

B. CHRISTIAN FIRST PRINCIPLES REGARDING KNOWING**1. Orientation: Philosophical Views of Knowing**

In philosophy the question of Knowing is discussed under the heading of Epistemology. Epistemology asks the questions, "Is knowledge possible?" and "If so, are we justified in claiming knowledge of any whole class of truths?"

a. Definition of Relevant Philosophical Terms

- (1) **epistemology** - that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and basis, and the general reliability of claims to knowledge.
- (2) **knowledge** - clear and adequate perception of truth; a proposition confirmed by adequate evidence (such as sense perception and/or reason); **justified true belief**.
- (3) **truth** - a judgment that describes or refers to a state of affairs that is actually as described; a judgment that corresponds to reality; the quality of propositions which conform to reality, or the quality of beings which realize in existence what ought to be.

b. Description of Various Epistemological Views**EPISTEMOLOGICAL OPTIONS**

NAME OF OPTION	KNOWLEDGE ATTAINED OR ATTAINABLE
(1) Skepticism	Reality unknowable
(2) Agnosticism	Reality unknown
(3) Subjectivism	Only subjective reality knowable
[Objectivism]	Objective reality knowable
(4) Rationalism	by means of reasoning
(5) Empiricism	by means of experience
(6) Rational Empiricism	by combination of these

(1) Skepticism

This view embodies the belief that human efforts to know are futile. First proclaimed by Pyrrho (360-275 BC), who asserted "we can be certain of nothing, not even the most trivial assertions. Therefore, we ought never to make any positive statements on any subject." One cannot have any rational basis for preferring one course of action to another. Pyrrho is said to have professed complete disregard for life. He was not fearful, he said, "of wagons, precipices, and dogs." Once a friend saved him