

Version: 1.0

Version Date: September 08, 2001

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2. This document is a work in progress. That is to say, it's NOT DONE! I have plans to build an index, add references to books, a glossary of terms, historical perspectives, and a host of other things. I need your help! If you find a discrepancy, a misspelled word, a misquote or something that just ought not be there, PLEASE email me and let me know so that I can make the changes.

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The Great Debate

Dr. Greg Bahnsen versus Gordon Stein

Segment 1

Bahnsen's Opening Statements

Dr. Bahnsen:

Thank you David. I want to begin this evening with three opening and introductory remarks about the nature of the debate itself.

Arguing For the Christian God

First of all it's necessary at the outset of the debate to define our terms, that's always the case. In the particular here, I should make it clear what I mean when I use the term God. I want to specify that I'm arguing particularly in favor of Christian theism, and for it as a unit of system of thought, and not for anything like theism in general, and there are reasons for that...three.

1. The various conceptions of deity found in the world religions are in most cases logically incompatible leaving no unambiguous sense to general theism, whatever that might be.
2. Secondly, I have not found the non-Christian religions to be philosophically defensible, each of them being internally incoherent or undermining human reason and experience.
3. And thirdly since I by the grace of God am a Christian, I cannot from the heart adequately defend those religious faiths with which I disagree. My commitment is to the Triune God and Christian world-view based on God's revelation in the Old and New Testaments.

So first then, I am defending Christian theism.

Issues of Debate

Secondly, I want to observe and we should indicate what it is (and is not) at issue in the debate and on the basis of which we hope you will consider the debate. It must be clear that we are debating about philosophical systems, not the people who adhere to or profess them. Our concern is with the objective merits of the case which can be made for atheism, or Christian theism: not relative, subjective or personal matters. And again I have three reasons or illustrations of this.

1. The personalities of those individuals who adhere to different systems of thought are not really relevant to the truth or falsity of the claims made by those systems. Atheists and Christians can equally be found emotional, unlearned, intolerant, or rude in their approaches.

2. Secondly, subjective claims made about the experience of inner satisfaction or peace (claims that are made interestingly by both Christians and Atheists in their literature) and promotional claims made about the superiority of Christianity or Atheism for instance (some atheist literature suggests that greater mental health comes through the independence of the atheist outlook): these sorts of things are always subject to conflicting interpretations and explanations being, I think, more autobiographical rather than telling us anything for sure about the truths of the system under consideration.
3. Thirdly, the issue is not whether the atheists or professing Christians have ever done anything undesirable or morally unacceptable. One need only think respectively of the atheist involvement in the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution and the professing Christian involved in the Spanish Inquisition. Now the question is not whether adherents of these systems have lived spotless lives, but whether atheism or Christian theism as philosophical systems are objectively true.

And so I'll be defending Christian theism, and I'll be defending it as a philosophical system.

Concession To Knowledge Pertaining to Ovarian maturation of Japanese Quail.

My last introductory remark is simply to the effect that I want to concede to my opponent all issues pertaining to the control of ovarian maturation in Japanese quail. Okay? The subject of his doctoral dissertation in 1974 at Ohio State? *(Audience laughter)*

I would not pretend to hold my own in a discussion with him of the empirical details of his narrow domain of specialized natural science. However our subject tonight is really much different, calling for intelligent reflection upon issues, which are philosophical or theological in character.

For some reason Dr. Stein has over the last decade left his field of expertise and given his life to a campaign for atheism. Whatever his perception of the reason for that, I do not believe that it is because of any cogent philosophical case which might be made for atheism as a world-view, and it is to this subject which I now turn for tonight's debate.

Opening Case

My opening case for the existence of God will cover three areas of thought. They are the nature of evidence, the presuppositional conflict of world-views, and finally the transcendental argument for God's existence.

The Nature Of Evidence

First of all the nature of evidence. How should the difference of opinion between the atheist and the theist be rationally resolved? What Dr. Stein has written indicates that he, like many atheists, has not reflected adequately on this question. He writes, and I quote:

“The question of the existence of God is a factual question and should be answered in the same way as any other factual question”, end of quote.

The assumptions that all existence claims are questions about matters of fact; the assumption that these are all answered in the very same way is not merely oversimplified and misleading, it is simply mistaken. The existence, factuality, or reality of different kinds of things is not established or disconfirmed in the same way in every case.

We might ask, "Is there a box of crackers in the pantry?" and we know how we would go about answering that question. But that is a far cry from the way we go about answering, uh, determining the reality of say barometric pressure, quasars, gravitational attraction, elasticity, radioactivity, natural laws, names, grammar, numbers, the university itself (that you're now at), past events, categories, future contingencies, laws of thought, political obligations, individual identity over time, causation, memories, dreams or even love or beauty.

In such case cases, one does not do anything like walking to the pantry and looking inside for the crackers. There are thousands of existence or factual questions and they are not at all answered in the same way in each case. Just think of the differences and argumentation and types of evidence used by biologists, grammarians, physicists, mathematicians, lawyers, logicians, mechanics, merchants, and artists. It should be obvious that the type of evidence which one looks for in existence or factual claims will be determined by the field of discussion and especially by the metaphysical nature of the entity mentioned in the claim under question.

Dr. Stein's remark that the existence of a god is answered; (rephrase) the question of the existence of god is answered in the same way as any other factual question mistakenly reduces the theistic question to the same level as a box of crackers in the pantry, which we will hereafter call the crackers in the pantry fallacy.

The presuppositional conflict of world-views

Secondly then I would like to talk about the presuppositional conflict of world-views. Dr. Stein has written about the nature of evidence in the theistic debate, and what he has said points to a second philosophical error of significant proportions. In passing we would note how unclear he is by the way, in speaking of the evidence which must be used describing it variously as logic, facts or reason. Each of these terms is susceptible to a whole host of differing senses, not only in philosophy, but especially in ordinary usage depending on who is using the terms. I take it he wishes to judge hypothesis and the "common sense" by test of logical coherence and empirical observation.

The problem arises when Dr. Stein elsewhere insists that every claim which someone makes must be treated as a hypothesis which must be tested by such evidence before accepting it. "There is to be nothing", he says, "which smacks of begging the question or circular reasoning."

This I think is oversimplified thinking and again misleading (what might call the pretended neutrality fallacy). One can see this by considering the following quotation of Dr. Stein. And I quote:

"The use of logic or reason is the only valid way to examine the truth or falsity of a statement which claims to be factual." That's the end of the quote.

One must eventually ask Dr. Stein then how he proves this statement itself. That is, how does he prove that logic or reason is the only way to prove factual statements? He is now on the horns of a real epistemological dilemma. If he says that the statement is proven by logic or reason, then he is engaging in circular reasoning and he is begging the question, which he staunchly forbids. If he says that the statement is proven in some other fashion, then he refutes the statement itself! That logic or reasoning is the only way to prove things.

Now my point is not to fault Dr. Stein's commitment to logic or reason, but to observe that it

actually has the nature of a pre-commitment or a presupposition. It is not something he has proven by empirical experience or logic, but it is rather *that* by which he proceeds to prove everything else. He is not presuppositionally neutral in his approach to factual questions and disputes. He does not avoid begging crucial questions rather than proving them in what we might call the "garden variety ordinary way."

Now this tendency to beg crucial questions is openly exposed by Dr. Stein when the issue becomes the existence of God (because he demands that the theist present him with evidence for the existence of God). Now a theist like myself would gladly and readily do so. There is the evidence of the created order itself, testifying to the wisdom, power, plan and glory of God. One should not miss the testimony of the solar system, the persuasion of the sea, the amazing intricacies of the human body. There's the evidence of history; God's deliverance of His people, the miracles at Passover night and the Red Sea. The visions of Isaiah, the Shikinah Glory in the temple, the virgin birth of Jesus, His mighty miracles, His resurrection from the dead. There's the evidence of special revelation, the wonder of the Bible as God's word unsurpassed in its coherence over time and its historical accuracy and its life renewing power.

In short, there is no shortage of empirical indicators or evidences of God's existence, from the thousand stars of the heavens to the five hundred witnesses of Christ's resurrection. But Dr. Stein precludes the very possibility of any of this empirical evidence counting as proof of God's existence. He writes and now I quote:

"Supernatural explanations are not allowed in science. The theist is hard put to document his claims to the existence of the supernatural if he is in effect forbidden from invoking the supernatural as a part of his explanation. Of course this is entirely fair as it would be begging the question to use what has to be proved as a part of the explanation." End of quote.

In advance you see, Dr. Stein is committed to disallowing any theistic interpretation of nature, history or experience. What he seems to overlook is that this is just as much begging the question on his own part as it is on the part of the theist, who appeals to such evidence. He has not at all proven, by empirical observation and logic, his pre-commitment to naturalism. He has assumed it in advance, accepting and rejecting all further factual claims in terms of that controlling and unproven assumption.

Now the theist does the very same thing, don't get me wrong. When certain empirical evidences are put forth as allegedly disproving the existence of God, the theist regiments his commitment in terms of his presuppositions as well. See, just as the naturalist would insist that Christ could not have risen from the dead, or that there is a natural explanation yet to be found of how he did rise from the dead, so the super naturalist insists that the alleged discrepancies in the Bible have an explanation, some yet to be found perhaps, and that the evil of this world has a sufficient reason behind it, known at least to God.

They both have their governing presuppositions by which the facts of experience are interpreted. Even as all philosophical systems, all world-views do. At the most fundamental levels of everyone's thinking and beliefs, there are primary convictions about reality, man, the world, knowledge, truth, behavior and such things. Convictions, about which all other experiences organized, interpreted and applied.

Dr. Stein has such presuppositions and so do I, and so do all of you. And it is these presuppositions, which determine what we accept by ordinary reasoning and evidence, for they are assumed in all of our reasoning, even about reasoning itself.

The Transcendental Argument For the Existence Of God

So I come thirdly then to the transcendental proof of God's existence. How should the difference of opinion between the theist and the atheist be rationally resolved? That was my opening question. We've seen two of Dr. Steins error regarding it: The crackers in the pantry fallacy, and the pretended neutrality fallacy.

In the process of discussing them, we've observed that belief in the existence of God is not tested in any ordinary way like other factual claims; and the reason for that is metaphysically because of the non-natural character of God and epistemologically because of the presuppositional character of commitment for or against His existence.

Arguments over conflicting presuppositions between world-views therefore must be resolved somewhat differently and yet still rationally than conflicts over factual existence claims within a world-view or system of thoughts. When we go to look at the different world-views that atheists and theists have, I suggest that we can prove the existence of God from the impossibility of the contrary.

The transcendental proof for God's existence is that without Him, it is impossible to prove anything. The atheist world-view is irrational and cannot consistently provide the preconditions of intelligible experience, science, logic or morality. The atheist world-view cannot allow for laws of logic, the uniformity of nature, the ability for the mind to understand the world, and moral absolutes. In that sense, the atheist world-view cannot account for our debate tonight.

Stein's Opening Statements

David:

Thank you Dr. Bahnsen for that opening statement. We now turn to you Dr. Stein; your fifteen minute opening statement please.

Dr. Stein:

Can everybody hear me? I assume so. Well, I'll grant Dr. Bahnsen his expertise on a conditional resolution of the apparent paradox of self-deception, which was his dissertation. I don't know how much more relevant that is to our discussion tonight than mine is, probably not any more but um, I would like to also thank Dr. Bahnsen for showing us that he rally doesn't really understand too much about atheism. I will try to straighten him out.

This is an important question we are discussing. Perhaps it's the most important question in the whole field of Religion, because if God does not exist, then the Bible cannot be the word of God; Jesus can't be the Messiah and Christianity cannot be true as well as other religions. So we're dealing with an important issue here.

Now Dr. Bahnsen repeated for me that the existence of God is a factual question. I don't think he would dispute that. I think he misinterpreted what I said when I said that we solve factual questions in the same way. I didn't mean *exactly* the same way: I mean with the use of reason, logic and evidence and that is what I am holding.

