

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ISSUES OF APOLOGETICS

#### Definitions of knowledge

Before discussing the various schools of apologetics, it is necessary to discuss what is meant by knowledge. And before that can be done, it must be determined what knowledge itself is. This is the subject of epistemology, the philosophic study of knowledge and knowing. Epistemology is the most basic topic of all philosophy, since all other areas of knowledge must of necessity be based on one's understanding of what it is to know, and what basis knowledge can have.

Different writers define knowledge differently. However, certain terms have fairly agreed upon meanings.

#### ***Knowledge***

Ultimately knowledge is that which is known to be true for legitimate reason, and is indeed true. Christians believe that the only absolute knowledge is that which is revealed by God. Knowledge also includes those truths that can be logically deduced from revealed truth. As was stated by the Westminster divines:

“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” (*WCF* 1.6)

Absolute knowledge must be *a priori*; that is, it must be accepted as having to be true. It must be the truth as is known by God and revealed to us. This knowledge is so certain that people are to be loyal to it even when their own sense perception and the united testimony of the world seem to go against it. This kind of knowledge is the result of God's sovereign election and the resulting work of the Holy Spirit.

“We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.” (WCF 1.5)

## **Opinion**

What most people commonly call knowledge can more properly be called opinion. Opinion represents the beliefs people have based on their experience or observation. It is basically *a posteriori*; that is, it is conclusions reached after examining individual examples. While absolute knowledge is deductive, inductive conclusions are not absolute, since it is impossible to observe all possible relevant examples, and since no observation is perfectly precise.

Conclusions formed from inductive observations are necessarily tentative. They might be changed when more evidence becomes available. For example, since science is basically inductive, its conclusions are properly stated as scientific opinion, not scientific knowledge. The scientific method, involving hypothesis, experiment, observation, and theory, produces many practical benefits and useful ways of organizing our thinking about the world. However, it should be remembered that what has been called scientific knowledge has radically changed over the history of science.

There is a distinction between knowledge and opinion, even when the opinion is true. It is possible to come to a true conclusion by fallible means. It certainly is common that people believe something that is true for the wrong reasons.

The idea of probability is difficult to apply to knowledge. Many say that, while scientific knowledge is not absolute, it at least is probably true. However, probability is hard to determine when the absolute truth is unknown. Of course, we must live in the practical world, and we order our daily lives and make innumerable decisions on the basis of our understanding of probabilities.

## **Belief**

Belief is a flexible term, which can include both knowledge and opinion. The Bible speaks of belief or faith as the firm conviction of the truth of God and his Word. On the other

hand belief may be based on observation or induction, which may or may not be true, or it may be simply based on fancy or wishful thinking.

## **The attainment of knowledge**

There have been in the history of philosophy four primary theories of how knowledge is attained. Each provides a system built on the basis of presuppositions. All knowledge ultimately is based on presuppositions. In order to analyze or dispute claims of knowledge, scientific or otherwise, one must be aware of the presuppositions supposed by those who claim that knowledge. These four schools provide radical differences in presuppositions, and in the resulting conclusions.

### ***Rationalism***

There are two ways the term *rationalism* is used. In general the term means to base one's knowledge on only what one observes and reasons about; knowledge is not to be accepted merely on the basis of authority. However, technically, the word is much more restrictive. True, a consistent rationalist does not trust authority, but also he does not trust even his own observation; in fact, he does not trust his senses at all. The only dependable knowledge is that which originates from self-evident presuppositions and that can be developed by logical deduction from those presuppositions.

Sometimes this type of knowledge is considered to be *a priori*, it is either presupposed or is based on logical deductions from presupposed knowledge. Plato is the greatest ancient philosopher who favored this approach to knowledge. Augustine tended to follow Plato.

A famous rationalist was René Descartes, who based all knowledge on the foundational proposition, which he considered to be self-evident and incontrovertible, that “Cogito ergo sum” (“I think, therefore I am”). From this truth he followed Anselm and by logical deduction proved the existence of God, and from there branched out to other knowledge. Immanuel Kant and Georg W. F. Hegel both distrusted the senses as accurate conveyers of knowledge.

