OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Knowledge of God

Christian Thought

Can natural theology give Christians genuine knowledge of God without revelation?

1,614 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

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Argument plan

Can natural theology give Christians genuine knowledge of God without revelation?

Thesis: Natural theology can offer limited, revisable reasons for belief in a creator, but cannot independently deliver the specifically Christian knowledge of God's identity in Christ. Aquinas's distinction between truths accessible to reason and truths received through revelation is more convincing than either autonomous rational certainty or the claim that reason contributes nothing.

1. Aquinas allows reason to infer a creator from effects while admitting limits.

Counter-argument: The effects are ambiguous and may support no more than a minimal explanatory ground.

> Interim judgement: Natural theology can contribute a conditional case without establishing the full Christian God.

2. Barth protects revelation from human projection and the effects of sin.

Counter-argument: His rejection of natural theology risks making Christian identification of revelation inaccessible to criticism.

> Interim judgement: The warning against idolatry is stronger than the conclusion that natural reflection has no theological value.

3. A critical partnership of reason and revelation checks both projection and fideism.

Counter-argument: Religious diversity and selective interpretation can make the partnership circular.

> Interim judgement: Public reasons should remain open to revision, while Christian specificity is acknowledged as a revealed claim.