Now first let me make clear what atheism is and is not. I think that this is a very commonly

misunderstood subject. Atheists do not say that they can prove that there is no God. An atheist is not someone who denies that there is a God. Rather an atheist says that he has examined the proofs that are offered by the theist and he finds them inadequate.

Now if I were to say that this gentleman sitting on the front step could fly by flapping his arms, I would be making a kind of unusual statement and it would be up to him to demonstrate that he could fly. If he can't demonstrate it then we don't believe that he can fly. Now if he doesn't demonstrate it right now, that doesn't mean he can't fly. It just means that he can't fly right now. So we do not deny that he can fly, because he can't demonstrate it right now, but we say that he has not proven his case; and therefore we do not believe that he can fly until he proves so. And this is what an atheist says about the existence of God. He says the case is unproven, not dis-proven.

So an atheist is really someone who is without a belief in God or who does not believe in a god. It is not someone who denies the existence of God or who says that one does not exist or can prove that one does not exist.

Now I think that I would like to define a god as well. I'm not so sure I like his definition; I'm not going to stick to just Christian God. I'm going to stick to all kinds of God. I'm going to use the definition, which both Father Copleston and Bertrand Russell both agreed upon in their famous debate. Now this was both sides, the leading exponents of both sides, both managed to agree on a definition of God. So I think it must be at least an adequate one if not a great one. And this is the definition:

“A supreme personal being distinct from the world and creator of the world.”

Now before asking for proof of God's existence, we need this satisfactory definition and I think I've given one which I will find at least satisfactory and if Dr. Bahnsen doesn't agree, we can hear from him.

Now nothing can qualify as evidence for the existence of a God unless we have some idea of what we are searching for. That's why we need the definition. Okay; now throughout, eleven major kinds of evidence or proof have been offered for the existence of God. In my campus visits, I have heard all kinds of other things offered as proof, but they basically fall into those eleven categories, with some juggling. And if these eleven proofs do not work out logically, or lead to logical self-contradictions, then we can only say that God's existence is not proved; it's unproven, not dis-proven as I mentioned before.

Now if I assert that this gentleman can fly by flapping his arms, as I said the burden of proof is on him. Supposing I make a more complicated statement. Supposing I say that my dog can talk in complete sentences. Okay, well again I'm making a kind of unusual statement and it's up to me to offer the evidence. So I better be prepared to do that or I better be prepared to have people not believe what I say.

Now I'd like a demonstration either of this gentleman's flying or of my dog talking if I were the person who was being asked to make a conclusion before I admitted that such things were possible or existed. Okay, now how easy would it be to show that this gentleman cannot fly or that my dog cannot talk in complete sentences? As I mentioned before, we get into a real problem when we're trying to show that something cannot happen or that something does not exist.

For example, if I wanted to prove that unicorns do not exist, I can examine this room and we can find out that there are definitely no unicorns in this room (that small area), but to prove

that the general non-existence of something like unicorns, we would have to search the entire universe simultaneously. Then we could only say that no unicorns exist at the moment we searched the universe. But you know, maybe they were there five minutes before, or if we only searched the whole earth, they were on another planet at the time; I mean there are all kinds of other possibilities; so you cannot prove that something does not exist. And that's why as I mentioned before the definition of an atheist is not someone who thinks he has proven that God does not exist, because you cannot.

Okay, now of those eleven major proofs, I'm going to go over some of them very quickly. They've been nine hundred years in the formulation. During this nine hundred years this is basically what people have come up with.

Cosmological argument

The first cause argument, also called the cosmological argument. It says that everything must have a cause, therefore the universe had a cause, and that cause was God. God was the first, or uncaused cause. Okay. Well this leads into a real logical bind for the theist, because if everything must have had a cause, then God must have had a cause. If God had a cause, then he was not the first or uncaused cause. If God did not have a cause, then not everything must have a cause. If not everything needs a cause, then perhaps the universe is one of those things which doesn't need a cause. So you see that we've gotten into a logical bind there; and that proof basically fails.

Now I'm giving you a real short synopsis of each of these proofs; they could fill an entire book in half, so you have to understand that I'm oversimplifying slightly but I think I'm retaining the logic of it both the pro and con.

Teleological argument.

The second one is the design argument, also called the teleological argument. It says that the universe is wonderful and exhibits evidence of design or order. Things, which show such wonderful design, must have had a designer who is even more wonderful and that designer was God. Well, if the universe is wonderfully designed, surely God is even more wonderfully designed. He must therefore have had a designer even more wonderful than He is. If God did not require a designer, then there is no reason why such a relatively less wonderful thing as the universe needed one. Again, we are into a logical self-contradiction.

Argument From Life

The argument from life says life cannot originate from the random movement of atoms, yet life exists therefore the existence of a God was necessary to create life. Now basically life didn't originate from the random movement of atoms, and no scientist would say so because there are limits on the chemical composition and physics of atoms and they don't move in any possible way. Chemicals do not combine in any possible way. That's why when you see these one billion to one kind of odds that people have said for life originating... they're all wet. They haven't considered the possibility that not every reaction can occur. So it's possible to explain the origin of life without a God using the principle of parsimony or "*Occam's Razor*". I think we are left with the simpler explanation as the one without the god. I'll go into more detail on that later.

Revealed Theology

Then we have the argument from revealed theology, which seems to be one of Dr. Bahnsen's favorites. It says that the Bible, says that God exists and the Bible is the inspired word of

God, therefore what it says must be true, therefore God exists.

Now this is obviously a circular argument. It begs the question. We're trying to show whether God exists, therefore calling the bible the word of God is not permitted, because it assumes the existence of the very thing we are trying to prove. Now if the bible is not the word of God, in this case, then we cannot give any real weight to the fact that it mentions that God exists. It does not become a proof. In fact, to prove God from the Bible is standing things on its head. First you must prove God, then you may say (examine) whether god wrote the Bible or dictated it or inspired it. But you can't really use the bible, as Dr. Bahnsen seems to want to do as evidence for the existence of god per se.

Argument From Miracles

Then we have the argument from miracles. It says that the existence of miracles requires the presence of a supernatural force (that is, a god). Miracles do occur, therefore there is a supernatural force or God.

Again, this is begging the question. It requires that you must believe in the existence of a God first, beforehand, and then you say that there are such things as miracles, which are the thing of a god to create violations of his own laws. So it is not evidence per se. It can serve as supplementary once you have good evidence in another kind of a way; for the existence of a god then you can use miracles as an additional argument. But in of itself, it doesn't show the existence of a god because it assumes that which is to be proven.

I just want to quote you one little thing from Thomas Paine about miracles:

“If we see an account given of such a miracle by a person who said he saw it, it raises a question in the mind that is very easily decided which I Dr Stein: Is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie?”

We have never seen in our time nature go out of her course, but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time. It is therefore at least millions to one that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie. I think those are good odds.

Ontological Argument

Then we come to the ontological argument, one of the most difficult ones to explain to people, but basically it says God is by definition perfect. A necessary quality of any perfect object is that it exists. If it did not exist, it would not be perfect. If perfect requires existence, then God exists since God is perfect.

Now I don't know if you followed that, but I think this has been pretty well ripped to shreds by philosophers, and I think the problem lies with the (pause/rephrase), the trouble is with the word “exists.” In order for something to be perfect, it must first exist. I mean if something did not exist, the word perfect wouldn't mean anything. So, first you must have existence, then possibly you may have perfection. So this again is going backwards, and you must have an existing god, then you can decide whether he is perfect; if perfect ness is a quality of a god then he may be perfect, but he first must exist.

Moral Argument

Then we have the moral argument. All people have moral values. Existence of these values cannot be explained unless they were implanted in people by a god: therefore God exists.

Well their answer to this is that there are simpler ways of explaining the origin of moral values without requiring the existence of a god to implant in the people. Besides, if moral values did come from a god, then all people should have the same moral values; and they don't.

People's moral values are a result of an accommodation, which they have made with their particular environment and then taught to their children as a survival mechanism.

Wish Argument

Okay, then we have the wish argument. Without the existence of a god, people would have no reason to live or be good, therefore there has to be a god. Most people believe in a god, therefore there is a god.

This really isn't a proof; it's just a wish. It's like saying, "it would be nice to have a god," which it would, but you know, that doesn't have anything to do with whether there is one or not.

Argument From Faith

Um, finally we ha..(pause), oh, I'm missing one here. Then we have the argument from faith. The existence of a god cannot be proven by the use of reason, but only by the use of faith. The use of faith shows that, there is a god, therefore god exists.

Reason or logic is a proven way of obtaining factual information about the universe. Faith has never been shown to produce true information about the universe. Because faith is believing something is so because you want it to be so without adequate evidence. Therefore, it can't be used to prove the existence of anything. In addition, an additional fact is that faith often gives you the opposite answer to what is given by reason to the same problem. It also shows that faith does not provide valid answers.

Religious Experience

Now the argument from religious experience: Many people claim to have had a personal experience, or encounter with god, therefore he must exist. Now this is a difficult one to handle, because first of all, I've never had such an experience, but I'm sure people have absolutely, honestly reported having had such experiences. But the feeling of having met god must not be confused with that fact of having met him.

This is a confusion; a semantic confusion and also we cannot use our own feelings as if they were valid information about the world. They are feelings that we have inside of us, but you cannot demonstrate them to another person. They cannot be used as evidence.

If everyone had that same experience, like if we all looked around the room and we all agreed there was a clock over there, then you might say that the vision of a clock was a consensual one, if everyone agreed on it. Other than that, if you saw a clock that nobody else did, or only two or three people did in the room, we would have a bit of a problem.

Pascal's Wager

Pascal's wager is the last of the eleven arguments. I hear this a lot on the campuses. It says since we don't know whether a god exists or not, we have no way of finding out in this life. We have nothing to lose by believing in a god. On the other hand, we have a lot to lose if we do not believe in a god and there later turns out to be one after we're dead.

Well, this is only true if number one: you're right about a god, and secondly if you have picked the right religion, because you might wind up at the judgment day and be right about a god; and he says

“What religion were you?”

and you say,

“I was a believer in Islam,”

he said,

“Sorry, Catholicism was the right religion. Down you go!”

So in addition, if we have a god who punishes people who live virtuous lives, let's say an atheist who lived a virtuous life, did wonderful deeds in the world, but just did not believe in a god; if a god punishes him, then we have an irrational god who is just as likely to punish the believer as the unbeliever.

SEGMENT 2: Cross-Examination

David:

Thank you Dr. Stein. We will now move to our period of cross-examination. The first cross-examiner will be Dr. Bahnsen, who will have an opportunity to cross-examine Dr. Stein. If I could please have silence, we would appreciate it.

Dr. Bahnsen

Dr. Stein, do you have any sources that you can give to us very briefly that define atheism as one who finds the theistic proofs inadequate rather than one who denies the existence of God?

Dr. Stein

Yes sir. George Smith's book which you will find for sale in the back of the room upstairs, later called "Atheism, the case Against God which I think is the finest book ever written on this subject, makes this quite explicit. I happen to have a copy right here, I can quote you the exact words if you like to see them.

Dr. Bahnsen

No, that won't be necessary.

Dr. Stein

Okay.

Dr. Bahnsen

Do you have any other sources?

Dr. Stein

Sure.

Dr. Bahnsen

What would they be?

Dr. Stein

Charles Bradlaw, who... I will give him to you right now. Uh, 200 years, uh 100 years ago Charles Bradlaw made the comment in his plea for atheism; he said ...

Dr. Bahnsen

That'll be fine.

Dr. Stein

Okay, well...

Dr. Bahnsen

Dr. Stein, did you hear Dr. Bahnsen use the following argument?

"The bible says that God exists, and the bible is the inspired word of God, therefore what it says must be true, therefore god exists?"

Dr. Stein

You did not use that, you just assumed that that was so because you were quoting from the bible as if it proved the existence of god.

Dr. Bahnsen

I didn't ask you what I assumed, I asked you if I used that argument..

Dr. Stein

No, you did not use the argument, but you used the results of the argument.

Dr. Bahnsen

Okay Dr. Stein, you mentioned eleven basic proofs for the existence of God. Did you mention the transcendental proof for the existence of god?