### ***Empiricism***

Empiricists are people who base knowledge on sensory perception. They believe that we can truly know the external world as it is through our senses. They are convinced that the observations they make of nature or of the results of experiments are accurate and true. These perceptions can be categorized and patterns detected. From these patterns scientists can formulate hypotheses and laws. The resulting laws are considered as knowledge, even though they may be falsified later. Knowledge in this sense is not absolute, but is probable.

Empirical knowledge is *a posteriori*, knowledge that is derived from induction, based on observation of individual examples. Aristotle believed in the empirical acquisition of knowledge. Thomas Aquinas adopted this approach. The British philosophers John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume were forerunners of modern empiricists such as William James and John Dewey, and of modern secular science.

Many Christian apologists employ empirical arguments to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. This approach is called Evidentialism. The apologetic approach that denies the validity of empirical arguments is called Presuppositionalism.

### **Skepticism**

If we know nothing except that which comes to us through our senses, if our senses do not give us absolutely reliable data or complete information, and if the actual world is in constant flux, then actually, we can know nothing. This is the conclusion of skepticism. The Greek philosopher Zeno refuted the empiricism of his contemporaries, and concluded that no knowledge is possible. This idea was picked up by the Sophists. More recently many followers of empiricism have come to realize that they can know nothing in itself, only their own sensations and thoughts; they are isolated from the world by an impassible barrier.

The extreme form of this skepticism is solipsism—all we can know is what we ourselves are thinking. This actually is the logical conclusion of any philosophy that bases knowledge on anything or anyone that is changeable. Modern existentialism is a reaction to this philosophy; truth is to be found not in an absolute being, but in oneself.

### **Dogmatism**

Dogmatism asserts that truth is obtainable. The philosophy of dogmatism is that which assumes the axiomatic truth of some revelation, and bases its knowledge on that revelation. It does not accept this revelation because of empirical or other justification; dogmatists believe that empiricism leads only to skepticism. Rather, dogmatism judges all other propositions by the revelation. All knowledge is either contained in the revelation or can be deduced logically from that revelation. Beliefs arrived at by any other way are considered as opinion and not knowledge.

Dogmatism is often accused of being circular reasoning—we believe the Bible is God's Word because the Bible says it is God's Word. In a way this is true. However, the consistency of the Bible's teachings and the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit are the motivating factors in Christianity. It might be asked how Christian dogmatism can argue against other self-consistent dogmatic systems, such as Mormonism or Islam. Dogmatists would reply that there is no basis from which to argue with a consistent dogmatist with a different set of axioms. However, they believe that these other systems contain logical contradictions and inconsistencies which we can

exploit. Dogmatists would recommend the preaching of the Word, prayer, and a Christian testimony as God's means to win the elect from other dogmatic religions.

The situation is different when arguing with empiricists. Dogmatists are permitted to assume the validity of empirical evidences for the sake of argument. This is called *argumentum ad hominem* ("arguing to the man"). It takes on the assumptions of one's opponent for the purpose of demonstrating to him that even according to his own presuppositions his non-Christian beliefs are false, and that his own standards of proof should lead him to embrace Christian doctrines. A Christian dogmatist might say something like this: "I don't believe we should base our faith on modern scientific opinion, but you do. If you do accept the conclusions of scientific investigation, then you should agree with the Bible when it talks about the creation of the universe out of nothing, and the beginning of time, or when it states that life itself and its various forms were designed by God; modern science shows that atheistic materialism has no reasonable explanation for these phenomena—its speculations are extremely improbable. So how can you go on maintaining these beliefs?" In this way presuppositionalists can consistently use evidential arguments.

## **Modern apologetic approaches**

[For a helpful classification of apologetic approaches into four main categories plus an integrative approach, see Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* (Navpress, 2001). The following categories and the lists of typical adherents are taken from this source.]

