Arthur F Holmes: *All Truth is God's Truth.* IVP 1977

Chapter Summaries:

1. *The lost world-view*: the loss of truth [loss of focus on truth // loss of universality of truth because of confusion with 'objective' and 'subjective' – thus the need to recognise that "metaphysical objectivity is perfectly compatible with epistemological subjectivity" p.6 // loss of unit of truth] // yet all truth is God's truth

2. *Sacred and secular*: The terminological difficulties suggest that no adequate reason may exist for isolating the sacred of for denigrating the secular [p.17] // reasons for the divorce // is the secular worldly? "The secular [AH defines this a cultural – society focussed living and tasks] is part and parcel of creation: its tasks are 'creational' tasks and as such they are good. Withdrawal from the secular appears to be neither possible nor necessary. [p.21] // Is the secular beyond help? [disagrees with Ellul's conceptualisation, which is closer to civil monasticism] // "Everything a man does becomes sacred when he does it for the glory of God" [p.26] // Sacred and secular learning – "The basic Biblical distinction is not between sacred and secular but between God and his creation." [p.28]

3. *What is Truth*? Truth is both personal and propositional // "All truth is God's truth, no matter where it is found." [p.32] – therefore, firstly, "truth is not relative, but absolute" [p.32] noting that "Some truths then are localised and dated in that they are about a particular place or time… Individual truths about changing things are not altogether relative. They bear witness to what is unchanging and so universal. [p.33] … The only unchanging, universally-the-same and unifying reality is none other than God himself." [p.34] – secondly, "truth is inherently personal, not autonomous like the ideal forms of Plato's *Republic*". [34] "When Jesus spoke of bearing witness to the truth he spoke of truth in the Biblical manner – personal truth as well as propositional." [34] "Jesus Christ not only claimed to teach and bear witness to the truth: he also claimed to *be* the truth (Alethia, John 14:6)" [35] "As creator and lord of all, his self-revelation brings truth into focus, uncovers the basis of its

unity, and reaffirms its universality. To know him is the key to seeing things as a meaningful whole." [36] In the NT, "To know is to know *for oneself*, to interiorize what is learned, to ac on it, to make it one's own…. Knowledge, being personal and not detached, brings responsibility: a man must measure up to the truth he knows and behave accordingly, or the very truth he knows condemns him. He must 'do the truth' he knows (e.g. 1 John1: 6,8; 2:4; 3:18-19)" [36] // gives an historical overview of understanding of truth

4. *All Those Errors*! Reviews the areas of: sin and unbelief // finiteness and freewill // provisional judgements // science and religion // philosophical parameters // Poor understanding can lead to ignorance – but it is the will that leads to error of judgement – "I err when instead of restraining free will within the range of my finite understanding and withholding judgment outside, I allow it full rein without the rule of reason. Then it 'readily falls into error and sin by choosing the false in the room of the true, and evil instead of good'". [55]

5. *No Royal Road*: Faith and truth – "Faith, then, is man's response to God, the opening of our lives to him. Faith is more than assent to true propositions (creedal assent)." [71] "Faith is not closed-minded but exploratory; it does not compartmentalize life but unifies it…" [73]. // Revelation and truth – "In sum, revelation is not *either* personal *or* propositional, but both. A person reveals himself, as does God, by what he does and says, and by what others do and say in response. Propositional revelation thereby informs us about the personal nature of God…. The Bible is not a royal road to learning everything." [77] // Experience and truth //

6. *How Reliable is Human Reason*? Gives an overview of deduction, induction and reasoning. // "Our best empirical descriptions are 'progress reports' and not, strictly speaking, 'conclusions', in the sense that nothing further can be said… Empirical generalizations are additionally precarious because they apply to a whole class of things, of which I may have examined only a small sample." [94]

