

DEBATE BETWEEN DR. GREG L. BAHNSEN AND DR. GORDON STEIN
on the question

"DOES GOD EXIST?"

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE 1985

INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Greg Bahnsen:

Holds the Th.M and M. Div. from Westminster Theological Seminary as well as the Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California. He has filled professorships at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS and at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio. He is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Society of Christian Philosophers, the American Philosophical Society, as well as an advisory board member of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Dr. Bahnsen has published numerous articles on apologetics and Christian theology as well as 4 scholarly books. Dr. Bahnsen is currently the pastor of Covenant Community Church located in Placentia CA and resides in the Orange County area with his wife Kathy and his 4 children.

Dr. Gordon Stein:

Dr. Stein received the Ph.D. from Ohio State University. He has established himself as one of America's foremost scholars of atheism. He is currently the President of the American Rationalist Federation, President of the Free Thought Association, member of the Board of Directors of the NA Committee for Humanism, the Vice President, Pacific, of the Freedom from Religion Foundation and Vice President of Atheists United. Dr. Stein has authored 5 leading books, 2 pamphlets one of which by the way is entitled *How to Argue with a Theist and Win*, as well as several scholarly articles. He is also the editor of the American Rationalist journal, and the associate editor of Free Inquiry magazine.

DEBATE FORMAT

- Segment 1: 2 Opening Statements, 15 minutes each, followed by a 4 minute period of cross examination. The segment will conclude with 2 rebuttal periods each 6 minutes long.
- Segment 2: Identical to segment 1 except the speaking order is inverted and the allotted time increments will be shorter. 10 minute opening statements and 6 minute rebuttal periods.
- Segment 3 2 Closing Statements each 10 minutes in length
- Segment 4 Question and Answer Period

PART I

OPENING STATEMENTS

(15 minutes each)

Dr. Bahnsen's opening statement:

I want to begin this evening with three opening and introductory remarks about the nature of the debate itself. First of all it is necessary at the outset of our debate to define our terms, that is always the case. In particular here I should make it clear what I mean when I use the term "God." I want to specify that I am arguing particularly in favor of Christian theism and for it as a unit or system of thought, and not for anything like theism in general. There are reasons for that, three. 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. Secondly I have not found the non – Christian religions to be philosophically defensible; each of them being internally incoherent or undermining human reason or experience. Thirdly, since I am by the grace of God a Christian, I cannot adequately defend from the heart 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.

Secondly I want to observe, and we should indicate just what it is and is not at issue in the debate and the basis of which we hope you will consider the debate. It must be made 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 related subjective or personal matters. Again I have three reasons or illustrations of this. 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. Secondly subjective claims made about the experience or 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 sort of things are always subject to conflicting interpretations and explanations, being, I think, more autobiographical rather than telling us anything for sure about the truth of the system under consideration.

Thirdly, the issue is not whether atheists or 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 involvement in the Spanish inquisition. The question is not whether adherents of the systems have lived spotless lives, but whether atheism or Christian theism as philosophical systems are objectively true. So I will be defending Christian Theism and I will be defending it as a philosophical system.

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 – the subject of his doctoral dissertation in 1974 at Ohio State. Dr. Stein is a man of intelligence and that is not in question in this debate. 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 on 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 generally cogent philosophical case which might be made for atheism as a world view. It is to this subject that I know turn for tonight's debate.

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. 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." The assumption 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. We know how we would go about answering that question. But that is a far, far cry from the way we go about answering questions determining the reality of barometric pressure, quasars, gravitational attraction, elasticity, radioactivity, natural laws, names, grammar, numbers, the university itself that you are now at, past events, categories, future contingencies, laws of thought, political obligations, individual identify over time, causation, memories, dreams, or even love or beauty. In such cases one does not do anything like walk into the pantry and look 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 in argumentation and types of evidences 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 question of 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."

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. 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 hypotheses in the common sense by a 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 we might call the pretended neutrality fallacy. One can see this by considering the following quotation from Dr. Stein, "The use of logic or reason is the *only* valid way to examine the truth or fallacy of a statement which claims to be factual." One must eventually ask Dr. Stein how he proved this statement itself; that is how does he prove that logic or reason are 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 reason 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 theists 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 is 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 is 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 evidence of God's existence, from the 1000 stars of the heavens to the 500 witnesses of Christ's resurrection. But Dr. Stein precludes the very *possibility* of any of this empirical evidence counting toward God's existence. He writes, "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." 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 appeal 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 or 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 commitments in terms of his presuppositions as well. 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 supernaturalist insists that the alleged discrepancies in the Bible have an explanation, some yet to be found perhaps, and that the evil in 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 level 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 experience is organized, interpreted, and applied. Dr. Stein has such presuppositions and so do I and so do all of you. 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.

So I come thirdly then to the transcendental proof of God's existence. How then should the difference of opinion between theists and atheists be rationally resolved? That was my opening question. We have seen two of Dr. Stein's errors regarding it: the crackers in the pantry fallacy, and the pretended neutrality fallacy. In the process of discussing them we have 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 for or against his existence. Arguments over existing 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 thought. 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 through the mind to understand the world, and moral absolutes. In that sense the atheist world view cannot account for our debate tonight.

Dr. Stein's opening statement:

I will grant Dr. Bahnsen his expertise on the *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 I would like to thank Dr. Bahnsen for showing us that he really does not understand too much about atheism; I will try to straighten him out. This is an important question we are discussing, perhaps the most important question in the whole field of religion. Because if God does not exist then the Bible can not be the word of God, Jesus can not be the Messiah, and Christianity can not be true as well as other religions. So we are dealing with an important issue here. Now Dr. Bahnsen repeated for me that the existence of God is a factual question. I do not 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 did not mean exactly the same way, but 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 this is a very commonly misunderstood subject. Atheist do not say that they can prove 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 offered by the theists and he finds them inadequate. Now, if I were to say that this gentlemen sitting on the front steps could fly by flapping his arms, I would be making an unusual statement. It would be up to me or him to demonstrate that he could fly. If he can not demonstrate it then we do not believe that he can fly. Now if he does not demonstrate it right now, it does not mean that he can not fly; it just means that he can not fly right now. So that we do not deny that he can not fly because he can not demonstrate it right now; but we say that he has not proven his case. Therefore we do not believe that he can fly until he proves so. This is what an atheist says about the existence of God; the case is unproven, not disproven. So an atheist is really someone without a belief in a God or who does not believe in 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.

