrive at the facts any more than for two people on opposite sides of a marriage problem? Cornelius Van Til, who in principle at least, is as skeptical as my medical doctor, says, in effect. "No! There is no common ground in principle."² Subsequently, however, Van Til's denial seems to suffer the death of a thousand qualifications. In practice, he builds upon common principles to show the non-Christians that Christianity's system alone provides meaning.³

Carnell does not do as Van Til says, but as he does, in appealing to common principles of logic, fact, values and morality. His ethical analysis developed most fully in *Christian Commitment* does not move from the fact of right and wrong by the principle of causality to a moral God. Analysis is not inductive inference from experience to something outside of experience. Neither is analysis a mere phenomenological description of experience. Analysis is a reflective discrimination of the various elements already present in experience. It cannot be done by proxy through what we hear from others. It is our own unique experience that we are encouraged to analyze. And we are simply to ask what, if anything, makes it meaningful.⁴

Human Rights

What constitutes morally responsible action when we stand in the presence of other human beings? When we confront another person, we ought to respect his inherent rights and acknowledge his worth or dignity.