Dr. Stein

No, I didn't mention it by name. I think it is not a proof. I would not call it a proof as I understand it the way you said it.

Dr. Bahnsen

You'll have time for a rebuttal on that point. In other words, you didn't deal with that particular one?

Are all factual questions answered in the very same way?

Dr. Stein

No they are not. They are answered by the use of certain methods though, that are the same: reason, logic and presenting evidence as facts.

Dr. Bahnsen

Okay; I heard you mention logical binds and logical self contradictions in your speech. You did say that?

Dr. Stein

I used that phrase, yes.

Dr. Bahnsen

Do you believe there are laws of logic then?

Dr. Stein

Absolutely.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they universal?

Dr. Stein

They are agreed upon by human beings. They aren't laws that exist out in nature. They are...

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they simply conventions then?

Dr. Stein

They are conventions, but they are conventions that are self verifying.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they sociological laws, or laws of thought?

Dr. Stein

They are laws of thought which are interpreted by men; and promulgated by men.

Dr. Bahnsen

Are they material in nature?

Dr. Stein

How can a law be material?

Dr. Bahnsen

That's a question I'm going to ask you!

Thank you.

[audience laughter]

Cross Examination: Dr. Stein questions Dr. Bahnsen.

David: At this time you have an opportunity to cross examine Dr. Bahnsen.

Dr. Stein

Dr. Bahnsen, would you call god material or immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Immaterial.

Dr. Stein

What is something that's immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Something not extended in space.

Dr. Stein

Can you give me an example of anything other than god that's immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

Laws of logic.

[Audience Laughter]

[David: Can I ask that you hold that down please?]

Dr. Stein

Are you putting god as an equivalent thing to the laws of logic?

Dr. Bahnsen

No. Only if you think all factual questions are answered in the very same way would you even assume that by thinking there are two immaterial things, they must be identical. No they are not identical.

Dr. Stein

I'm not assuming that. I'm just assuming that because the laws of logic are a convention among men. Are you saying god is a convention among men?

Dr. Bahnsen

I don't accept the facts that laws; [correcting himself] that claim that laws of logic are conventional.

Dr. Stein

Okay. Uh, is your god omnipotent, omniscient and omni benevolent?

Dr. Bahnsen

He is.

Dr. Stein

You don't find this a contradiction at all?

Dr. Bahnsen

I do not.

Dr. Stein

Okay, we'll show you a little later that it is...

Um, if your arguments in favor of the existence of god are shown to be incorrect, will you relinquish your belief in god?

Dr. Bahnsen

If my arguments are disproven?

Dr. Stein

Yes.

Dr. Bahnsen

Will I relinquish my belief in God? If there are no arguments for the existence of God, I wouldn't believe in God.

Dr. Stein

That's not quite answering the question. If someone can show you that there are no arguments, would you relinquish your belief? I'm trying to see, what's the basis for your belief.

Dr. Bahnsen

You were the one who said that it's impossible to show a universal negative. No one can show that there are no arguments for the existence of God, so we can only deal with those that I know of.

Dr. Stein

Okay, if someone showed that all of the ones that you produced were invalid, what would be your position?

Dr. Bahnsen

Well, you'd have to describe further the conditions of this. Uh, rationally speaking, if there is no basis for belief in the existence of God, I would relinquish that belief.

Dr. Stein

Okay.

Is God good?

Dr. Bahnsen

Yes He is.

Dr. Stein

How do you know that?

Dr. Bahnsen

He saved me. He created me. He made the world and He made it good. He sent His son into the world to die for my sins. Many of these evidences are quite convincing to me, but I don't use them outside of a world-view in which they make sense, in which they would be taken as true.

If you mean is God good in such a way, or can I give you evidence that you would accept? That would depend on what your presuppositions are.

Dr. Stein

No. I'm asking if God says something, anything, is it right because anything God does is good, because God is good? Or does it become good just because God said it? I don't know if I said that right. I guess I did.

Dr. Bahnsen

No: I understand the problem, though it's roughly stated.

What God says to be good is good because it reflects His own character. God is good, and is the standard of goodness. That's one of the presuppositions of the Christian world-view.

Dr. Stein

Doesn't it indeed [correcting himself]; isn't it a presupposition which is presupposed before there is any actual data from God?

Dr. Bahnsen

Is this a question about my first opening statement?

Dr. Stein

In a sense it is, because although it isn't directly mentioned in your opening statement, it has to do with the whole idea of whether there are absolutes outside of God, which is an important issue in this whole debate. It may come up later.

[THE VOICE: To continue with this presentation, please turn your cassette over at this time.]

BEGIN TAPE 1: SIDE 2

Dr. Bahnsen

I still think we're straining at the limits of debate rules here, but I will answer your question. There are no absolutes outside of God.

Dr. Stein

So in other words, the fact that God is good, is something that God told you and that's why you accept it, rather than knowing it ahead and assuming it as a presupposition, which you said a minute ago.

Dr. Bahnsen

That's extremely simplistic. God told it to me and He provided evidence of it.

Dr. Stein

But you also said it was a presupposition.

Dr. Bahnsen

That's right. That's right.

Dr. Stein

Isn't that a contradiction?

Dr. Bahnsen

Oh, not at all. There are many things which are presupposed as well as, uh, evidenced in this world; for instance the laws of logic.

Dr. Stein

I would disagree with that, but.

[asking the moderator]: Um, I still have some time? All right...

When we talk about immaterial things, are you also saying that there is a such a thing as ghosts or the soul which are another example of immaterial things? Would you call them immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen

I would say that man is a living soul and has an immaterial aspect to his being; yes.

Dr. Stein

And how would you, uh, prove this?

Dr. Bahnsen

Does this have to do with the existence of God then?

Dr. Stein

Well, it has to do with the existence of immaterial things.

Dr. Bahnsen

Well, if there is an immaterial being (God), and if the bible is His word, then I would say that, uh, his revealing the nature of man in the bible is sufficient proof; and that takes us back logically as you'll be bound to say, to whether God Himself does exist. And that's what we're supposed to be debating.

Dr. Stein

Okay, so you're giving me a circular argument which, uh, is...

Dr. Bahnsen

No, I'm telling you what the debate is about.

Dr. Stein

Oh; I know what the debate is about.

Dr. Bahnsen

Yeah [cynically]

Dr. Stein

I'm asking for an answer to a question and I didn't get one. Oh...

Dr. Bahnsen

I'm not debating the nature of the soul tonight, but the existence of God. Yes I believe that man has a soul.

Dr. Stein

Okay. The only reason I asked about the soul is because this is a simpler immaterial object that most people would hold as also immaterial.

Dr. Bahnsen

No; I didn't say that it is similar; I mean that's your claim!

Dr. Stein

Simpler I said. Not similar.

Dr. Bahnsen

Okay.

Dr. Stein

Okay.

Final Rebuttals: Segment One

[David:

Okay, having concluded our segment of cross-examination, we will now begin final rebuttals for segment number one. Dr. Bahnsen, I now turn to you for an eight minute rebuttal.]

Dr. Bahnsen

Thank you. Uh, Dr. Stein is uh, not into this debate yet tonight. We are, um, debating the nature of [correcting himself]; I mean the existence of God. I specified that I would be speaking in order to avoid logical contradiction of one particular view of God, the Christian view of God which I personally hold. Dr. Stein says that he will not restrict himself to the Christian conception of God. Well, that's fine...he may not. But all the time he uses on anything that's not the Christian conception of God will be irrelevant. In fact, I will join him in refuting those other conceptions of God. The existence of God that I'm arguing tonight is the Christian one.

Secondly, when Dr. Stein defines an atheist as one who finds the theistic proofs inadequate: that is unproven but not disproven, he is engaging in linguistic revision. He does quote for us of course, two um... he said that he could (and I trust that he can) two atheists who likewise defined atheism that way. But you see that it... it strikes me as similar to a Christian who defines his position as being true at the outset and therefore it must be true cause it's true by definition.

He has minimized the task that is before him by simply saying, "I'm here to show that the theistic proofs are inadequate." Well, you see even at that though he didn't do his job, even though that is less than what he really should be doing. Because he gave us eleven basic proofs for God attributing one to me that I didn't use, and do not use, and did not assume. He mentioned eleven basic proofs but did not deal with the one that I gave in my opening presentation; so he has not dealt yet with the argument that is before us this evening.

Dr. Stein has mentioned logical binds and logical self-contradictions. He says that he holds that the laws of logic are universal but however they are conventional in nature. Uh, that is not at all acceptable philosophically. If the laws of logic are conventional in nature, then you might have different societies that use different laws of logic. It might be appropriate in some society to say both: "my car is in the parking lot and it's not the case that my car is in the parking lot."

That is, certain societies that have a convention that says, "go ahead and contradict yourself." Of course there are in a sense sub groups within our own society that might think that way. Thieves have a tendency to say, "this is not my wallet, but it is not the case that it's not my wallet." They might engage in contradictions like that, but I don't think that any of us would want to accept it.

The laws of logic are not conventional, are not sociological. I would say that the laws of logic have a transcendental necessity about them. They are universal, they are invariant, and they are not material in nature; and if they are not that then I'd like to know in an atheist universe how it's possible to have laws in the first place, and secondly how it is possible to justify those laws.

The laws of logic you see are abstract. As abstract entities, which is the appropriate philosophical term, not spiritual entities as Dr. Stein is speaking of. As abstract entities, that is to say non-individual, or universal in character. They are not materialistic.

As universal, they are not experienced to be true. There may be experiences whereby the laws of logic are used, but no one has universal experience. No one has tried every possible instance of a law of logic. As invariant, they don't fit into what most materialists would tell us about the constantly changing nature of the world. And so you see we have a real problem on our hands. Dr. Stein wants to use the laws of logic tonight. I maintain, in so doing, he's borrowing my world-view.

For you see, within the theistic world-view, laws of logic make sense. Within the theistic world-view, there can be abstract, universal, invariant entities such as the laws of logic. You cannot contradict yourself because to do so you engage in the nature of lying, and that's contrary to the character of God as we perceive it; and so the laws of logic are something that Dr. Stein is going to have to explain as a atheist or else relinquish using them.

The transcendental argument for the existence of God then, which Dr. Stein has yet to touch, and which I don't believe he can surmount is that without the existence of God it's impossible to prove anything; and that's because in the atheistic world, you cannot justify and cannot account for laws in general (laws of thought in particular).

Laws of nature cannot account for the human mind, and the fact that it's more than electrochemical complexes and events, and cannot give us moral absolutes. That is to say, in the atheist conception of the world, there's really no reason to debate, because in the end as Dr. Stein has said, all these laws are conventional. All these laws are not really law-like in their nature, they're just... well if you're an atheist, a materialist, you'd have to say they're just something that happens inside the brain. But you see, what happens inside your brain is not the same as what happens inside my brain, and so what happens inside of your brain is not a law. It doesn't necessarily correspond to what happens in mine. In fact you can't be identical with what is inside of my mind or brain, because we don't have the same brains. If the laws of logic come down to being materialistic entities, then they no longer have their law-like character.

If they are only social conventions, then of course what we might do tonight to win the debate is just define a new set of laws and we'll say that all those that want the convention that says atheism must be true or theism must be true, and we have the following laws which we conventionally adopt to prove it, you see we'll be satisfied.

But no one is satisfied. That's not a rational procedure to follow. Laws of logic cannot be avoided. Laws of logic cannot be accounted for in a materialistic universe, therefore the laws of logic are one of many evidences that without God, you can't prove anything at all.

David: [Thank you Dr. Bahnsen. Dr. Stein, your eight minute rebuttal please.]

Dr. Stein

Okay, I'll now touch on transcendental evidence for the existence of god, which is I think the only time I can really do such is in my rebuttal; but first I'd like to do one more important thing. Rather than asking what is the cause of the universe, we must first ask, does the universe require a causal explanation? Rather than asking what is responsible for design in nature, we must ask, "does nature exhibit design?" God is given as a solution to a metaphysical problem, but no consideration is given to whether such a problem exists in the first place. But God is not an explanation for anything. For example, if I ask you how did the universe come and you say "God created it", that doesn't answer the question. The question is how did God create it? And I defy any theist to explain how God created it. Basically, what you're saying is that an unknowable being is responsible for a given phenomena which he caused through unknowable means. And that's not an explanation, but rather a

concession that the phenomena is totally inexplicable.