I would like to define a god as well. I am not so sure I like his definition. I am not going to stick to just the Christian God, I am going to stick to all kinds of god. I am going to use the definition of god that Father Copleston and Bertrand Russell both agreed on in their famous debate. Since both sides of the debate agreed on it I think it must be at least an adequate one if not a great one. 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. I have given one which I at least will find satisfactory and if Dr. Bahnsen does not agree we can hear from him. Now nothing can qualify as evidence for the existence of God unless we have some idea of what we are searching for, that is why we need the definition. Throughout history 11 major kinds of evidence or proof have been offered for the existence of a God. In my campus visits I have heard all kinds of other things offered as proof but they basically fall into those 11 categories with some juggling. If these 11 proofs do not work out logically, or lead to logical self-contradictions, then we can only say that God's existence is unproven not disproven as I mentioned before. If I assert that this gentleman can fly by flapping his arms the burden of proof is on him. Suppose I make a more complicated statement and say that my dog can talk in complete sentences. Again I am making an unusual statement so I had better be prepared to offer the evidence or I better be prepared to have people not believe what I say. Now I would like a demonstration of either this gentleman flying or of my dog talking if I was the person being asked to make such a conclusion before I admitted that such things were possible or existed. How easy would it be to show that this gentleman can not fly or that my dog can not talk in complete sentences. As I mentioned before we get into a real problem when one tries to show that something can not happen or does not exist. If I wanted to prove that unicorns do not exist we could search this room and find out that there are no unicorns in this room, a small area. But to prove the general non-existence of something like unicorns you would have to search the entire universe simultaneously, then we could only say that there were no unicorns at the moment we searched the universe. But maybe they were there 5 minutes before or if we only searched the whole earth maybe they were on another planet at the time; there are a all kinds of other possibilities, so you can not prove that something does not exist. That is why I mentioned before the definition of an atheist is not someone who thinks he has proven that God does not exist because you can not.

Of those 11 major proofs I am going to go over some of them very quickly. They have been 900 years in the formulation. During those 900 years this is basically what people have come up with. The first cause argument, also called the cosmological argument, says that everything must have a cause. Therefore the universe must have a cause. That cause was God. God was the first or uncaused cause. This leads to 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 needs a cause. If not everything needs a cause then perhaps the universe is one of those things which does not need a cause. So you see we have gotten onto a logical bind there and that proof basically fails. Now I am giving you a real short synopsis of each of these proofs. They could fill an entire book and have. You have to understand I am oversimplifying slightly, but I think I am retaining the logic of it, both pro and con.

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 design must have had a Designer who is even more wonderful and that designer was God. Well if the universe is wonderfully designed then 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 such as the universe needed one. Again we are into a logical self-contradiction.

The argument from life says that life can not originate from the random movement of atoms, yet life exists. Therefore the existence of a God was necessary to create life. Well basically life did not 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 do not

move in any possible way and chemicals do not combine in any possible way. That is why you see these 1 billion to 1 odds for life originating they are all wet. They have not considered the possibility that not every reaction can occur. So it is possible to explain the origin of life without a God. Using the principle of parsimony or Occum's razor I think we are left with the simpler explanation as the one without the God. I will go into more detail on that later.

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. Well this is obviously a circular argument. It begs the question. We are 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 can not 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 examine whether God wrote the Bible or dictated it, or inspired it. But you can not use the Bible, as Dr. Bahnsen seems to want to do, as evidence for the existence of God, per se.

Now 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 acting of a God to create violations of his own laws. So it is not evidence per se. It can serve as supplementary once you had good evidence in another kind of way for the existence of a god; then you can use miracles as an additional argument. But in and of itself it does not 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 saw it, it raises a question in the mind that is very easily decided. 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 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.

Then we come to the ontological argument which is one of the more difficult ones to explain to people. Basically it says that God is by definition perfect. A necessary quality of any perfect object is that it exist. If it did not exist it would not be perfect. If perfection requires existence then God exists since God is perfect. I do not 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 word 'exist'. In order for something to be perfect it must first exist. If something did not exist the word perfect would not mean anything. First you must have existence then possibly you may have perfection. So this again is going backwards in that you must have an existing God, then you can decide whether he is perfect. If perfectness is a quality of a god then he may be perfect. But first he must exist.

Then we have the moral argument. All people have moral values. The existence of these values can not be explained unless they were implanted in people by a god. Therefore God exists. Well the answer to this is that there are simpler ways to explain the origin of moral values without the existence of a god to implant them in people. Besides if moral values did come from a god, then all people should have the same moral values and they do not. People's moral values are the result of an accommodation which they have made with their particular environment and then taught to their children. It's a survival mechanism.

Then we have the wish argument. Without the existence of a god people would have no reason to live and be good therefore there has to be a god. Most people believe in a god, therefore there is a god. This really is not a proof, it is just a wish. It is like saying it would be nice to have a God, which it would; but that does not have anything to do with whether there is one or not.

Then we have the argument from faith. The existence of a god can not be proven through 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 so, without adequate evidence. Therefore it can't be used to prove the existence of anything. An additional fact is that faith often gives the opposite answer to what is given by reason to the same problem. This also shows that faith does not provide valid answers.

The argument from religious experience. Many people claim to have had a personal experience or encounter with God, therefore he must exist. This is a difficult one to handle because first of all I have never had such experience. But I am sure people have absolutely honestly reported having had such experiences. But the feeling of having met God must not be confused with the fact of having met him. This is a confusion, a semantic confusion and also we can not use our own feelings as if they were valid information about the world. They are feelings that we have inside of us, but you can not demonstrate them to another person and they can not be used as evidence. If everyone had that same experience, for instance if we all looked around the room and we all agreed that there was a clock over there, then we might say that the vision of a clock was a consensual one that everyone agreed on it. Other than that, if you saw a clock and nobody else did or only 2 or 3 people did in the room we would have a bit of a problem.

Pascal's wager is the last of the 11 arguments. I hear this a lot on the campuses. It says since we don't know whether god exists or not and since we have no way of finding out in this life or not, we have nothing to lose by believing in a god. On the other we have a lot to lose if we do not believe in a god and there later turns out to be one after we are dead. Well this is only true if first you are true about a god and second if you have picked the right religion. You might wind up at the judgment day and be right about a god, but he says what religion were you and you say I believe in Islam and he says sorry Catholicism is the right religion, down you go. So in addition if we have a god who punishes people who live virtuous lives, lets say an atheist who lived a virtuous life and did wonderful deeds in the world but just did not believe in a god, if god punishes him then we have an irrational god who is just as likely to punish the believer as the unbeliever.

Part I Cross Examination

Dr. Bahnsen cross examines Dr. Stein (4 minutes).

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

Dr. Stein: Yes sir. George Spiffs 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 point explicit. I happen to have a copy right here I could quote you the exact words if you like.

Dr. Bahnsen: No that won't be necessary. Do you have any other sources?

Dr. Stein: Do I have any other sources? Sure!

Dr. Bahnsen: What would they be?

Dr. Stein: Charles Bradlaw who, I will give it to you right now, 100 years ago made the comment in his plea for atheism he said ...

Dr. Bahnsen: That will be fine. 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 it was so because you were quoting from the Bible as if it proved the existence of ...

Dr. Bahnsen: I did not 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: Dr. Stein you mentioned 11 basic proofs for the existence of God, did you mention the transcendental proof for the existence of God?

Dr. Stein: No, I did not mention it by name. I think it is not a proof. I would not call it a proof as I understand it.

Dr. Bahnsen: You will have time for 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 that are the same: reason, logic, and presenting evidence or facts.

Dr. Bahnsen: 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 are not laws that exist out in nature.

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 is the question I am going to ask you?

Dr. Stein: I would say no.

Dr. Stein cross examines Dr. Bahnsen.

Dr. Stein: Dr. Bahnsen would you call God material or immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen: Immaterial.

Dr. Stein: What is something that is immaterial?

Dr. Bahnsen: Something not extended in space.

