

non-Christian to join him in repenting for failing to live up to these common standards. Until the non-Christian repents, these absolutes are the basis of his responsibility and accountability before God. They do not make a person autonomous, but responsible!

Special Redemptive Absolutes Discovered By Verification

As Augustine said, "the essence of the world is change, the essence of God is changelessness."¹⁸ Having discovered changeless principles in our world, we have discovered characteristics of God. God is just, loving, respectful of the human beings he created in his image, not a man that he should lie or deny himself, and source and sustainer of every bit of data that man experiences. In seeing these essential characteristics of God, even though we may be unconscious of the fact that they are from him, we know something of his eternal power and existence.

If, however, God has any unique, special plans and purposes beyond the order of nature in the order of grace, we cannot discover them unless He communicates them to us in special revelation. If God has any redemptive plans and purposes for fallen man in history, He must take these inner intentions of his heart known in some special way.

The classical Christian claim is that God disclosed his inner plans and purposes for redeeming fallen man in the person of Christ and the teachings of prophets and apostles.¹⁹ Is that claim true? There were many false prophets during Old Testament times, false christs and false apostles in the last days from New Testament times to the present. As a result there are many sacred writings in the religions and cults of the world. One cannot accept them all for they contradict each other on the nature of God and the way to redemption. Mature persons cannot ignore claims contradicting basic beliefs but must evaluate them on the basis of a sound criterion of truth.

How then can people determine what is truly in accord with God's inner plans and purposes? Any special plan of the God who cannot deny himself, must be consistent with the givens of his created world, internally consistent and supportive of his justice and love. If a claim to divine revelation is to be accepted as true, it must cohere with all the invariables of reality. It is not enough to exhibit the unique authenticity of Christ's person as Trueblood did in *A Place to Stand*.²⁰ Neither should we rest the case on Christ's resurrection alone as John Montgomery does.²¹ The sheer logical consistency to which Gordon Clark appeals is insufficient.²² So is the witness to one's own conversion experience as in Warren C. Young.²³ Arbitrarily to presuppose the authority of one sacred writing because of our subjective response to it (even though identified with the witness of the Holy Spirit) avoids the issue and is insufficient.²⁴ As in government, so in philosophy of religion, we need as many checks and balances upon revelation-claims as possible. Any claim to special revelation from God must be consistent, factual and viable. When these tests are employed, we have an answer to the charge that Christianity may be fine for you but it is not for me. It is true in relation to these unchanging universal principles.