Now, about the laws of science. An atheist world... first of all I don't think that Dr. Bahnsen understands what a scientific law is. A scientific law is an observation that's made over and over and over again. The law of gravitation: we drop objects all over the world in different situations and we always observe that they fall to the earth. So eventually we make a statistical statement that objects are likely, almost 100 percent likely to fall to the earth if they're not accelerating in the opposite direction. Okay, in other words, a rocket doesn't fall to the earth immediately, but eventually will if it doesn't escape the gravity of the earth. So these scientific laws are merely consensuses based on thousands and hundreds of thousands of observations.

The laws of logic are also consensuses based on observations. The fact that they can predict something correctly shows us that we're on the right track; that we're corresponding to reality in some way. If I can plug in a formula and show exactly where a cannon ball is going to land, and predict exactly where it will going to strike, then my mathematics is reflecting something valid about the behavior of cannon balls that are fired on this earth. Otherwise, I wouldn't have picked the exact spot. Mathematics is basically logic, again used in the same way by consensus of tested things that are self-verifying. I'm not explaining it as well as I could, but that's basically what I'm saying.

An atheist universe then goes on the basis of the fact that matter has certain intrinsic behavior patterns; electrons repel each other, because they're both negatively charged. Protons repel each other. An electron and a proton attract each other. The opposite poles of a magnet do that. That's an inherent property of matter. That is what produces the regularity in the universe. If there were no regularity then there would be no science possible because you couldn't predict anything (matter wouldn't behave the same the second time as it did the first time; or the third or the fourth).

So the lack of having a god is in no way detrimental to logic and to having laws in an atheist universe. In fact, if we had a god, we could very easily have an irrational god who did things capriciously so that if I threw a ball...one time I threw it would go up and then the next time down and you know crash straight down and sch srrr sss sssoar right up. That would be just as much evidence for a god as a regularly behaving ball or object dropped. I mean we could have a god who makes the rules and changes them from time to time, or we could have one that makes things the same or we could have a universe that just behaves that way normally.

Now to ask what caused the universe, although we didn't get into this exact thing, I'm trying to show you that it's to ask an absurd question in the first place. To give

god as the answer, first of all I mentioned it doesn't explain anything, but secondly, before something can act as a cause, it must first exist. That is, it must be a part of the universe. And the universe sets the foundation for a causal explanation, but it can not itself require a causal explanation. I don't know if that's clear.

If I say "every human being had a mother;" that's a valid question. But if I ask, "who is the mother of the human race?" that is a non-valid question because the human race didn't have a mother. I can ask what was the cause of this planet exploding, but to ask what was the cause of the universe is to ask an invalid question; and to offer the answer as god is to offer an invalid answer to an invalid question.

We haven't gotten into morality; I think I'm going to leave that for the second half. If Dr. Bahnsen doesn't raise it; I will. He makes an awful lot of statements that are basically feelings. He felt god entered his life, he felt that this happened; he felt that Jesus was resurrected. If he were held to the historian's standard, especially the standard required when a miracle is done as David Hume said ("when a miraculous or a very unlikely event..." such as the resurrection although Hume didn't use that exact analogy, that exact example, "occurs, we must demand an extraordinary amount of proof").

If I say that the sun is gonna to rise tomorrow, we don't need too much proof because its been rising every day. If I say that that sun is not going to rise tomorrow, then we need an extraordinary amount of evidence before someone will take that seriously because that is a rather unusual event, okay?

Now he (Dr. Bahnsen) has not held up the historian's standard to a lot of the things he's accepting from the bible as evidence for god; and I think that if he did so, he would soon see that those evidences dried up.

And now to get to the transcendental evidence, finally. The statement that "if God did not exist you couldn't prove anything", and that "logic and scientific laws would be invalid" is absolute nonsense, and I think I've demonstrated part of that. He says that laws of logic are the same everywhere. This is not true, although they are mostly the same and I wonder if he's ever heard of a Zen cone; and the answer to a Zen cone is something, which, like now; what is the sound of one hand clapping is the most famous Zen cone. The answer to that kind of a question is in another type of logic in a sense, or is extra-logical if you want to call it that.

But I do think that most logic as we accept it in the Western world and most of the Eastern world is basis of agreement on people that reflect something about the universe. The idea that transcendental evidence for the existence of god is that the

impossibility of the opposite, that the world-view would not be rational if it were atheistic is total nonsense; and I've demonstrated to you that it depends on the inherent properties of matter. If matter has the properties where it behaves regularly, then we have order in the universe and we have a logical rational universe without a god.

The god issue is not germane if matter behaves in a regular way; and I would hold that the properties of matter as demonstrated over and over again are regular and its an inherent property of matter. So I think that the transcendental evidence statement can be dismissed as mere wishful thinking coupled with misinformation about what scientific laws are and what atheists would hold. In fact, most scientists; in fact science itself is atheistic. Science is not allowed to use a supernatural explanation for anything; and there is a very good reason for that. If your experiment came out one way, you could say, "god did it." If it came out the opposite way, you could say, "god did that." You would never make any progress in explaining anything in science and so the agreed upon consensus or rules of science is that naturalistic explanations only are asked for and allowed.

SEGMENT 2

[David:

Okay, we have concluded segment number one of this evening's debate. We will now enter segment number two of this evening's debate. Dr. Stein will open segment number two with a ten minute opening statement.]

Dr. Stein

He will if he can find his notes! Ah... now it would be logically wrong to say that if all of the proofs fail for the existence of god, that one is justified in saying that there is no god. That's...there's a logical fallacy (argumentum ad ignorantum) or something like that, to say that you accept something just because all the evidence to the contrary fails.

However, we have two other factors here that we must consider. One of them is the fact that nine hundred years have passed since Anselm first postulated the Ontological proof, and Thomas Aquinas in 1200 or so, so we have a long period of time which all of these proofs that are being professed failed. That's some evidence about probability of there being a proof that someone will come up with that will succeed being pretty unlikely. In addition, we have a number of things, which I wouldn't call proofs, but I would call evidence which make the existence of god even

more improbable; and one of them is the problem of evil. If an all good god exists, why is there evil in the world?

We are told with god that all things are possible. If all things are possible, it would be possible for him to create a world in which the vast mass of suffering that is morally pointless, such as the pain and misery of animals, the cancer and blindness of little children, the humiliations of senility and insanity were avoided. These are apparently inflictions of the creator himself, or else we have a god that isn't omnipotent. If you admit that, then you deny his goodness. If you say that he would not have done otherwise, you deny "with him all things are possible."

So the atheist can present several arguments which sort of increase the probability that there isn't a god. They're not proofs as I've said. One of them would be the problem of evil. The idea is that the presence of evil is incompatible with an all good, all knowing and all-powerful god as Dr. Bahnsen suggested he believes in. Now he could come up with a statement that injustice in this world may well be corrected in the next world, but that would be something that he would be making without any evidence whatsoever. Just again, wishful thinking.

He could also say that (to get out of this bind) that god is not all-powerful. That some things (some evil things) are done without his permission so to speak; in which case his statement that he believes in an omnipotent god is falsified.

He could also say that the old argument about free will, which is basically a morass into which he may fall if he wishes, will not do. To say that god gave man free will and therefore he can choose between evil and good is to imply that god was unable to make a man who could examine both sides and always choose the good. In other words, he is limited and the only way he can do it is to let man completely choose for himself, as if that would take something away from man if he could examine both sides and still have the guidance within himself to always choose the good.

Now there's no obvious physical evidence of a god. If god wanted man to believe in him, man or woman (people) he could; all he would have to do is to put in an appearance before a group of people, especially a group of atheists... in fact we invite him to our meetings to put in an appearance, and that way anyone would believe in him except a fool. Well the Christian says that this may sound logical to you, but it doesn't to god; god evidently wants man to believe on faith without adequate evidence. Well, if he does, then why did he give man the power of reason, and why did he give man more reason than any other animal has?

If all living things on the earth were created by a god, and he was a living god who made man in his own image, how do you explain the fact that he must have created the tape worm, the malaria parasite, tetanus germs, polio, ticks, mosquitoes, cockroaches and fleas. Now surely the dog is not suffering from original sin, and needs to be infected with fleas so that he can get to doggy heaven, which will be better than his present life.

The standard answer of theists to this kind of question is; "things have to be better after death." You know, we have these things on earth as a veil of tears, so to speak. It doesn't make much sense. I mean any god that would punish a man for what his ancestors did is not a very moral god. I'm talking about original sin now; Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden.

There are many instances on the earth, which no distinction seems to be made between the innocent, and the guilty, between the Christian and the non-believer. For example, in natural disasters, like an earthquake or a fire; it kills Christians, it kills babies; it kills animals; it kills non-Christians. You certainly can't say that these people were punished in some way for something that they did. It also demolishes churches and hospitals without distinction. Isn't this evidence that at the very least, whatever force there is controlling these things doesn't care if people are Christians or not? Or whether they're innocent or not?

If there's only one god, and he cares at all how he is worshipped, why are there so many different conceptions of god and so many different religions, all claiming to be the one true religion? Does this mean that they're all mistaken? Does it mean that one is correct and all the others are mistaken? There's an old joke about an atheist in which he said to a believer:

"You know you believe that 99 of the 100 gods are false,; I jut go one step further and say that the 100th one is also false."

So I'm sure that Dr. Bahnsen, in fact he even agreed that he would help me refute any other gods, but the Christian God. If Christianity is the one true religion, why are so many people who sincerely believe in it found in prisons, slums and in organized crime? I'm not saying that all people there are Christians. I'm not saying that all people in organized crime are Christians either. But it evidently, if Christianity led to an elevation of moral standards which we haven't gotten into yet about morality, but I'm going to jump the gun here a little bit, Christians would be expected to be highly moral, not less moral. In fact studies of the religious beliefs of prisoners have shown that almost all were devout Christians. The number of atheists is less than one percent; and these statistics were in fact so disturbing to the people who've conducted them that they've stopped collecting them recently. Can't argue with the facts though.

Any system which seems to fail in its application as frequently as Christianity does, is not a very good or practical system for mankind to follow. I don't want to get into a real discussion of Christianity except that Dr. Bahnsen insists that the Christian God and Jesus and the other evidences that come from the Christian God are true and the others are not.

What are we left with after this exercise? Well, we can see that we can't prove the existence of god by any rational or logical process, and Dr. Bahnsen has not offered us any. We have a factual issue here. Again, as I've said, because the proofs fail, it doesn't mean that the existence is disproved, but I think that it certainly is unproved. We can, as I will say in my closing statement, this does not leave us in a bleak and horrible world. There are many many things that the atheist does with his life which make this world a nice place and enable him to get to solving of the problems of this world instead of hoping for pie in the sky which does not seem to be very probable.

[David:

Thank you Dr. Stein. Dr. Bahnsen, may we please have your ten-minute opening statement?]

Dr. Bahnsen

You've heard Dr. Stein refer to the transcendental argument and try to dismiss it simply as wishful thinking. If our debate is going to degenerate to that level then I dismiss everything that he has said as wishful thinking and delusion and why don't we all go home? No, we're here to argue. We're here to argue a point and I'm going to stay just with the argument that has been proposed and see if Dr. Stein has any better answer than just to engage in name-calling.

Dr. Stein proposes an atheist world-view, I propose a Christian theistic world-view. There are other proposals out there that may want their evening to debate as well. I'm maintaining that that proof of the Christian world-view is that the denial of it leads to irrationality. That is, without the Christian God, you cannot prove anything. As one illustration of that, although I want to get into more than that in the second speech, I have referred to the Laws of Logic. An atheist universe cannot account for the laws of logic. Dr. Stein innocently in responding to that, spoke more about scientific law than he did about the laws of logic, and I'm going to come back to that in my rebuttal to ask about his understanding of scientific law. However we still hear him saying that laws of logic are a matter of consensus and are just this way. That is to say "I don't have to prove that the laws of logic exist, or that they are justified, it's just this way." Now friends, how would you like it if I were to have conducted the debate in that fashion this evening. "God exists because it's just that way, you just can't avoid it."