Dr. Stein: Can you give me an example of anything other than God that is immaterial?

- Dr. Bahnsen: The laws of logic. [Thunderous Uproar]
- Moderator: Can 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 that because there are two immaterial things they must be identical.
- Dr. Stein: No, I am not assuming that, I am just assuming that because the laws of logic are a convention among men, are you saying that God is a convention among men.
- Dr. Bahnsen: I do not accept the claim that the laws of logic are a conventional.
- Dr. Stein: O.K. Is your God omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-benevolent?
- Dr. Bahnsen: He is.
- Dr. Stein: You do not find this a contradiction at all?
- Dr. Bahnsen: I do not.
- Dr. Stein: O.K. we will show you a little later that it is. If your arguments for the existence of God are shown to be incorrect will you relinquish your belief in God?
- Dr. Bahnsen: If my arguments are disproven will I relinquish my belief in God?
- Dr. Stein: Yes.
- Dr. Bahnsen: If there are no arguments for the existence of God I would not believe in God.
- Dr. Stein: That is not quite answering the question. If someone can show you that there are no arguments, would you relinquish your belief? I am trying to see what is the basis for your beliefs.
- Dr. Bahnsen: You were the one who said it is 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 those that I know of.
- Dr. Stein: O.K. If someone showed that all of the ones that you produced were invalid what would be your position?
- Dr. Bahnsen: You would have to describe further the conditions of this. Rationally speaking if there is no basis for belief in the existence of God I would relinquish that belief.
- Dr. Stein: Is God good?
- Dr. Bahnsen: Yes he is.
- Dr. Stein: How do you know that?
- Dr. Bahnsen: He saved me, He created me, He created 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 the world view in which they make sense and in which they would be taken as true. If you mean is God good in such a way or can I give you evidence you would accept, that would depend on what your presuppositions are.
- Dr. Stein: No, I am 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 do not know if I said that right, I guess I did.
- Dr. Bahnsen: I understand the problem though it was 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 is one of the presuppositions of the Christian world view.
- Dr. Stein: Is it not 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. Although it is not 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.
- Dr. Bahnsen: I think it is stretching the debate rules here, but I will answer your question. There are no absolutes outside of God.
- Dr. Stein: So the fact that God is good is something that God told you and that is why you accept it rather than knowing it ahead and assumed it a presupposition as you said a minute ago.
- Dr. Bahnsen: That is 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 is right.
- Dr. Stein: Is not that a contradiction?
- Dr. Bahnsen: Oh not at all. There are many things which are presupposed and as well as evidenced in this world. For instance the laws of logic.
- Dr. Stein: I would disagree with that. When we talk about immaterial things are you also saying that there is such a thing as ghosts, or the soul which are other examples 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.
- Dr. Stein: How would you prove this?
- Dr. Bahnsen: Does this have to do with the existence of God now?
- 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 his revealing the nature of man in the Bible is sufficient proof. That takes us back logically as you will be bound to say to whether God himself does exist and that is what we are supposed to be debating.
- Dr. Stein: So you are giving me a circular argument.
- Dr. Bahnsen: No, I am telling you what the debate is about.
- Dr. Stein: I know what the debate is about. I am asking for an answer to a question and I did not get one.
- Dr. Bahnsen: I am not debating the nature of the soul tonight but the existence of God. Yes I believe that man has a soul.
- Dr. Stein: The only reason I asked about the soul was because this is a simpler immaterial object that most people would hold is also immaterial.
- Dr. Bahnsen: I don't think that it is similar, that is your claim.
- Dr. Stein: Simpler, I said not similar.

PART 1 REBUTTALS
(8 minutes each)

Dr. Bahnsen's rebuttal:

Dr. Stein is not into this debate yet tonight. We are debating 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 is fine; he may not, but all the time he uses on anything that is 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 am arguing tonight is the Christian one. Secondly, when Dr. Stein defines an atheist as one who finds the theistic proof's inadequate, that is unproven but not disproven, he is engaging in linguistic revision. He does quote for us of course, (he said that he could and I trust that he can), two atheists who likewise define atheism that way. But that strikes me as similar to a Christian who defines his position at the outset and therefore it is must be true because it is true by definition. He has minimized the task that is before him by simply saying I am here to show that the theistic proofs are inadequate. See even at that he did not do his job, even though that is less than what he really should be doing. He gave us 11 basic proofs for God, attributing one to me that I didn't use and do not use and did not assume; 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. 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 is not my wallet. They might engage in contradictions like that, but I don't think any of us would want to accept that. The laws of logic are not conventional and not sociological. I would say the laws of logic have a transcendental necessity about them. They are universal, they are invariant and they are not material in nature. If they are not that, then I would like to know in an atheist universe how it is 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] that is to say non individual 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 the laws of logic. As invariant they do not fit into what most materialists would tell us about the constantly changing nature of the world. So you see we have a real problem on our hands. Dr. Stein wants to use the laws of logic tonight. I maintain that in so doing he is borrowing my world view. For in the theistic world view the laws of logic make sense. Within the theistic world view there can be abstract universal invariant entities, such as the laws of logic. Within the theistic world view you can not contradict yourself because to so do you engage in the nature of lying and that is contrary to the character of God as we perceive it. So the laws of logic are something Dr. Stein is going to have to explain as an atheist or else relinquish using them. The transcendental

argument for the existence of God, which Dr. Stein has yet to touch and which I don't believe he can surmount, is, that without the existence of God it is impossible to prove anything. That is because in the atheistic world you can not justify and can not account for laws in general, laws of thought in particular, laws of nature. You cannot account for the human mind and the fact that it is more than electrochemical complexes and events and cannot give us moral absolutes. That is to say in the atheist conception of the world there is 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 are just, well if you are an atheist and a materialist you would have to say that they are just something that happens inside the brain. But what happens inside your brain is not the same as what happens inside my brain. And so what happens inside your brain is not a law and does not necessarily correspond to what happens inside mine. In fact it can't be identical with what happens inside of my mind or brain because we do not 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. We will say all those who want the convention that says that atheism must be true or theism must be true and we have the following laws that we conventionally adopt to prove it. Then we will all be satisfied. But no one is satisfied. That is not a rational procedure to follow. The laws of logic can not be avoided. The laws of logic can not be accounted for in materialistic universe therefore the laws of logic are one of many evidences that without God you can not prove anything at all.

