PREFACE

There are discussions with Cornelius Van Til that I never got to have. As a pesky graduate student in the '70s I was wont to take advantage of his hospitality and good nature to talk over issues in philosophy and apologetics. He called me, simply, "Hoover," and from him it was especially endearing. I would so love to have just one more pleasant (vigorous) chat with him, but he has gone to be with his beloved Christ. Perhaps I will chat with him later, when our apologetics will be both perfect and irrelevant.

Even after I left the heady university and seminary environment of Philadelphia to teach philosophy at Covenant College, we traded a few letters and spoke once on the phone. He still called me "Hoover" and expressed interest rather than judgment at my increasing defection from his presuppositionalism. The last message I got from him was a brief note in his aged scrawl in which he expressed concern for my son's heart condition telling me he was praying for us.

Today I treasure my memories of that white haired man—still haunted, somehow, by his ever so bold but (I am convinced) quixotic apologetics. It was he, among only a few others, who stirred up my own gifts, and I know that were he still with us, he would be delighted to tell me what is wrong with *The Defeasible Pumpkin*.

For what it is worth, *The Defeasible Pumpkin* bears some conceptual affinity to John Warwick Montgomery's essay, *Once Upon an A Priori* (published in *Jerusalem and Athens*, 1971), but there are important differences too. The chief difference is that my intent has not been merely critical (although much of it is); I have also tried to indicate the fundamental alternative to Van Til. I conceive that alternative to be the grounding of the evidential relation in the creation's *causal order*. It is lawlike and causal regularity in the observable universe that grounds the rationality of inductive investigation. And it is the causal order that grounds the *exceptional* and *extraordinary* evidential value of fulfilled