You see, that's not debate, that's not argument and it's not rational. And therefore we have interestingly an illustration in our very debate tonight that atheists cannot sustain a rational approach to this question. What are the laws of logic Dr. Stein, and how are they justified? We still have to answer that question from a materialist standpoint. From a Christian standpoint, we have an answer obviously; they reflect the thinking of God. They are if you will a reflection of the way God thinks and expects us to think. But if you don't take that approach, and want to justify the laws of logic in some a-priori fashion that is apart from experience, sometimes that suggests when he says', "these things are self verified," then we can ask why the laws of logic are universal, unchanging, and invariant truths. Why they in fact apply repeatedly in the realm of contingent experience. Dr. Stein told you, "well we use the laws of logic because we can make accurate predictions using them." Well, as a matter of fact, that doesn't come anywhere close to discussing the vast majority of the laws of logic. That isn't the way they are proven. It's very difficult to conduct experiments on the laws of logic of that sort. They are more conceptual in nature rather than empirical or predicting certain outcome in empirical experience. But even if you want to try to justify all of them in that way, we have to ask, "why is it that they apply repeatedly in a contingent realm of experience?" Why in a world that is random, not subject to personal order as I believe Christian God, why is it that the laws of logic continue to have that success generating feature about them? Why should they be assumed to have anything to do with the realm of history, or why should reasoning about history or science or empirical experience have these laws of thought imposed upon it?

Once again we have to come back to this really unacceptable idea that they are conventional. If they are conventional, then across the rock would be just numerous approaches to scholarship everywhere, different approaches to history, to science and so forth because people just adopt different laws of logic. That just isn't the way scholarship proceeds, and if anybody thinks that is adequate, then they just need to go to the library and read a bit more. The laws of logic are not treated as conventions. To say that they are merely conventions is simply to say "I haven't got an answer."

Now if you want to justify logical truths along a posteriori lines, that is rather than arguing that they are self evident; but rather arguing that there is evidence for them that we can find in experience or by observation (that approach was used by the way, by John Stewart Mill), people will say we gain confidence in the laws of logic through repeated experience, and then that experience is generalized (in some weaker moments I think Dr. Stein was trying to say that).

Of course some of the suggested logical truths it turns out are so complex or so unusual that it's difficult to believe anyone has perceived their instances in experience. But even if we restrict our attention to the other more simple laws of logic, it should be seen that if their truth cannot be decided independently of experience, then they actually become contingent. That is, if people cannot justify the laws of logic independent of experience, then you can only say they apply as far

as I know in the past experience that I've had. They are contingent, they lose their necessity, universality and invariance.

Why should a law of logic, which is verified in one domain of experience by way, be taken as true for un-experienced domains as well? Why should we universalize or generalize about the laws of logic? Especially in a materialistic universe not subject to the control of a personal God?

Now it turns out if the a-priori and the a posteriori lines of justification for logical truths are unconvincing as I'm suggesting briefly they both are, perhaps we could say they are linguistic conventions about certain symbols. Certain philosophers have suggested that. The laws of logic would not be taken as an exhorably dictated, but rather we impose their necessity on our language. They become therefore somewhat like rules of grammar, and as John Dewy pointed out so persuasively earlier in the century, the laws of grammar are just culturally relative. That the laws of logic are like grammar, then the laws of logic are culturally relative too. Why then are not contradictory systems deemed equally rational. If the laws of logic can be made culturally relative, then we can win the debate by simply stipulating a law of logic that says, "Anybody who argues in this way has got a tautology on his hands, and therefore it's true."

Why are arbitrary conventions like the logical truths so useful if they are only conventional? Why are they so useful in dealing with problems in the world of experience? You see, we must ask whether the atheist has a rational basis for his claims. Atheists love to talk about laws of science, laws of logic, they speak as though there are certain moral absolutes for which Christians were just a few minutes ago being indicted because they didn't live up to them. But who is the atheist to tell us about laws? In a materialistic universe, there are no laws, much less laws of morality that anybody has to live up to. When we consider that the lectures and essays that are written by logicians and others are not likely filled with just uninterrupted series of tautologies, we can examine those propositions which logicians are most concerned to convey. For instance, logicians will say things like "a proposition has the opposite truth value from its negation." Now when we look at those kinds of propositions, we have to ask the general question, "what type of evidence do people have for that kind of teaching? Is it the same sort of evidence that's utilized by the biologist, by the mathematician, the lawyer, the mechanic, by your beautician?" What is it that justifies a law of logic? Or even belief that there is such a thing? What is a law of logic after all? There is no agreement on that question. If we had universal agreement perhaps it would be silly to ask the question. It has been suggested to you that it is absurd to ask these sorts of things, although the analogy that was used by Dr. Stein about the absurdity of asking about the cause of the world is not at all relevant because that isn't what my argument is. By the way that's not absurd to ask that question either. It may be unnecessary to ask it if you are an atheist, but it certainly is not absurd to ask it.

But it isn't absurd to ask the question that I'm asking about logic. You see, logicians

are having a great deal of difficulty deciding on the nature of their claims. Anybody who reads the philosophy of logic must be impressed with that today. Some say that the laws of logic are inferences comprised of judgments made up of concepts. Others say that they are arguments comprised of propositions made up of terms. Others say they are proofs, comprised of sentences made up of names. Others would simply say they are electrochemical processes in the brain. In the end, what you think the laws of logic are will determine the nature of evidence that you will suggest for them.

Now in an atheist universe, what are the laws of logic? How can they be universal, abstract, invariant? And how does an atheist justify the use of them? Are they merely conventions imposed on our experience or are they something that reflect absolute truth?

Dr. Stein tonight has wanted to use the laws of logic. I want to suggest to you one more time that Dr. Stein in so doing is borrowing my world-view. He is using the Christian approach to the world, so that there can be such laws of logic, scientific inference or what have you. But then he wants to deny the very foundation of it.

[DAVID: Thank you Dr. Bahnsen. Dr. Stein, you now have an opportunity to cross examine Dr. Bahnsen. This will last 4 minutes.]

Stein:

Is mathematics either atheistic or theistic?

Bahnsen:

The foundations of mathematics? Yes.

Stein:

Which?

Bahnsen:

Theistic.

Stein:

Theistic?

Bahnsen:

Christian theistic.

Stein:

How do you figure that?

Bahnsen:

From the impossibility of the contrary. No other world-view can justify the laws of mathematics or of logic. Because no other world-view can account for universal, invariant, abstract entities such as them.

Stein:

Do you think it's fair since you pointed out that logicians themselves are in great disagreement about the nature of the laws of logic, to ask me to explain them in a way that you would find satisfactory?

Bahnsen:

Yes it's fair.

[Audience laughter]

Stein:

Why?

Bahnsen:

Because this is a rational debate about world-views. You have a naturalistic world-view, I have a super-naturalistic one. I want something even beginning to be an answer how a naturalist can justify a universal abstract entity. I haven't heard one yet.

Stein:

Okay, is logic based upon mathematics?

Bahnsen:

No.

Stein:

Never? Not symbolic logic for example?

Bahnsen:

No.

Stein:

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I would disagree with you.

Bahnsen:

Well if we want to get into Russell and Whitehead and debate those issues, we would be glad to do that, but if you ask a simple question, I can only give you a simple answer.

Stein:

You said that.

Bahnsen:

Assume the opposite. As far as I'm concerned as a Christian, I'm not committed one way or another to that. If you want to say mathematical laws and the permutation laws of math are the same as those used in logic, that's fine. How do you justify either one of them is my question.

Stein:

Well I would ask you a more fundamental question that as you explained that the laws of logic reflect the thinking of God. Number one, how do you know this? Number two, what does it mean?

Bahnsen:

What question? What difficulty I'm having understanding "what does it mean?"

Stein:

I don't know how you are privy to the thinking of God.

Bahnsen:

He revealed himself through the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Stein:

And that explains the logic?

Bahnsen:

That explains why there are universal standards of reasoning, yes.

Stein:

That doesn't explain'em to me. Could you explain'em again?

Bahnsen:

Yeah, we have bible studies from time to time, where those things can be delved into.

[Audience laughter]

Stein:

You mean you spend some time rationalizing the irreconcilable, or reconciling the irreconcilable?

Bahnsen:

That's just, I mean [interrupted]

[Stein interrupting]

Stein:

Like the two accounts in Genesis, the two

[Bahnsen interrupting]

Bahnsen:

This is a cross-examination. If you have something other than a rhetorical question I'll try to answer it.

Stein:

Well it's not intended as a rhetorical question, it's intended as a

[Bahnsen interrupting]

Bahnsen:

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The previous one was rhetorical only.

Stein:

No, it was intended to show that your last statement was disingenuous, and, and uh ... [David interrupts]

[DAVID: Please limit your comments to questions]

Stein:

Yes, okay. Saying that logic reflects the thinking of God is to make a non-statement. How is that an answer to anything that's relevant in this discussion?

Bahnsen:

It answers the general metaphysical issue of how there can be universal invariant abstract entities in a particular person's world-view. If you want to know the precise relationship, for instance, if somebody wants to know how did God make a cow, okay? The statement that God made the cow has meaning apart from my being able to explain the mechanics of God making a cow. Likewise, the statement that the laws of logic are intelligible within a Christian theistic universe, has meaning because there are things which are in fact, spiritual, immaterial and have a universal quality such as God's thinking, and those standards that he imposes on people. And so again, we can at least metaphysically make sense of invariant abstract entities in one universe, whereas we can't make sense of them at all in the other.

We're not asking for the mechanics here, or anything precise such as resolving the relationship of logic to math and that sort of thing. I'm simply asking a more general question: if you're an atheist, how is it that... how in the atheist universe is it possible to have an abstract universal law?

[DAVID: Thank you Dr. Stein. Dr. Bahnsen, you now have a 4 minute opportunity to cross examine Dr. Stein.

Bahnsen:

Okay Dr. Stein; you made reference to David Hume and his rejection of miracles. Have you also read David Hume and his discussion of induction or more popularly, the uniformity of nature?

Stein:

Along time ago. I can't recall exactly what he said. But I have read David Hume.

Bahnsen:

All right. Were you convinced along time ago that you had an answer to Hume's skepticism about induction?

Stein:

Can't answer that question honestly. I don't remember what... this is at least 15 years ago that I read this.

Bahnsen:

Scientific Laws were [correcting himself] the validity of Scientific Laws were undermined by Hume when he contended that we have no rational basis for expecting the future to be like the past. Or if you will, for there to be types of events so that one event happening can be understood as a type of event so where it's seen happening somewhere else, the same consequence can be expected from similar causation. Hume said we have no rational basis for that... [David interrupts].

[DAVID: Excuse me Dr. Bahnsen...could we please have a question please, for Dr. Stein?]

Bahnsen:

Yeah, I'm trying to set up a question.

Hume suggested that there was no rational basis for expecting the future to be like the past, in which case science is based simply on convention, or if you will, habits of thought.

Do you agree with Hume?

Stein:

Not on this issue I don't.

Bahnsen:

Do you now have an answer for Hume?

Stein:

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I think he was wrong about that one thing, but he was also right about a lot of other things. Nobody is perfect.

Bahnsen:

What is the basis for the uniformity of nature?

Stein:

I went through this, but I'll be glad to reiterate it.

Bahnsen:

Okay.

Stein:

The uniformity of nature comes from the fact that matter has certain properties which it regularly exhibits. It's part of the nature of matter: Electrons, oppositely charged things attract, the same charges repel. There are certain valences that can fill up the shell of an atom, and that is as far as it can combine...

Bahnsen:

Do all electrons repel each other?

Stein:

If they are within a certain distance of each other, yes.

Bahnsen:

Have you, um... tested all electrons?