Dr. Stein (8 minute rebuttal)

I will now touch on transcendental evidence for the existence of God which I think is the only time I could really do such, is in my rebuttal. But first I would 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 the 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 does not answer the question. The question is how did God create it. I defy any theist to explain how God created it. Basically what you are saying is that an unknowable being is responsible for a phenomena that he caused through unknowable means. That is not an explanation but rather a concession that the phenomena is totally inexplicable. Now about the laws of science. First of all I don't think Dr. Bahnsen understands what a scientific law is. A scientific law is an observation that is 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 fall to the earth. So eventually we make a statistical statement that objects are likely, almost 100 % likely to fall to the earth if they are not accelerating in the opposite direction. A rocket does not fall to the earth right away, but eventually it will if it does not escape the gravitational field of the earth. So these scientific laws are merely consensus' based on thousands and hundreds of thousands of observations. The laws of logic are also consensus' based on observations. The fact that they can predict something correctly shows us that they are on the right track, that we are 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 strike, then my mathematics is predicting something valid about the behavior of cannon balls fired on this earth. Otherwise I would not have picked the

exact spot. Mathematics is basically logic again used in the same way, by consensus of things that are self-verifying. I am not explaining it as well as I could, but that is basically what I am saying. An atheist universe then goes on the basis that matter has certain basic behavior patterns. Electrons repel each other because they are both negatively charged. Protons repel each other. An electron and a proton attract each other. The opposite poles of a magnet do that. It is 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 could not predict anything. Matter would not behave 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 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 it would go up and the next time it would crash straight down and soar right up. That would be just as much evidence for a God as a regularly behaving ball. 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 did not get into this exact thing, is to ask an absurd question in the first place. To give God as the answer, first of all 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. The universe sets the foundation for a causal explanation, but it can not itself require a causal explanation. I do not know if that is clear. If I say every human being had a mother, that is a valid question, but if I ask who is the mother of the human race, that is non-valid question because the human race did not 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; to offer the answer as God is to offer an invalid answer to an invalid question. We have not gotten into morality. I think I am going to leave that for the second half. If Dr. Bahnsen does not 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 historians standard, especially the standard required when a miracle is done. As David Hume said, when a miraculous, very unlikely event, such as the resurrection although Hume did not use that analogy or exact example, occurs we must demand an extraordinary amount of proof. If I say that the sun is going to rise tomorrow we do not need a lot of proof because the sun has been rising every day. If I say the sun is not going to rise tomorrow, then we need an extraordinary amount of evidence before someone will take us seriously because that is an unusual event. Now he has not held up the historians standard to a lot of the things he is accepting from the Bible as evidence for God. If he did so he would soon see that those evidences dried up.

Now to get to transcendental evidence finally. The statement that if God did not exist we could not prove anything and that logic and scientific laws would be invalid, is absolute nonsense. I think I have demonstrated part of that. He says that laws of logic are the same everywhere. This is not true, although they are mostly the same. I wonder if he has ever heard of a Zen Cone. The answer to a Zen cone is something which (like what is the sound of one hand clapping is the most famous Zen Cone) is in a different type of logic in a sense or it 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 the basis of agreement on people that reflect something about the universe. The idea that transcendental evidence for the existence of God, or the impossibility of the opposite, that the world view would not be rational if it were atheistic, is total nonsense. I have demonstrated to you that it depends on the inherent properties of matter. If matter has the properties where it behaves regularly then we have a rational universe. Then we have a rational universe without a God. The God issue is not germane if matter behaves in a

regular way. I would hold that the properties of matter as demonstrated over and over again are regular. It is an inherent property of matter. 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 science itself is atheistic. Science is not allowed to use a supernatural explanation for anything. There is a very good reason for that. If your experiment came out one way you could say God did it. If it came the opposite way you could say God did that. We would never make any progress in explaining anything in science. So the agreed upon consensus or rule in science is that naturalistic explanations only are asked for and allowed.

This concludes segment one of the debate.

PART II

OPENING STATEMENTS

(10 minutes each)

Dr. Stein's part ii opening statement.

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. There is a logical fallacy there, the *argumentum adum erratum* 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 900 years have passed since Anselm first postulated the ontological proof and Thomas Aquinas in 1200 or so. We have along time in which all these proofs that are being professed fail. That is some evidence about their probability of there being a proof that will come up with that will succeed, it being pretty unlikely. In addition we have a number things which I would not call proofs, but which are evidence which make the existence of God even more improbable. 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 is not omnipotent. If you admit that, then you deny his goodness. If you say that he would not have done otherwise, you deny with him things that are possible, that all things are possible. So the atheist can present several arguments which increase the possibility that there is not a God. They are not proofs as I have said. One of them would be the problem of evil. The idea is that the presence of evil is incompatible with an all good and all powerful and all knowing God as Dr. Bahnsen has 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 wishful thinking. He could also get out of this bind by saying 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 a morass into which he can fall if he wishes, will not do. To say that God gave man free will and therefore he can choose between the evil and the good is to imply that God was unable to make a man who was able to examine both sides and always choose the good. In other words he is limited and the only way he could 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 is no obvious physical evidence for a God. If God wanted to man to believe in him, (man or woman, people) all he would have to do is 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. The Christian says that 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 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 loving god who made man in his own image, how do you explain the fact that he must have created the tapeworm, the malaria parasite, the tetanus germ, 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 doggie heaven which would be better than his present life. A standard answer of theists to this kind of question is things have to be better after death. We have these things on earth, it is a veil of tears so to speak, does not make much sense. Any God that would punish a man for what his ancestors did is not a very moral God. I am talking about original sin now, Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, There are many instances on the earth in which no distinction seems to be made between the innocent and the guilty, between the Christian and the non Christian. For instance in natural disasters like an earthquake or a fire. It kills Christians, it kills babies, it kills animals, it kills non-Christians. You surely can't say these people were punished in some way for something that they did. It also demolishes churches and hospitals without distinction. Is not this evidence that at the very least whatever force there is controlling these things does not care if people are Christians or not, or whether they are innocent or not? If there is only one God and he cares at all about how he is worshipped, why are there so many different conceptions about God, and so many different religions all claiming to be the one true religion? Does this mean that they are all mistaken? Does it mean that one is correct and all the others are mistaken? There is an old joke about an atheist in which he said to a believer, you know that you believe 99 of the 100 gods are false, I just go 1 step farther and say that the 100th one is also false. So I am sure that Dr. Bahnsen, in fact he even agreed that he would help me refute all the other gods but the Christian God. If Christianity is the one true religion why do so many people who sincerely believe in it found in prisons, slums, and organized crime. I am not saying that all people there are Christians, and I am not saying that all people in organized crime are Christians either. But evidently if Christianity led to an elevation of moral standards, which we have not gotten into yet, about morality, but I am 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 1%. These statistics were in fact so disturbing to the people that conducted them that they stopped collecting them recently. You 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 do not 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, concomitance with them, are true and the others are not. What are we left with after this exercise? Well we see that we can not 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 said because the proofs fail does not mean that the existence is disproven, but I think it is certainly unproved. As I will say in my closing statement, this does not leave us in a bleak and hollow 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 the problems of this world instead of hoping for pie in the sky, which does not seem to be very probable.

Dr. Bahnsen's part ii opening statement.

