

traditional analysis) in a moment, but first a word on what philosophers who theorize about knowledge are trying to do.

With certain notable exceptions, epistemologists (as these philosophers are called) haven't merely striven for clarification about the way we *use* the concept of knowledge. Usage is of course important and a good place to begin, but the philosophical interest in the concept of knowledge is not merely lexical. Philosophers involved in theory of knowledge (or epistemology) want clarity on two central issues: (1) the meaning of the knowledge concept, and (2) the precise conditions under which the knowledge concept is to be applied to people. That is to say, the second issue involves the provision of *criteria* for correct knowledge ascription. The perennial difficulty in epistemology has been how to provide a non-circular formulation that incorporates an answer to questions raised by (1) and (2). But that is not our present worry; our very modest concern is to get just a rough idea of how a reasonable set of criteria for correctly (or aptly) ascribing the knowledge concept might be formulated.

Before getting under way let me stress that a theory of knowledge that utterly lacks criteria for applying the knowledge concept is useless in any would-be defense of knowledge claims—and that of course includes the defense of Christian knowledge claims. That is because without the satisfaction of certain criteria we would have no basis to distinguish knowledge from ignorance. A criteriology for knowledge ascription is simply the attempt to identify what conditions (criteria) would have to be satisfied if we are (correctly or appropriately) to say of some person that he or she *knows* some matter of fact. And as I have already begun to do, we'll call the specification of a complete set of conditions an *analysis* of the knowledge concept.

One other preliminary matter is to state what happens if one's analysis of the knowledge concept stipulates conditions that afford *no* criteria, or criteria that are humanly impossible to recognize. Obviously such an analysis cannot serve in helping us to determine cases of human knowledge. While such an analysis might allege certain properties of knowledge *if* there is any, the analysis in question would be necessarily speculative—an exercise in deductions from definitions, perhaps, but affording no cognitive *link* between a human mind and an external reality. I will call this sort of "analysis" (i.e., one *without* application criteria) a