Stein:

All electrons that have ever been tested repel each other. I have not tested all.

Bahnsen:

Have you read all the tests on electrons?

Stein:

Me personally or can I go on the witness of experts?

Bahnsen:

Have you read all of the witnesses about electrons?

Stein:

All it takes is one witness to say no and it would be on the front pages of every physics journal, and there are none so therefore I would say yes in effect; by default.

Bahnsen:

Well, physicists have their presuppositions by which they exclude contrary evidence too; but in other words, you haven't experienced all electrons but you would generalize that all electrons under certain conditions repel each other?

Stein:

Just statistically, on the basis of past observation.

Bahnsen:

And we don't know that it's gonna be that way ten minutes after this debate then?

Stein:

No, but we see no evidence that things have switched around either.

Bahnsen:

Do you accept the Zen Buddhist logic that allows for cones, the different kind of logic that you referred to, used by Zen Buddhists?

Stein:

I used the word extra logical, and I think that's the right word. It is outside of the normal kinds of logic. And it is not necessarily a different kind of logic but it's just non-logical.

Bahnsen:

Okay.

Stein:

But accepted in place of logic.

Bahnsen:

Is it also... are extra logical things absurd?

Stein:

It may seem that way to us, but no, I would say they are not absurd in the grand scheme of things.

Bahnsen:

Can extra logical things be true? Can claims about extra logical matters be true?

Stein:

That's an impossible question to answer because if we are using logic to answer whether something is true or not, then extra logical things are not subject to the analysis given by logic.

Bahnsen:

All right. So are claims about extra logical entities allowed or disallowed in your world-view?

Stein:

In my world-view? That depends on what we are talking about. If we are talking about things like Zen Buddhists, and they confine themselves to these philosophical speculations there then yes. If we are talking about science, no.

Bahnsen:

Sounds very arbitrary.

END OF TAPE 1.

[The Voice: For the continuation of this presentation, please go to the next cassette.]

BEGIN TAPE 2: Side 1

[David: Thank you. We will now move to rebuttals. Dr. Stein, 6 minute rebuttal please.]

Stein:

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I would first like to make one little factual rebuttal about a statement that, which was slipped by in the first speech of Dr. Bahnsen, but that atheists caused the French Revolution, this is a false statement. The leader of the French Revolution, the most important person was Ropes Pierre, who was a Christian, so; I mean there may have been some atheists there but that doesn't mean that they caused the French Revolution. There are atheists everywhere.

Okay, now. We've spent a lot of time talking about logic, and yet I'd like to know why, and this is not a question that is addressed right now for an answer, but just as a put out for future response. Why has Dr. Bahnsen stressed the laws of logic so much when he has refused to apply them to the existence of god? I'm not so sure that it's even falsifiable, so therefore it isn't even a statement that can be tested in any way. He has stressed the laws of logic because he knows that there is no explanation for the laws of logic that philosophers agree upon. This is a trap in effect. I may have fallen into it; if so, fine. The point is it's not relevant to his position. To say that he doesn't have an answer to the laws of logic either, to say that they reflect the thinking of a god is to make a non-statement. First of all, he doesn't know what the thinking of a god is. All he knows is what has been said by men to be what they thought the thinking of a god might have been many, many years ago (maybe if we keep granting all of these possible things in his favor).

It's like saying, as I said before that god created the universe. Unless you explain how he created it, you have not made a statement that has any intrinsic value to it. I mean, you may have made a part of a statement, but I want to hear the other half. What is there in the method that god used that we can learn something from? I mean, why did god do it if you want to be a little bit more nasty. It's not valid to ask science why something happens. We can ask how it happens, but science doesn't try to answer the question why. But theologians do ask the question why, and try an answer it. I have not heard an answer as to why god did anything that he supposedly did, nor have I heard how god did it. These are the two most essential, meaningful answers to asking a question. If we don't supply those, we have ducked the whole center of the issue and just given you another mumbling, which doesn't go anywhere. I'll give you an example.

If I said "How did that car that's parked in the parking lot, that red car right in front, how did it get here?" And you say, "General Motors made it." That does not explain how the car got here. Now if you want to go and explain that: in Detroit, a hundred men worked a certain number of hours to make this car out of steel that they got from Youngstown Ohio from the smelting plant, and then maybe we're getting somewhere as to how that car got here. I don't mean how it got onto Irvine campus; I mean how did it get here in existence?

So until we have that kind of an answer, we have not said anything. To say that General motors made it; not answering the question of how that car got here. Neither is

there an answer to say that God made it. And I would ask Dr. Bahnsen to explain if he thinks he knows the answer, which none of these philosophers know about the laws of logic, to put his answer in some kind of meaningful language. To say that the laws of logic reflect the thinking of god is to make a non-meaningful statement. And not just to me; to anyone!

I want to know whether god thinks rationally all the time, whether he can be irrational; how do we know when he is being irrational? Is it possible for him to be irrational? I want to know what kind of logic god uses. Does he use the kind of logic that we can demonstrate, that we can test in the same way that we use the logic that we are talking about in science? If so, should it be impossible for god to contradict himself in anyway? Can he make a stone so big he can't lift it? Is that a logical impossibility? Is god limited by that kind of a thing? Can god make a square circle? I mean these are little logical games that we play that don't really ask important questions, but they have a reflection on some kind of a problem that he is having with his concept of god. I mean if god can do anything, if he is omnipotent, omniscient and omni benevolent, can he do those two things I said, or asked? And if he does, what kind of logic is he using? The logic of self contradiction?

Until we have some answers to these questions, I don't think we've got very much meaningful from Dr. Bahnsen in the first place (about any issue). He certainly hasn't applied logic to the proofs for the existence of god that have been offered by philosophers.

[David: Thank you Dr. Stein. Dr. Bahnsen, you now have 6 minutes allocated for your rebuttal.]

Bahnsen:

Dr. Stein has demonstrated it seems to me repeatedly in the course of tonight's debate, the claim that was made very early on in my original statement, and that' that the atheist world-view cannot give an account of those things which are necessary for rational discourse in science. When asked about Hume and the skepticism that he generated about induction or the uniformity of nature, we don't hear an answer coming forth. I don't think there will be an answer coming forth from the atheist world-view. However, Dr. Stein who is an atheist has said, and I think this is close to a quote, "If there were no uniformity, science would be impossible." Exactly Dr. Stein! If there were no uniformity, science would be impossible. So on what basis in an atheist universe is science possible, since in an atheist universe, there's no basis for assuming that there is going to be uniformity.

For someone to say, "Well, it's been that way in all the cases in the past that we know of, and therefore very probably it's going to be that way in the future," is to assume (because you are using probability) that the future is going to be like the past. That is to say, it is to beg the very question that is being asked you.

Now of course if you don't like the tough philosophical questions that are asked you about the nature of the laws of logic, how they are justified, the nature of natural law, how it is justified and so forth, and just dismiss it as absurd questions or "non-questions," that no one understands and does not have meaning, seems to me is just to try to give medicine to a dead man. You see, it's to say, "I'm not going to reason about that because I haven't got an answer to it, and that's just uncomfortable."

But you see, these are philosophical question which not just Christian by the way but all philosophers have had to ask and face throughout the centuries. Dr. Stein doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of giving us an answer how an atheist world-view can account for laws. Laws of science, laws of logic, laws of morality. And yet he does tell us, without them, science would be impossible.

As for the transcendental argument not being logical; Um, I mean you can claim that, but I have yet to see Dr. Stein show any self contradiction or any violation of the laws of logic in it. And of course if he were, I would immediately ask him if that law of logic is one of the things that we are necessarily to live according to. Do we reason by this law, or is it just a convention? Should I say, "well that's your convention, but it's not mine!" Or is that law of logic universal and invariant and something that must be followed if we're going to arrive at truth? If it is, then I'm going to ask him how it's possible to have such a thing in his universe. How he can justify it at all. But he hasn't shown any contradiction; he's simply again, called it illogical.

Whether it's falsifiable or not, I mean even asking that question I think shows that Dr. Stein is not really aware of the philosophical nature of the question in the debate before us. No, transcendentals are not falsifiable. That's right. But they are very meaningful, and the very sorts of things that philosophers deal with all the time. If you look at Kant, or Aristotle, or other philosophers, you'll see that they deal with the preconditions of experience. And since they are the preconditions of experience, they are not falsifiable and yet they are meaningful.

He says that I do not have an answer to these questions either. Well I certainly do. It's just that he doesn't like the answer. The answer is that God created the world, and this world reflects the uniformity that he imposes on it by his governing, and our thinking is to reflect the same consistency or logical coherence that is in God's thinking. How do we learn about those things? He revealed himself to us. Again, these are simple answers and the sorts of things that Sunday school children learn. But you know I have yet to find any reason not to believe them.

For Dr. Stein to say, "Well, these aren't answers!" doesn't convince me at all. He says they're not gonna be answers unless I include how it took place; what is God's method and why did he do it? Well, I don't accept those standards. I don't accept that that's a requirement for an explanation at all. And he hasn't given us any good reason except that he's not gonna be satisfied or it's unhelpful to him. He says it's a non-meaningful statement to say that the laws of logic reflect the thinking of God. He wants to know things like: can God be irrational?

Well, if he would ask those questions in cross examination, I'd answer them. No, God cannot be irrational. Rationality is measured by the standard of His thinking and His revelation.

The atheist world-view cannot account for the laws of logic; cannot account for any universal or abstract entities for that matter; cannot account for the uniformity of nature and therefore cannot account for the successes of science. Nor can the atheist universe give us universal and absolute laws of morality. So on three of the most important issues philosophically, that men must face; logic, science and morality, the atheist universe is completely at odds with those things.

Well, we have one minute left here. I want to answer very quickly those few things that Dr. Stein brought up in his second presentation so that I might rebut them. He wants to know about the problem of evil. My answer to the problem of evil is this: There is no problem of evil in an atheist universe because there is no evil in an atheist universe. Since there's no god, there's no absolute moral standard of good by which to measure evil in an atheist universe. You only have that in a theistic universe, and therefore the very posing of the problem presupposes my world-view, rather than his own. God has a good reason for the evil that he plans or allows.

[David: Thank you Dr. Bahnsen. We have now concluded segment number two of this evening's debate, and we will move very quickly into segment number three, which is closing statement. Dr. Stein has the first closing statement which will be of a ten minute duration.]

Dr. Stein:

Dr. Bahnsen in his last response and indeed throughout his entire talk has made a number of claims about what is possible in an atheist universe, and what is not possible in an atheist universe. All I can say is that he has a very strange conception of an atheist universe, and perhaps of the universe in general.

First of all, evil in an atheist universe. Yes, indeed there can be evil in an atheist universe. Evil is by definition in an atheist universe that which decreases the happiness of people. The most unhappiness of people. In other words, if we have two things that we want to make a comparative evil statement: which is more evil than another. The thing which is more evil which causes more people to be unhappy. Now how do we know this? Well, we don't know it. It is a consensus, just like morality in general is a consensus. It's a consensus reinforced by the teachings of society through its parents to children, teachers to students, the media, literature, the bible. All of these things reinforce morality through teaching and the socialization process. And also we pass laws to punish people that violate some of the more blatant cases that we have said are no's.

So the idea that there is no evil in an atheist universe is utter hogwash. But our evil is at least a rational determinant thing. We don't say, "well did god make this evil?", and then we have to go flipping through the bible to see if it was covered at all. You know, there is a hundred volumes of commentary, at least a hundred volumes more, called the Talbot which is the Jews interpretation of all the places that the Old Testament didn't give them any guidance on for ethical or moral issues. So I mean these things are not clearly spelled out in the bible. We have no guidance on a lot of things as to what's evil. Is ovum transplant evil? I mean you won't find that in your bible. You've got to go and look at the issues. And you do an analysis just the way any rational philosopher would do it, or et, ethic, e e ethi [whistles].. what do call that person? Ethicist.. couldn't think of the word.

So I mean we have standards by which we determine evil and good and in an atheistic world, the atheistic world-view. I think I have demonstrated that the regularity of matter which is an inherent property of matter explains that the way we are able to make laws which are generalizations in the field of science.