You have 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 every thing that he has said as wishful thinking and illusion and why don't we all go home. No, we are here

to argue. We are here to argue a point and I am going to say just what 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 am maintaining that the proof of the Christian world view is that the denial of it leads to irrationality. That is without the Christian God you can not 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 can not account for the laws of logic. Dr. Stein interestingly in responding to that spoke more about scientific law than he did about the laws of logic and I am 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 do not have to prove that the laws of logic exist or that they are justified, it is just this way. Now friends how would you like it if I would have conducted the debate in that fashion this evening. God exists because it is just that way. You just can not avoid it. You see that is not debate, that is not argument and it is not rational. Therefore we have interestingly an illustration in our very debate tonight, that atheists can not 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 he suggests that when he says that 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 does not come anywhere close to discussing the vast majority of the laws of logic. That is not the way they are proven. It is very difficult to conduct experiments in 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 and not subject to personal order, as I believe the 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. 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 first there ought to 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. If anybody thinks that is adequate, 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 to say that 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, arguing that there is evidence for them we can find in experience or observation, that approach was used by the way by John Stuart 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 is difficult to believe that 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 truths can not be decided independently of experience then they actually

become contingent. That is if people can not justify the laws of logic independently of experience, then you can only say they apply as far as I know as far as the past experiences that I 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 the way, be taken as true for unexperienced 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 truth are unconvincing as I am 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 inexorably dictated, but rather we impose their necessity on our language. They become therefore somewhat like rules of grammar. As John Dewey pointed out so persuasively earlier in the century, the laws of grammar are culturally relative. If the laws of logic are like grammar, 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 a tautology on his hands and therefore it is 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. 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 being indicted just a few moments ago because they did not live up to them. But who is the atheist to tell us about laws? In a materialist 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. 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 is utilized by the biologist, by the mathematician, by the lawyer, by the mechanic, or by your beautician? What is it that justifies the 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 is not what my argument is. By the way it is not absurd to ask that question either. It may be unnecessary to ask it if you are an atheist, but is certainly not absurd to ask it. But it is not absurd to ask the question that I am asking about logic. You see logicians are having a great deal of difficulty deciding on the nature of their claims. Anybody who reads in 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 what 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? 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 or it.

PART II CROSS EXAMINATION

(4 minutes each)

Dr. Stein cross examines Dr. Bahnsen:

Dr. Stein Is mathematics either atheistic or theistic?

Dr. Bahnsen The foundations of math, yes.

Dr. Stein: Which?

Dr. Bahnsen: Theistic. Christian theistic.

Dr. Stein How do you figure that?

Dr. 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.

Dr. Stein Do you think it is fair since you have pointed out that logicians themselves are in great disagreement about the laws of logic to ask me to explain them in a way you would find satisfactory?

Dr. Bahnsen Yes, it is fair. {Laughter}

Dr. Stein Why?

Dr. Bahnsen Because this a rational debate about world views. You have a naturalistic world view. I have a super naturalistic one. I want something even beginning to answer how a naturalist can justify a universal abstract entity. I have not heard one yet.

Dr. Stein Is logic based on mathematics?

Dr. Bahnsen No.

Dr. Stein Never! Not symbolic logic for example.

Dr. Bahnsen No.

Dr. Stein I would disagree with you.

Dr. Bahnsen Well if we want to get into Russell and Whitehead and debate those issues I'll be glad to do that. But if you ask a simple question I can only give you a simple answer. Assume the opposite. As far as I am concerned as a Christian I am not committed one way or another to that. If you want to say the mathematical laws and the permutations of laws of math are the same as those used in logic that is fine. How do you justify either one is my question.

Dr. Stein I would ask you a more fundamental question. You explained the laws of logic reflect the thinking of God. First, how do you know this and second, what does it mean?

Dr. Bahnsen What difficulty are you having understanding "What does it mean?"

Dr. Stein How are you privy to the thinking of God.

Dr. Bahnsen He revealed himself through the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Dr. Stein That explains the logic?

Dr. Bahnsen That explains why there are universal standards of reasoning. Yes.

Dr. Stein It does not explain them to me could you explain them again.

- Dr. Bahnsen Yes we have Bible studies from time to time where these things can be delved into.
- Dr. Stein You mean you spend some time rationalizing the irreconcilable or reconciling the irreconcilable such as the two accounts of Genesis.
- Dr. Bahnsen This is a cross examination. If you have something other than a rhetorical question I will try to answer it.
- Dr. Stein Well it is not intended as a rhetorical question, it is intended . . .
- Dr. Bahnsen The previous one was rhetorical only.
- Dr. Stein No it was intended to show that your last statement was disingenuous . . .
- Moderator: Please limit your comments to questions.
- Dr. Stein Saying that logic reflects the thinking of God is to make a non-statement. How is that an answer to anything that is relevant in this discussion?
- Dr. Bahnsen It answers the general metaphysical issue of how there can be universal invariant abstract entities in a particular world view. If you want to know the precise relationship, for instance, How did God make a cow: 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 the 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 he imposes on people. And so again we can at least metaphysically make sense of invariant abstract entities in one universe, but we can not make sense of them at all in the other. We are not asking for the mechanics here or anything precise such as resolving the relationship of logic to math and that sort of thing. I am simply asking a general question. If you are an atheist, how in the atheistic universe is it possible to have an abstract universal law?
- Dr. Bahnsen Cross Examines Dr. Stein.
- Dr. Bahnsen Dr. Stein you made reference to David Hume and his rejection of miracles. Have you also read David Hume in his discussion of induction or more popularly, the uniformity of nature?
- Dr. Stein A long time ago. I can not recall exactly what he said, but I have read David Hume.
- Dr. Bahnsen Were you convinced a long time ago that you had an answer to Hume's skepticism about induction?
- Dr. Stein I can not answer that question honestly. I do not remember. It was at least 15 years ago that I read this.
- Dr. Bahnsen The validity of scientific laws was 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 were it seen happening somewhere else the same consequences could be expected from similar causation. Hume said we had no rational basis for that.
- Moderator: Excuse me Dr. Bahnsen, could we have a question, please for Dr. Stein?
- Dr. Bahnsen Yes I am setting up the 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?
- Dr. Stein Not on this issue I do not.

- Dr. Bahnsen Do you now have an answer for Hume?
- Dr. Stein I think he was wrong on that one point, but I think he was also right about a lot of other things.
- Dr. Bahnsen What is the basis for the uniformity of nature?
- Dr. Stein I went through this, but I will be glad to reiterate if. The uniformity of nature comes from the fact that matter has certain properties which it regularly exhibits. It is part of the nature of matter. Oppositely charged particles attract. Similar charges repel. There are certain valences that can fill up a shell and that is as far as it can combine. {Blatantly circular.}
- Dr. Bahnsen Do all electrons repel each other?
- Dr. Stein If they are within a certain distance of each other, yes.
- Dr. Bahnsen Have you tested all electrons?
- Dr. Stein All electrons that have ever been tested repel each other.
- Dr. Bahnsen Have you read all the tests of electrons?
- Dr. Stein Personally, or can I go on the testing of experts?
- Dr. Bahnsen Have you read all of the witnesses about electrons?
- Dr. Stein All it takes is one witness to say no and it would be on the front page of every physics journal. There are none. Therefore in effect by default, yes.
- Dr. Bahnsen Well physicists have there presuppositions by which they exclude contrary evidence too, but in other words you have not experienced all electrons, but you would generalize that all electrons under certain conditions repel each other.
- Dr. Stein Just statistically on the basis of past observation.
- Dr. Bahnsen We do not know it is going to be that way 10 min after the debate then?
- Dr. Stein No, but we have no evidence things have switched around either.
- Dr. 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?
- Dr. Stein I used the word the extra logical and I think that is the right word. It is outside the normal kinds of logic. It is not necessarily a different kind of logic, but it is just non-logical. It is accepted in place of logic.
- Dr. Bahnsen Are extra-logical things absurd?
- Dr. Stein They may seem that way to us, but I would say, No, they are not absurd in the grand scheme of things.
- Dr. Bahnsen Can extra-logical things be true? Can claims about extra-logical things be true?
- Dr. Stein That is an impossible question to answer because if you are using logic to answer whether something is true or not, then extra-logical things are not subject to the analysis given by logic.
- Dr. Bahnsen All right. Are claims about extra-logical entities allowed or disallowed in your world view?
- Dr. Stein In my world view it depends what we are talking about. If we are talking about things like Zen Buddhist and they confine themselves to these philosophical speculations, then yes. If we are talking about science, then no.
- Dr. Bahnsen Sounds very arbitrary.

