

construction whom I shall introduce in due course.

You have Lucy to thank, too, for prompting all the italicized and indented asides throughout the account of the pumpkin patch reunion (as it came to be called). These asides are, as it were, "stage whispers" intended to clarify, but may occasionally do the opposite. It is I, of course, who have done the whispering and provided the content, not Lucy (whispering is not a grace she intends to cultivate any time soon, and as for content—well, she's still chewing things over). Anyhow, to have done with these preliminaries, I will fly my true colors forthwith:

In a Nutshell . . .

. . . the story about to unfold is a device to focus some of the key issues in the essentially intramural 20th Century quarrel between presuppositional and evidential apologetes. Both sides have counted among their advocates gifted, agile, and deeply committed Christian minds. As in any intellectual quarrel that drags on for more than fifty years, there is bound to be the generation of specialized language—jargon; and the fray we shall consider is no exception. Although I doubt that those of Lucy's bent will ever agree, there are *good* things to be said about jargon as well as bad. In general, what is good about it is that jargon may facilitate precision of expression and provide the tools to plumb new and unexpected depths by means of an increasingly powerful shorthand; what is bad about it is that lay people cannot be benefited by the model (constructed by the shorthand) without a translation that often runs the risk of oversimplification. Lucy is big on simplification, but if you press her, she acknowledges—with Einstein—that although everything should be rendered as simply as possible, it should not be rendered any *simpler!*

But what is "The Defeasible Pumpkin" all about? Two things, really. The first thing is the logical dilemma any Christian faces (and I have chosen Charlie Brown to be my hapless dilemma facer) whenever his or her *method* of supporting Christianity may be used *with equal facility* to support the very *antithesis* of Christianity—the method declaring *both* positions to be absolutely certain! The second thing is an analysis and critique of what I take to be the fundamental weakness of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositionalism. It is a weakness whose most crippling effect is that it prevents those of Van Til's persuasion from crediting humans with