First of all, many many scientists are atheists. It has been shown by studies over and over again. So the claim as Dr. Bahnsen's claims to claim that science doesn't give us an atheistic world-view that is in conformity with, I mean that science is not in conformity with an atheistic world-view is utter nonsense. Science is in itself not in conformity with an atheistic world-view is utter nonsense. Science is in itself atheistic. It doesn't use God to explain things, and it understands that matter behaves in a regular and therefore predictable way. And that is the way in which scientific research is done.

The same with logic. Logic is a consensus. I think it has a mathematical and linguistic basis. It has some conformity to the reality of the world. I don't know how many times we have to repeat that for it to get through to Dr. Bahnsen, but it doesn't seem to be. And he seems to specialize in what we call the "thinking makes it so, school of logic."

If you want to call it that. Because he says something is so, because he knows what god's thinking was, therefore it is so. The omniscient Dr. Bahnsen has answered.

Well that doesn't answer anything if we are going to apply the tests of reason to what he says. His statements are not only irrational, they are unreasonable. The idea that the future is gonna be like the past, it's a statistical probability statement. We have never seen a future, today is the future from yesterday. And yesterday, what is happening today is the future. We have not seen anything in that time period that we have observed which is several hundred years, to show that the regularity of matter and its behavior is gonna change. If it changes, scientific experiments will go haywire and we'll know it right off the bat, and then we'll have to revise a lot of things. I think the chances of that happening are pretty small.

Now, let me just finish by saying that atheism is not a bleak and negative concept. It frees man, it sweeps away the theological debris that has prevented man from taking action to correct the problems of this world. We wanna to feed the hungry, we wanna to educate the illiterate, we wanna clothe the naked, we wanna raise the standard of living, we wanna spread reason and thinking and progress and science. These are all things which are and in of themselves atheistic. We don't do them because god tells us to do them. We do them because they are right, they need to be done in this world. And if we do them because they are right and we make people happy, we will be made happy ourselves by making other people happy. It's a very positive world outlook, which is something I don't think Dr. Bahnsen has even mentioned, but it is certainly the other side of the coin. I mean, what happens when you wipe away the god concept. Are you left with nothing? No, you're left with responsibility that you have to take on yourself. You're responsible for your actions, and also you get the credit for the things that you do. And I would rather have a realistic world-view, that gives up a few things that would be nice to have but just don't happen to be true. And I would rather operate on a world-view like that than I would on making a wish fulfillment of things that just are not so.

[David: thank you Dr. Stein. Dr. Bahnsen, your ten minute closing statement please.]

Dr. Bahnsen.

I would like to begin my closing statement by thanking the debate team for inviting both Dr. Stein and myself here for this interesting evening of interchange, and thank you all for giving up an evening to discuss what I consider a very important question. And I thank Dr. Stein for coming and for his graciousness toward me.

As far as my rebuttal, or excuse, my close closing statement, I need to deal I think first of all, perhaps even the entire time, analyzing this remark that my statements have been

tonight irrational. Well, perhaps they have, but you see, saying so doesn't make it so. That's something we've just heard as well. And so if my statements have been irrational, then we're going to need some standards of reasoning by which these statements have been shown to be irrational.

Dr. Stein has yet to explain to us in even the broadest, simplest Sunday school child manner, that I told you about laws of logic, laws of science, and laws of morality. He hasn't even begun to scratch the surface to tell us how in his world-view, there can be laws of any sort. And if there can't be laws or standards in his world-view, then he can't worry about my irrationality (my alleged irrationality).

The transcendental argument for the existence of God has not been answered by Dr. Stein. It has been evaded, it's been made fun of, but it hasn't been answered. And that's what we're here for; rational interchange. The transcendental argument says the proof of the Christian God is that without Him, you can't prove anything. Notice, the argument does not say that atheists don't prove things. The argument doesn't say that atheists don't use logic, science or laws of morality. In fact they do. The argument is that their world-view cannot account for what they are doing. Their world-view is not consistent with what they are doing. In their world-view, there are no laws, there are no abstract entities, there are no universals, there are no prescriptions. There is just the material universe, naturalistically explained and the way things happen to be. That's not law like or universal and therefore their world-view doesn't account for logic, science or morality.

But atheists of course use logic, science and morality. And in so doing, atheists give continual evidence of the fact that in their heart of hearts, they aren't atheist. In their heart of hearts, they know the god I'm talking about. This God made them, this God reveals himself continually to them through the natural order, through their conscience and through out their very use of reason. They know this God and they suppress the truth about him. One of the ways we see that they suppress the truth about him is because they do continue to use the laws of logic, science, and morality though their world-view cannot account for them.

Dr. Stein has said the laws of logic are merely conventional. If so, then on convention he wins tonight's debate; on convention I win tonight's debate; and if you're satisfied with that, you didn't need to come in the first place. You expected the laws of logic to be applied as universal standards of rationality. Rationality is not possible in a universe that just consigns them to convention.

Dr. Stein said the laws of science are law-like because of the inherent character of matter. But Dr. Stein doesn't know the inherent character of matter. Now if he were God, he might reveal that to us as I think God has revealed certain things to us about the operation of the universe. But he's not God; he doesn't even believe that there is a

god. Since he hasn't experienced all the instances of matter and all of the electron reactions, all of the other things scientists look at, since he hasn't experienced all of those, he doesn't know that those things are universal. He doesn't know that that the future is going to be like the past.

When he says, "Well it always has been in the past, and boy if it changes tomorrow won't that make the front pages!" that's not an answer. You see what we're asking? What justifies your proceeding on the expectations that the future is like the past. To say, "well it's always been that way in the past" is just to beg the question. We want to know on what basis your world-view allows for the uniformity of nature, and laws of science.

Thirdly, we've spoken of laws of morality tonight. He says they have laws of morality. The utilitarian standard of what brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Well, that doesn't justify utilitarianism to announce it. He's announced that it's the standard. Well why in an atheist universe should we live by that standard. Marquis De Sad enjoyed torturing women. Now why should he give up torturing women so that he might bring greater happiness to those women he's torturing? Now I've got an answer for that; it's not one that Dr. Stein lies, and maybe some of you up there don't like it, but at least I can begin philosophically to deal with that. I have an answer. A universal absolute about morality. Dr. Stein does not. He simply has an announced stipulated standard. And if morality can be stipulated, then of course Marquis De Sad can stipulate his own, even if Dr. Stein has stipulated his own.

Why should he feed the poor? He says they want to do that. I grant that. My argument tonight has never been that atheists are the lousiest people in the world. That's not the point. Some Christians can be pretty lousy too. But why is it that I call atheists or Christians lousy when they act in the ways we are thinking of. Because I have absolute standards of morality to judge, Dr. Stein does not. And therefore once again, from the transcendental standpoint, the atheistic world-view cannot account for this debate tonight. Because this debate tonight has assumed that we're going to use the laws of logic as standards of reasoning. Or else we're irrational. That we're going to use laws of science, we're going to be intelligent men that way. We're going to assume induction and causation and all those things that scientists do, and it's assumed moral stance. And we're not going to be dishonest and try to lie or just try to deceive you.

I mean if there aren't laws of morality, I can just take out a gun right now and say "Okay Dr. Stein, make my day. Is there a god or not?" You see if he argues "oh no! You can't murder me because there are laws of morality", then of course he's made my day because I win the debate. That shows that the atheist universe is not correct. But if he says "Oh no, there are no absolute standards; it's all by convention and stipulation" and that sort of thing, then I just pull the trigger and it's all over and I win the debate anyway.

[audience pause, then laughter and applause.]

Would you expect me to win the debate in that fashion? Absolutely not. You came here expecting rational interchange. I don't think we've heard much from Dr. Stein. I've asked him repeatedly, it's very simple. I don't want a lot of details, just begin to scratch the surface. How in a materialistic, naturalistic outlook on life, man in his place in the world, can you account for laws of logic, laws of science, and laws of morality. The atheist world-view cannot do it and therefore I feel justified in concluding as I did in my opening presentation this evening, by saying that the proof of the Christian God is the impossibility of the contrary. Without the Christian world-view, this debate wouldn't make sense.

The bible tells us, "the fool has said in his heart, there is no god". Don't misunderstand that. When the bible uses the term fool, it's not engaging in name calling. It's trying to describe somebody who is dense in the sense that they will not use his reason as God has given it. Somebody who is rebellious, who is hard-hearted. It's the fool who says in his heart there is no god. Paul tells us in first Corinthians, the first chapter, that God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. He calls rhetorically, "where is the wise? Where is the disputer or debater of this age? Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

In a sense, I think what Paul is telling us, if I can amplify and read between the lines, is the whole history of philosophy is an argument for the existence of God. The whole history of philosophy is an argument for the existence of God because of the impossibility of the contrary.

Someone who wants to say contrary to what the bible says about God, let him stand up and answer these questions. Let him show that in his heart he may say there is no God, but he can't live that way. He can't reason that way.

In Romans, the first chapter, Paul says God is making himself known continually to all men, and persuasively so that men do not have an excuse for the rejection of the existence of the Christian God. That isn't to say that all men confess this God. Not all will own up to him as their heavenly father. Not all will submit to him. Some continue to rebel. Some continue to devise their fools' errors and rationalizations for why they don't have to believe in Him. That's what the bible teaches. I didn't come here and make this up. I didn't come here tonight to say well, if you don't agree, you see you're just being rebellious. That's what the bible says.

What I want you to do tonight, is to go home and to consider whether there isn't something to that. Why is it that some people continue to use laws of logic, laws of morality, laws of science and yet they have a world-view that just clashes with that, and they just won't do anything to resolve contradiction.

Dr. Stein tonight made reference to my doctoral dissertation on self-deception. He wondered how relevant it might be. Well, it's very relevant. It's very relevant because what I do in that doctoral dissertation is to show that there are some people who know the truth, and yet work very hard to convince themselves that it's not true. Now of course atheists think that's what Christians are doing, I recognize that, and we'd have to argue what the evidence for and against self deception is. All I want to leave with you tonight is the fact that self deception is a real phenomenon. It does happen to people. People who know the truth and yet work very hard to rationalize the evidence, convince themselves (as Paul says "Suppress the truth in unrighteousness"), convince themselves that there is no God.

Well, you can choose tonight between the Christian world-view, the atheist world-view. We haven't touched all of the issues you may want to look into. But in broad strokes, we have touched on a very important issue. If you're going to be a rational man, a moral man, a man of science. Can you do so in atheist universe? I say you can't.

[DAVID: Thank you Dr. Bahnsen. To continue the conversion that has already begun, not a religious conversion, but the conversion to answer question. What we are going to do now is I'm going to reiterate what I stated at the beginning. You have a sheet of paper included in your evening program. If you have a question for either Dr. Bahnsen or Dr. Stein, I would ask that you would take that paper out, write your question quickly. They are being rapidly collected by speech and debate team members. Obviously we cannot answer every single question that's going to be posed here this evening. They will be sorted through by our question panelists that we have here this evening. They will be read by me at the podium. The person to whom the question is directed will have an opportunity to respond for two minutes. His opponent will have an opportunity to respond for one minute.]

BEGIN SIDE 2 of Tape Two

[DAVID: Then first question in keeping with our format this evening will be directed to Dr. Bahnsen. Dr. Bahnsen, the question reads:

Question 1 [Addressed To Dr. Bahnsen]:

What solid evidence do you have to maintain that the Christian faith is the only true religion with a god? There are religions far older, and more or just as wide spread which millions of people consider valid.

Dr. Bahnsen

That's a very good and relevant question. I wanna say two things just by way of preface. One, that isn't what the subject of our debate was tonight, however that can't just be taken for granted. I mean it's worthy of a debate, it's just that we couldn't do everything in one debate.

Secondly, you might be interested to know that in my original opening statement, I had a long paragraph dealing with that very question so that it wouldn't be thought that I was just flying over it arbitrarily in dealing with that matter. But when I read it back to myself and timed myself, it just turned out I had to cut a number of things out and so I cut that down.