PART II REBUTTAL

Dr. Stein's part ii rebuttal

I would like to make a little factual rebuttal about a statement that slipped by in the first statement by Bahnsen that atheists caused the French revolution. This is a false statement. The leader of the French Revolution, the most important person was Robespierre who was Christian. So, I mean there may have been some atheist there but that does not mean they caused the French Revolution. There are atheists everywhere. Now we have spent a lot of time talking about logic and yet I would like to know why has Dr. Bahnsen stressed the laws of logic so much when he has refused to apply them to the existence of God. I am not so sure that it is even falsifiable. And so it is not 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 is not relevant to his position. He does not have an answer to the laws of logic either. To say they reflect the thinking of a god, is to make a non-statement. First of all he does not 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 the possible things in his favor. It is like saying, like I said before, that God created the universe. Unless you say how he created it you have not made a statement that has any intrinsic value to it. 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 more nasty. It is not valid to ask science why something happens. You can ask how it happens, but science does not try to answer the question why. Theologians do ask the question why and try to 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 do not supply those we have ducked the whole center of the issue and given you another mumbling which does not go anywhere. I will give you an example. If I say how did that red car in the parking lot get here and you say General Motors made it, that does not explain how the car got here. Now if you want to explain how in Detroit a 100 men worked a certain number of hours to make this car out of steel that they got from a smelting plant in Youngstown, Ohio, then maybe we are getting somewhere as to how it got here. I do not mean how did it get on the 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 does not answer how that car got here, neither is it an answer to say that God made it. 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 a kind of logic we can demonstrate, that we test in the same way that we use the logic that we are talking about in science? If so, would it be impossible for God to contradict himself in any way? Can he make a stone so big he can not lift it? Is that a logical impossibility? Is God limited by that kind of a thing. Can God make a square circle? These are little logical games that we play that do not really ask important questions, but they have a reflection on some kind of problem that he is having with his concept of God. If God can do anything, if he is omnipotent, omniscient, and omni-benevolent can he do those two things I

asked? If he does, what kind of logic is he using? The logic of self contradiction? Until we have some answers to these questions I do not think we have gotten very much meaningful from Dr. Bahnsen in the first place about any issue. He certainly has not applied logic to the proofs of existence of God that have been offered by philosophers.

Dr. Bahnsen's Rebuttal (6 minutes):

Dr. Stein has demonstrated, it seems to me repeatedly, in the course of the debate, the claim that was made very early on in my original statement, and that is that the atheist world view cannot give an account of those things which are necessary for rational discourse or 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, 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 world view is science possible. Since in an atheist universe there is no basis for assuming that there is going to be uniformity. For someone to say well its been that way in all the cases in the past that we know of, therefore very probably it is 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 of 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 and how it is justified, and so forth, and just dismiss it as absurd questions or non-questions that no one understands and that do not have meaning it seems to me is just to try to give medicine to a dead man. You see it is to say I am not going to reason about that because I have not got an answer to it and that is just uncomfortable. But you see there are philosophical questions which not just Christians, by the way, but all philosophers have had to ask and face through out the centuries. Dr. Stein does not even begin to scratch the surface at 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 that without them science would be impossible.

As for the transcendental argument not being logical: you can claim that, but I have yet to see Dr. Stein show any contradiction or violation of the laws of logic in it. Of course if he did I would immediately ask him if that law of logic were one that we are necessarily to live according to. Are we to reason by this law or is it just a convention? If so, I will say "Well that is your convention but it is not mine." Or is that law of logic universal invariant and something that must be followed if we are going to arrive at truth. If it is then I am going to ask him how it is possible to have such a thing in his universe, how he can justify it at all? But he has not shown any contradictions, he has simply again called it illogical. Whether it is 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 and debate before us. No, transcendentals are not falsifiable. That is 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 you will see that they deal with the three conditions of experience. Since they are the pre-conditions of experience they are not falsifiable, and yet they are meaningful. He says that I do not have any answer for these questions either. Well, I certainly do. It is just that he does not like the answer. The answer is that God created the world. The world reflects the uniformity that he imposes on it by his governing. 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; the sorts of things Sunday school children learn. But you know I have yet to find any reason not to believe them. For Dr. Stein to say that they are not answers does not convince me at all. He says that they are not going to be answers unless I include how it took place, what is God's method, and how did he do it? Well I do not accept those standards. I do not accept that this is a requirement for an explanation at all. He has not given us any good reason except that he is not going to be satisfied or that it is unhelpful to him. He says that it is 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 you would ask those questions in cross examination I would answer them. No God can not be irrational. Rationality is measured by the standard of his thinking and his revelation. The atheist world view can not account for the laws of logic. It cannot account for any universe or any abstract entities for that matter. It 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. And so on three of the most important issues, philosophically, that man must face, logic, science, and morality, the atheist universe is completely at odds with those things.

Well, we have one minute left and 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 is no God, there is no absolute moral standard and nothing is wrong. The torture of little children is not wrong in an atheist universe. It may be painful, but it is not wrong. It is morally wrong in a theistic universe and therefore there is a problem of evil, of perhaps a psychological or emotional sort. But philosophically the answer to the problem of evil is: you don't have a have an absolute standard of good by which to measure evil in an atheistic universe. You only have that in a theistic universe. And that is where 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.

PART III

CLOSING STATEMENTS (10 minutes each)

Dr. Stein's closing statement:

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 the 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 unhappiness of the most people. If we have two things and we want to make a comparative statement of evil, which is more evil than the other, the thing is more evil which causes more people to be unhappy. Now how do we know this? Well we don't know this. It is a consensus, just like morality in general is a consensus. It is a consensus that is reinforced by the teaching of society, by the teaching of parents to children, teachers to students, media, literature, the Bible, all these things reinforce morality through teaching and the socialization process. Also we pass laws to punish those who violate some of the more blatant cases of some of the things we have said are no no's. So the idea that there is no evil in an atheist universe is utter hogwash. Evil is at least a rational determinate thing. We don't say "Well, did God make this evil and then go flipping through the Bible to see if it was covered at all." You know there are at least 100 volumes of commentary or more called the Talmud which is the Jews interpretation of all the places the Old Testament did not give any guidance on ethical or moral issues. These things are not clearly spelled out in the Bible. We have no guidance on a lot of things as to what is evil. Is ovum transplant evil? You won't find that in your Bible. You have to go and look at the issues and do an analysis just as any rational philosopher would do. We have standards by which we determine evil and good in an atheist world. 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 is by generalizations in the field of science. Many, many scientists are atheists. It has been shown by studies over and over again. So to claim as Dr. Bahnsen claims to claim that science is not in conformity with the atheist world view is utter nonsense. Science is in itself atheistic. It does not use God to explain things. 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 math or linguistic basis. It has some conformity to the reality of the world. I don't know how many times we to repeat that before we get through to Dr. Bahnsen. 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. But that doesn't answer anything if we are going to apply the tests of reason to what he says. Because his statements are not only irrational, they are unreasonable. The idea that the future is going to be like the past: it is a statistical probability statement. We have never seen a future, meaning that today is the future of yesterday, in several hundred years in which the regularity of matter and its behavior has changed. If it changes, scientific experiments will go haywire and we will know it right off the bat. Then we will have to revise a lot of things. I think the chances of that happening