7. *On Justifying Our Beliefs*: "Man is a rational being. Reasoning is concerned both with the facts of experience (as in induction) and with the logical relations of ideas (as in deduction). we therefore need (a) an empirical test…. And (b) a more formal test which we label 'rational coherence'. Man is a valuing being whose values influence his beliefs. In order to get to the universality of truth we must therefore ask what is universal and unchanging in human values; otherwise we risk allowing all our beliefs to become as relative a are some of our culturally and individually relative values… [values] are cognitive as well as emotive, and so ae amenable to rational assessment. Man is an agent who acts and whose action-projects require beliefs. Here too we must ask what is universal and unchanging, what projects are universal, and what is the most inclusive project that give unified direction tall else we do. [105] // rational assessments of belief // "If in the final analysis a belief remains inconsistent with whatever else we know to be true, it must be false. But if it is consistent, that does not establish its truth; it simply shows that the belief is logically possible." [109] "World-views unify our understanding of things by introducing as a focal point of reference some particular religious or quasi-religious belief. The belief that God is creator of all, for instance, does not serve as a premise from which everything else is deducible. But it provides the unifying perspective in a Biblical view of things, and the interrelated unity of the whole attests the truth of this central belief." [111] // Beliefs and values – "Prerequisite to confident belief is a valuation of the truth that inclines the will in that direction." [113] // Beliefs and action – Freud's belief about human beliefs can be no exception to his rule: if all human beliefs are simply projections of our psychological needs and relative thereto, so too are his beliefs. Neither Freud nor Marx nor any other such critic can consistently claim universal truth for his ow position." [118] "Let me reiterate what marks off the theist's view

from Dewey's: our projects arise within the ordered creation of God." [119] – Dewey's view relies on natural selection, and is therefore relativised // "… we can judge a belief in light of: (a) universal laws of logic (b) universal aspects of human experience (c) public evidence (d) the logical unity of a set of beliefs (e) universal value areas & (f) universal action-projects in the various orders of creation." [122] "The difference [between the Christian thinker aided by the Holy Spirit and any others] is rather that his final rule of faith and practice is clearly identified as the Scriptures, and the focus of his thinking will be the focal point in the ultimate unity of truth: Jesus Christ as creator and lord." [123]

8. *Christ the Truth*: Motivation – Christ the truth becomes the dominant motivation in intellectual inquiry // World-view – "It is here that the Christian rests his confidence that… [whatever we discover in sciences or arts] can either bless us or curse us, according to the wisdom and morality with which we use it [in Christ, and his desire for his creation, or not i.e. as his representatives, or not]." [126] "I have summarised the Biblical view of nature, of man, and of history because these concepts unify our thinking about everything else, and unify it in relation to Jesus Christ." [128] // Emphasising truth – "That Christ is the Truth also leads us to emphasize truth in what we do. We must emphasize It in *education*, both in our own schooling and in considering the teaching profession as a Christian vocation… If we believe that Christ is the Truth and that all truth is his, we will not be content with a training that merely develops vocational or professional skills rather than emphasizing the pursuit of truth itself. Schools and colleges and some universities are often geared to training rather than to education *per se,* and especially so in the developing nations." [128] "Some degree of specialization is of course necessary, but not without and not before one has learned to see things whole… Fragmented information produces connoisseurs at best, and a tragic confusion of thought and action at worst… If a man is a rational being, we nust indeed cultivate the mind… If man is a valuing being, education must engage his thinking about values – moral and social values, aesthetic and religious values- and must teach him to make defensible value judgements and help him launch their implementation. If man is a historical [and social] agent, then education must teach responsible decision making and prepare a person for effective social action and cultural activity that ranges far beyond the way he earns a living to the totality of his engagement in life…. But contemporary education seems concerned with vocational skills, interpersonal relations, and unstructured 'learning experience' at the expense of truth." [129] [Also applies to the arts] …"we must avoid another Platonic mistake that equates truth with beauty." [134] "Art is serious work that grapples with life the way it is or could be; it is not an escape… The fact is, I believe, that the arts can tell the truth more completely, in more depth, and more realistically that the sciences with their controlled data and theoretical abstraction often can." [135-6] "We suffer today from the fact that too many decisions are made on purely pragmatic bases." [138] "Such re-formation of thought [re family, government, business, etc.] demands that we think under the judgement of God's word, which is our only final rule of faith and conduct. It requires a process of learning that lasts far beyond the end of school or university. It will take humility, discipline, and dedication." [140]