What I did say, however, was that if I can find it here), that I have not found the non-Christian religions to be philosophically defensible, each of them being either internally incoherent or undermining human reason and experience. Unless it will violate your debate format, I will give just a couple of illustrations. Obviously I'm not going to cover all of them.

For instance, Hinduism assumes that God, or Brahman is the impersonal and universal soul of the unchanging one of which all things are part (for instance). And because of that particular outlook, Hinduism says that everything in terms of my normal experience of the world and thinking is Maya, or illusion. Because everything in experience and thinking presupposes distinctions. But that is contrary to the most fundamental metaphysical fact, and that's that there are no distinctions, all is one. So basically, Hinduism tells me that all my thinking, all of my reasoning is illusion. In so doing, it undermines reason.

You can take religions such as Shintoism, it's view of Commi, the forces that permeate the universe, or Taoism, the ordering force of the universe. And they are impersonal forces, and as such are even less than human beings because they don't have volition or intelligence.

[Dr. Bahnsen to David: Is that in indication that I should stop?]

[DAVID: Yeah, thank you. Let me just re-explain the format. We will allow the person to whom the question is directed to have a one minute response, and his opponent will have a one minute opportunity to rebut. Dr. Stein, your one minute rebuttal please.

Dr. Stein.

Well, Dr. Bahnsen has criticized Hinduism. I would make the case that Hinduism is no more irrational than Christianity is. Nor do I think that it is any more irrational than Islam is. Nor is it any more irrational than almost any other religion that you wanna name. With one exception; I'd say Buddhism is more rational than either Christianity or Hinduism. That doesn't mean that I accept Buddhism either, but I just think it's more rational. At least it makes some psychological sense, if nothing else.

[DAVID: Thank you Dr. Stein. The next question will be directed to you Dr. Stein. And the question reads as follows.]

Question 2 [Addressed To Dr. Stein]:

According to your definition and basis for evil, why was Hitler's Germany wrong. Or was it? Note, Jews and others were defined as non-persons, so their happiness doesn't really count.

Dr. Stein:

Well, Germany is part of the Western, European tradition. It's not deepest Africa or some place on Mars. They have the same Judeo- Christian background, and basically the same connection with the rest of the developed world. So therefore, the standards of morality that have been worked out as consensus' of that society apply to them too. They can't arbitrarily (Hitler can't arbitrarily) say, "well, I'm not going by the consensus' that genocide is evil and wrong, I'm just gonna change it and make it right." He has not the prerogative to do that. Neither does the German society as a whole. Cause it is still part of a larger society which you might call Western society. So even though morality is a consensus, it's not a consensus of one person or two people, it's a consensus of entire civilizations. And he cannot just arbitrarily do that, so what he did was evil and wrong.

[DAVID: Okay, Dr. Bahnsen, your one minute rebuttal please]:

Dr. Bahnsen [One minute rebuttal of Question #2]:

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Dr. Stein continues to beg the most important questions that are brought up. He tells us that Hitler's German was wrong because Hitler, or the German people didn't have the right to break out of the consensus of western civilization. Why not? Why is there any moral obligation upon Hitler or the German people to live up to the past tradition of western morality. In an atheist universe, there's no answer to that question. He gives the answer, but it is totally arbitrary.

[DAVID: Our next set of question lease, from the panelists. Our next question is directed towards you Dr. Bahnsen. If I could read it for just a second.]

Question 3

Why is there pain and evil in the world?

Dr. Bahnsen:

There are a number of answers that could be given to a question "why is something the way that it is." One relevant one, but not the most ultimate answer would be that there is pain and evil in this world because men have decided to rebel against God their maker, and that's one of the consequences of rebelling against God. Now somebody could say, well that's not fair. God shouldn't punish people for rebelling against him. Well, I mean if there is a God, as I have maintained, and if he is the Christian God as revealed in the scriptures, it won't do any good to complain about that. That's the way God governs mankind. And if you think you know better than God about morality, then you're in Job's position. You wanna have an interview with God, and you'll end up like Job. You'll put your hand over your mouth and you'll say, "I've spoken too soon. I can't contend with the almighty."

Okay, son one answer is that God has decided that that would be the outcome if people decided to rebel against him. If they want to be tier own little gods, if they want to make their own rules of morality and live by them, then the consequences are going to be such and such. And that includes pain for animals, and the created order because in so doing man represented all of creation. Even as the second man Jesus Christ represents all of creation in the new heavens and the new earth, which I believe based on faith in the scriptures, is yet to come. In that new heavens and new earth there will be a redeemed earth, where pain and suffering will be removed.

Why is there evil ultimately? The answer is obviously because God has planned it. I believe that he governs everything that's in history. Does that mean that he caused it? No, I don't believe he compelled Adam to fall into sin.

[DAVID: Dr. Stein, your one minute rebuttal please.]

Dr. Stein:

Well, Dr. Bahnsen has given us another one of his famous non-answers. Basically what he said is, anything God does is what he does. It's a tautology. It doesn't say anything. Now how can someone rebel against an omnipotent god? This is a logical self contradiction. If god is omnipotent, he has the power to prevent man from rebelling against him. And assuming he doesn't like rebellion, which I think Dr. Bahnsen would concede, because man evidently gonna be punished for this in some way, for his rebellion, eventually (the day of judgment). If God had the power to prevent him from rebelling, then he ought to prevent him from rebelling. And just to say that Dog does what h does is not to give us an answer at all.

[David: Thank you. The next question is directed to you Dr. Stein. It reads]

Question 4

If you haven't examined all the evidence, then is it not true that you are really an agnostic? Isn't it true that you are open to the fact that God may exist?

Dr. Stein:

Well, agnostic is a word that's very badly used. Thomas Huxley, who invented the word, used it in an entirely different way from the way we use it today. And in fact the way we use it today is entirely different from the way Herbert Spencer used it. I would define an agnostic as a sub-type of atheist.

An atheist is someone who does not believe in a god. A theist is someone who does

believe in god. There is no middle ground. You either do or you don't. Now an agnostic does not believe in a god either, because of one of two things. Either he thinks it is impossible ever to know whether there is one or not (that's the Spencerian, Herbert Spencer type agnostic that thinks there are unknowables), or secondly because he or she has never examined the evidence that exists, and therefore has not made up his or her mind. But still at this point, he does not believe in a god. Now if he examined the evidence and found it convincing, then he would move into the theist camp.

So, no, I am not an agnostic, because I do think that these questions are solvable. That not, maybe we don't know the answers now, but I think we can eventually know the answer. So I'm not a Spencerian agnostic. And I have examined the thing, so I'm not the other kind of agnostic, whatever that kind is called. It doesn't have a name for it.

[DAVID: Dr. Bahnsen, your one minute rebuttal please.]

Dr. Bahnsen [rebuttal to Question 4]

It's interesting that the word agnostic is being used as a sub-class of atheist. I would agree with that but for reasons different than have been suggested. It's also interesting that atheist is being redefined. Earlier in the debate, Dr. Stein said an atheist is one who finds the theistic proofs inadequate. I said no, traditionally an atheist is one that denies the existence of God or doesn't believe in the existence of God. Now, he's using the traditional definition to answer the question.

One more interesting comment about that, and then I'll let it go. He says, we do believe there are answers to these problems, we have yet to find them. You see, that's the problem; atheists live by faith.

[DAVID: Okay, the final set of questions are here before me. Dr. Bahnsen. Question for you reads.]

Question 5

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Why is it necessary for the abstract universal laws to be decided from the transcendental nature of God, or derived from the transcendental of God. Why not assume the transcendental nature of logic?

Dr. Bahnsen

Somebody who wrote the question is good in that you've studied some of these philosophical issues. The answer may not be meaningful to everybody in the audience, but very briefly, is that I do believe in the transcendental nature of the laws of logic. However the laws of logic do not justify themselves. Just because they are transcendental, that isn't a precondition of intelligibility. I mean, why isn't it just sound and fury signifying nothing? That's a possibility too.

So the laws of logic do have a transcendental necessity about them, but it seems to me you need to have a world-view in which the laws of logic are meaningful. Especially when you consider such a possible antinomies as the laws of logic being universal, categorizing things in that way. And yet, we have novelties in our experience. Universal, categorizing things in that way. and yet we have novelties in our experience.

I mean, the world of empirical observation isn't set rigidly by uniformity and by sameness as it were. There isn't a continuity in experience in that way, as there is a necessary continuity in the laws of logic. How can the laws of logic then be utilized when it comes to matters of personal experience in the world? We have a contingent changing world, and unchanging invariant laws of logic. How can these two be brought together? You need a world-view in which that transcendental necessity of logic can be made sense of in terms of my human experience. And I believe that Christianity provides that, and I just can't find any other one that competes with it that way.

[DAVID: And Dr. Stein, your one minute rebuttal.]

Dr. Stein

I do not have a rebuttal to that particular answer. I don't have a rebuttal to the last one, to his last rebuttal if I may make that very briefly.

[David talks with Dr. Bahnsen in the background) is it okay with you? Then talking to Dr. Stein: "okay, well, can you keep your limits to the questions that are before us?"]

Dr. Stein

All right, then I have no response.

Dr. Bahnsen [cutting in]

May I ask David; is this my last response? Have I given it?

[DAVID: No, we have one more question for Dr. Stein.]

Dr. Bahnsen

I'm sorry. If the same rule be applied so that I can respond the, I would be happy to. It thought we were ending the debate.

Dr. Stein

Certainly.

Dr. Bahnsen

Go ahead.

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Dr. Stein

Dr. Bahnsen's comment that atheists believe things on faith is a false statement. We have confidence based on experience. Confidence that things happen in a certain way, that we have learned a lot of things about the world, and therefore we will continue to learn a lot more about the world. Things that we do not know now, we will eventually have answers to. That's not faith, that's confidence based on experience. So I think he's misusing the word faith.

[DAVID: Okay. Dr. Stein, the final question is directed to you. It reads:]

Question 6

You have said that there has been no adequate evidence put forth for God's existence. What for you personally would constitute adequate evidence for God's existence?

Dr. Stein

Well it's very simple. I could give you two examples. If that podium suddenly rose into the air five feet, stayed there for a minute, and then dropped right down again, I would say that that was evidence of a supernatural because it would violate everything we knew about the laws of physics and chemistry. Assuming that there were/wasn't an engine under there or a wire attached to it. I mean you can make those obvious exclusions.

That would be evidence for a supernatural. Violation of the laws. It might be, I'd call it a miracle right in front of your eyes. That would be evidence I would accept. Any kind of a supernatural being putting in an appearance and doing miracles that could no be stage magic would also be evidence that I would accept.

Those are the two simplest ways. I would also accept any evidence that's logically non-contradictory, and I have not heard any yet tonight that hasn't been offered already.

[DAVID: Okay, Dr. Bahnsen, your one minute rebuttal please.]

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Dr. Bahnsen

Yes, Dr. Stein I think is really not reflecting on the true nature of atheism and human nature when he says all it would take is a miracle in my very presence to believe in God. History is replete with first of all, things which would be apparently miracles to people. Now from a atheistic or naturalistic standpoint, I will grant in terms of the hypothesis that that' s because they were ignorant of all the causal factors, and so it appeared to be miraculous.

But you see that didn't make everybody into a theist. In fact the scripture tells us there are instances of people who witnessed miracles who all the more hardened their heart and eventually crucified the Lord of Glory. They saw his miracles. That didn't change their mind. People are not made theists by miracles. People must change their world-view. Their hearts must be changed. They need to be converted. That's what it takes, and that's what it would take for Dr. Stein to finally believe in it.

If this podium rose up five feet off the ground and stayed there, Dr. Stein would eventually have in the future some naturalistic explanation. Cause you see, they believe things on faith, by which I mean they believe things they have not proven as yet by their senses.

[DAVID: Thank you Dr. Bahnsen. I'd like to thank the many people who made tonight possible before we dismiss. I'd like to thank Bryant Moffet and the associated students of the University of California at Irvine for their assistance. I'd like to thank the speech and debate team members. And I'd like to thank the speakers Dr. Greg Bahnsen and Dr. Gordon Stein.]