are pretty small. Now let me finish by saying atheism is not a bleak 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 want to feed the hungry, we want to educate the illiterate, we want to cloth the naked, we want to raise the standard of living; we want to spread reason, thinking, progress, and science. These are all things which are in and 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. If we do them because they are right and make people happy, we will be made happy ourselves by making other people happy. It is a very positive world outlook, something I don't think Dr. Bahnsen has even mentioned; but it is certainly the other side of the coin. What happens when you wipe away the God concept? Are you left with nothing? No you are left with responsibility that you have to take on yourself. You are responsible for your actions and you also get the credit for the things that you do. I would rather have a realistic world view that gives us a few things that would be nice to have but just don't happen to be true. 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.

Dr. Bahnsen's closing statement:

I would begin my closing statement by thanking the debate team for inviting both Dr. Stein and myself here for this interesting evening and interchange. And I thank you all for giving us an evening to discuss what I consider to be a very important question. And I thank Dr. Stein for his coming and for his graciousness toward me. As for my closing statement, I need to deal first of all or perhaps in the entire time, analyzing this remark that my statements tonight have been irrational.

Well perhaps they have. But you see saying so does not make it so. That is something we have just heard as well. And so if my statements have been irrational we are going to need some standards of reasoning by which these statements can be shown to be irrational. Dr. Stein has yet to explain to us in even the broadest simple Sunday school child manner that I told you about laws of logic, laws of science, and laws of morality. He has not 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 debated, it has been made fun of but it has not been answered. And that is what we are here for: rational interchange. The transcendental argument says the proof of the Christian God is that without him you can't prove anything. Notice that the argument does not say that atheists do not prove things. The argument does not say that atheists do not use logic, science or laws of morality. In fact they do. The argument is that their world view can not account for what they do. 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 material universe naturalistically explained in the way things happen to be. That is not law like or universal. Therefore their world view does not account for logic, science, or morality. But atheists of course use logic, science, and morality. And in so doing atheists give continual evidence that in their heart of hearts they are not atheists. In their heart of hearts they know the God I am talking about. This God made them, this God reveals himself continually to them through the natural order, through their conscience and through 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 laws of logic, science, and morality though their world view can not account for them. Dr. Stein has said that the laws of logic are merely conventional. If so then on convention he wins tonight's debate, on convention I win tonight's debate. If you are 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 assigns them to convention. Dr. Stein says that the laws of science are law like because of the inherent character of matter. But Dr. Stein does not 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 is not God, he does not even believe there is a God. Since he has not experienced all the instances of matter, all the electron reactions, and all the other things scientists look at, since he has not experienced all those things, he does not know that those things are universal; he does not know 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 is not an answer. We are asking what justifies your proceeding on the expectation that the future is like the past. To say well it has 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 have spoken of laws of morality. He says that they have laws of morality. The utilitarian standard of what brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Well that does not justify utilitarianism to announce it. He has announced that it is his standard. Well why in an atheist universe should we live by that standard? Marquis de Sahd enjoyed torturing women. Now why should he give up torturing women so that he might bring greater happiness to those women that he was torturing. Now I have an answer to that. It is not one that Dr. Stein likes and maybe some of you out 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. If morality can be stipulated then Marquis De Sahd can stipulate his own, even as Dr. Stein has stipulated his own. Why should he feed the poor? He says they want to do that. I grant that. My argument here tonight has never been that atheist are the lousiest people in the world. That is not 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 that we are thinking of? Because I have absolute standards of morality to judge. Dr. Stein does not. And therefore once again from a transcendental standpoint the atheistic world view cannot account for this debate tonight. For this debate tonight has assumed that we are going to use the laws of logic as standards of reasoning, or else we are irrational; that we are going to use laws of science, we are going to be intelligent men that way, we are going to assume induction and causation and all those things that scientists do and its assumed moral standard. So we are not going to be dishonest and try to lie or just try to deceive you. If there are not laws of morality I could just take out a gun right now and say "O. K. Dr. Stein, make my day." You see if he argues, "Oh no you can't murder me because there are laws of morality" then he has made my day because I win the debate. That shows that the atheist world view is not correct. But if he says that there are no absolute standards, it is all by convention, stipulation and that sort of thing; then I just pull the trigger and it is all over and I win the debate any way. Would you expect me to win the debate in that fashion. Absolutely not! You came here expecting rational interchange. I don't think we have heard much from Dr. Stein. I have asked him repeatedly – it is 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, how can you account for laws of logic, laws of science, and laws of morality? The atheist world view cannot do it. Therefore I feel justified in concluding, as I did in my opening presentation

this evening, by saying the proof of the Christian God is the impossibility of the contrary. Without the Christian world view this debate would not 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 is not engaging in name calling. It is 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 and hard hearted. It is the fool who says in his heart there is no God. Paul tells us in 1 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? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” I think what Paul is telling us if I may amplify and read between the lines is that 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. What it will show is 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 tells us that 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 is not 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 will continue to rebel, some continue to devise their fool errands and rationalizations for why they do not have to believe in him. That’s what the Bible teaches. I did not make this up. I did not come here tonight to say, well if you do agree you are just being rebellious. That is what the Bible says. What I want you to do tonight is go home and consider whether there is not something to that. Why is it that some people continue to use laws of logic, laws of morality, and laws of science and yet they have a world view which just clashes with that and yet they will not do anything to resolve the contradiction. Dr. Stein tonight made reference to my doctoral dissertation on self deception. He wondered how relevant it might be. Well it is very relevant. It is 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 is not true. Now of course atheists think that is what Christians are doing. I recognize that. We would have to argue what the evidence for and against self-deception is. All I want to leave with you tonight is that self-deception is a real phenomena. 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 and the atheist world view. We have not touched on all the issues you might want to look into, but in broad strokes we have touched in a very important issue. If you are going to be a rational man, a moral man, and a man of science, can you do so in an atheist universe? I say you can’t.

PART IV

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2 minute answers by the person to whom the question was addressed followed by a 1 minute response from the other person.

Question 1 What solid evidence do have to maintain that the Christian faith is the only true religion with a God? There are religions far older and just as wide spread which millions of people consider valid.

Dr. Bahnsen That is very good and relevant question. I want to say two things by way of preference. One, that is not what the subject of the debate was tonight. However that can not just be taken for granted. It is worthy of a debate, it is just that we could not do every thing 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 would not be thought that I was just arbitrarily flying over it. But when I read it back to myself and timed myself it turned out that I had to cut a number of things out and so I cut that down. What I did say however was that I have not found the non – Christian religions internally defensible. Each of them being 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 am not going to cover all of them. For instance, Hinduism assumes that God or Brahman is the impersonal or universal soul, the unchanging one of which all things are part, for instance. Because of that particular outlook, Hinduism says that every thing in terms of my normal experience of the world and thinking is myna or illusion. Because everything in thinking or experience presupposes distinctions. But that is contrary to the most fundamental metaphysical fact and that is that are no distinctions, all is one. So basically Hinduism tells me that all of my thinking and all of my reasoning is illusion. In so doing it undermines reason. You can take religions such as Shintoism, and its view of the comy, 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. Stein Dr. Bahnsen has criticized Hinduism. I don't think it is any more irrational than Christianity is. Nor do I think it is any more irrational than Islam is, nor is it any more irrational than almost any other religion that you might want to name with one exception. I would say Buddhism is more rational than either Christianity or Hinduism. That doesn't mean that I accept Buddhism either. But I just think it is more rational. At least it makes some psychological sense if nothing else.

Question 2 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 does not really count.

Dr. Stein Germany is part of the Western European tradition. It was not deepest Africa or some place on Mars. They have the same Judeo – Christian background and same basic connection with the rest of the developed world. Therefore the standards of morality that have been worked out as consensus's of that society apply to them too. Hitler can not arbitrarily say well I am not going by the consensus that genocide is evil and wrong, I am just going to change it and make it right. He does not have the prerogative to do that and neither does the German society as a whole because it is still part of a larger society which you might call Western society. So even though morality is a consensus it is not a consensus of one person or two people; it is a consensus of entire civilizations and he can not just do that. So what he did was evil and wrong.

Dr. Bahnsen Dr. Stein continues to beg the most important questions that are brought up. He tells us that Hitler's Germany was wrong because Hitler and the German people did not 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 is no answer to that question. He gives the answer but it is totally arbitrary.

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 to the question why is there pain and evil in this world is because men have decided to rebel against God their maker and that is one of the consequences of rebellion against God. Now somebody could say well that is not fair. God should not punish people for rebelling against him. Well, if there is a God as I have maintained and if he is the Christian God revealed in the scriptures it won't do any good to complain about that. That is the way God governs mankind. If you think you know better than God about morality then you are in Job's position. You want to have an interview with God. You will end up like Job. You will put your hand over mouth and say I have spoken too soon; I cannot contend with the Almighty. One answer is that God has decided that would be the outcome if people decided to rebel against him. If they want to be their 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. That includes pain for animals in 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 have been removed. Why is there pain and suffering ultimately? The answer is obviously because God has planned it. I believe that he controls all of history. Does that mean he caused it. No I do not mean that he compelled Adam to sin.

Dr. Stein Well Dr. Bahnsen has given us another one of his famous non answers. Basically I believe what he said is anything God does is what he does. It is a tautology. This is a logical self – contradiction. How can anyone rebel against an omnipotent God? If God is omnipotent he has the power to prevent man from rebelling against him. Assuming he does not like rebellion, which I think Dr. Bahnsen would concede, because man is

evidently going to be punished for this in some way in the day of judgment. If God had the power to prevent him from rebelling then he ought to prevent him from rebelling. Just to say that God does what he does is not to give us an answer at all.

Question 4 If you have not examined all the evidence, then is it not true that you are an agnostic? Are you not open to the fact that God may exist.

Dr. Stein Well agnostic is a word that is very badly used. Thomas Huxley who invented the word used it in an entirely different way from the way we used today. 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 subtype of atheist. An atheist is someone who does not believe in a God. A theist is someone who does believe in a God. There is no middle ground. You either do or you don't. An agnostic does not believe in a God either, for one of two reasons. Either he does not think that it is possible to know if there is a God. That is the Spencerian agnostic who thinks that there are un-knowables; 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 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 these questions are solvable. We may not know the answer now, but I think we can eventually know the answer. So I am not a Spencerian agnostic. And I have examined the answer so I am not the other kind of agnostic whatever that kind is called. It does not have a name for it.

Dr. Bahnsen It is interesting the word *agnostic* is being used as a subclass of atheist. I would agree with that but for reasons different than have been suggested. It is 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 does not believe in the existence of God. Now he is using the traditional definition to answer the question. One more interesting comment about that and we will let it go. He says that we do believe there are answers to these problems; we have yet to find them. You see that is the problem. Atheists live by faith. [Brings down the house]

Question 5 Why is it necessary for the abstract universal laws to be derived from the transcendent nature of God. Why not assume the transcendent nature of logic?

Dr. Bahnsen Somebody who wrote the question is good in that you have studied some of these philosophical issues. The answer may not be meaningful to every body in the audience. But I do believe in the transcendental nature of the laws of logic, however the laws of logic do justify themselves just because they are transcendental. That is a precondition of intelligibility. Why isn't it just sound and fury signifying nothing. That is a possibility too. So the laws of logic do have 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 possible antinomies as the laws of logic being universal and categorizing things in that way; and yet we have novelties in our experience. The world of

empirical observation isn't a set rigidly by uniformity and by sameness as it were. There isn't a continuity and 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. I believe Christianity provides that and I just can't find any other one that competes with it that way.

Dr. Stein I do not have a rebuttal to that one. I do have a rebuttal to his last rebuttal if I may make that very briefly. Dr. Bahnsen's statement that atheist 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. {What right do you have to expect the future to be like the past. The unspoken presupposition here is that the material is unchangeable. Or at least the "laws" that govern material. You have attributed to material that which theists attribute to God. You have engaged in the same sort of circular reasoning that theists engage in when dealing with an ultimate standard. You have a god and it is Matter.} Things that we do not know now we will eventually have answers to. That is not faith. That is confidence based on experience. So I think he is misusing the word faith.

Question 6 You have said that there has been no adequate evidence put forth for God's existence. What personally for you would constitute adequate evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Stein Well it is very simple. I could give you two examples. If that podium suddenly rose up into the air 5 feet stayed there for a minute and then dropped right down again I would say that was evidence for a supernatural for it would violate everything we knew about the laws of physics and chemistry; assuming that there was not an engine under there or a wire attached to it. We could make those obvious exclusions. That would be evidence for a supernatural. Violation of the laws. You could call it a miracle right in front of your eyes. That would be evidence that I would accept. Any kind of a supernatural being putting in an appearance and doing miracles that could not be stage magic would also be evidence that I would accept. Those are the two simplest ways. I would also accept any evidence that is logically non – contradictory and I have not heard any yet tonight.

Dr. Bahnsen 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 things that would be apparently miracles to people. Now from and an atheistic or naturalistic standpoint I will grant, in terms of the hypothesis, that is because they were ignorant of all the causal factors and so it appeared to be miraculous. But you see that did not make everybody into a theist. In fact the scripture tells us there were instances of people who witnessed miracles who all the more hardened their heart and who eventually crucified the Lord of glory. They saw his miracles and that did not

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 is what it takes and that is what it would take for Dr. Stein to finally believe in it. If this podium rose up 5 feet off the ground and stayed there, Dr. Stein would eventually have, in the future some naturalistic explanation. Because they believe things on faith by which I mean they believe things they have not proven as yet by their senses.