### ***Classical apologetics***

Classical apologists attempt to prove that God exists, that Jesus is his Son, and that the Bible is God's Word from some other basis. They use primarily reasonable arguments, such as the traditional theistic proofs (cosmological argument, moral argument, some use the ontological argument). They also show that competing worldviews are self-contradictory or do not explain reality. Usually they first try to show that Jesus is the Son of God, and then use his testimony to show that the Bible is God's Word. They would say that arguments from science do not prove Christianity to be true, but that they confirm Christian or theistic belief.

Typical adherents: Thomas Aquinas, B. B. Warfield, C. S. Lewis, Norman L. Geisler, Peter Kreeft, William Lane Craig.

### ***Evidential apologetics***

Evidentialists hold a high opinion of science and its ability to discover truth. For example, scientific apologist Hugh Ross states his beliefs in this way:

God speaks inerrantly through the words of the Bible. God speaks inerrantly through the facts of nature. The two revelations are totally consistent. In nature, God reveals Himself through His design and ordering of the physical processes. God also directly intervened, as described in Genesis, to shape the natural world through fiat miracles (special creation). Objective evidences are the effective tool for establishing truth. Propositions [from presuppositional apologetics] are effective in exposing error. (*Science and the Bible* syllabus, p. 1:8)

According to this approach the unbiased or scientific investigation of nature leads to the necessary conclusion that there is a Creator, who possesses the attributes which the Bible ascribes to God. Only the Bible provides a testable model of the creation of the universe that stands up scientifically. If scientists are confronted with this evidence, yet still refuse to accept Christ, the problem is a moral one, not an intellectual one.

Traditionally, the arguments most favored by evidentialists are the cosmological, teleological, and historical arguments for the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. The historical evidence for the resurrection leads us to accept its truth, and therefore the truth of Jesus' claims and teachings, including the inspiration of the Bible.

Typical adherents: Joseph Butler [and William Paley], James Orr, Clark H. Pinnock, John Warwick Montgomery, Richard Swinburne.

### ***Reformed [presuppositional] apologetics***

Presuppositional apologists generally take a dim view of empirical evidences. Some say they are useless because no knowledge can be learned purely by the senses (Clark); others say that they cannot be properly interpreted by sinful minds (Van Til). In general, these apologists come from the Reformed tradition, and believe that God alone can reveal himself to the mind, and does so for the elect. We are to receive the Bible as his Word, and then all other knowledge is made clear in its light. This is the gift of faith from God.

The apologetic method of presuppositionalism frequently is negative. The strategy is to show unbelievers that the system they hold is contradictory or irrational. Then, when the person realizes that he has no rational reason to believe and live the way he does, the gospel is presented as a self-consistent whole that meets the intellectual and moral needs we have. The apologist relies on a straight presentation of the gospel, prayer, and a life of Christian testimony to be used by God to bring the elect to salvation. Biblical truth has its own force if accompanied by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. If a presuppositionalist uses scientific or historical arguments, it is in the negative capacity of showing the person that his supposed rational beliefs are not consistent with the evidence he himself claims to follow.

Typical adherents: John Calvin, Herman Dooyeweerd, Cornelius Van Til, Gordon H. Clark, Alvin Plantinga.

### ***Fideist apologetics***

While the evidentialist depends on empirical evidences primarily, and the classical and presuppositional apologists may use such evidences in certain situations, the fideist swears off these evidences totally. Fideist apologists believe in God in spite of evidences, not because of them (cf. Kierkegaard's famous statement, "I do not believe in Christianity because it is logical, I believe because it is not logical"). This tradition tends to downplay the intellectual aspect of belief, making faith a personal relation rather than intellectual assent to propositions.

These apologists have no problem accepting science or history, regardless of modern conclusions which might negatively impact Biblical statements. Faith operates in a separate sphere, and should not be interfered with by empirical knowledge, or even by logic. This group therefore has little interest in science as having a bearing on religion. Our decisions for or against Christianity arise not from our intellect, but from our personal feelings and inclinations.

Typical adherents: Martin Luther, Blaise Pascal, Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, Donald G. Bloesch.

### ***Integrated apologetics***

While most adherents to the four main categories of apologetics believe that their system is incompatible with the other three systems, there are some who believe these systems are not mutually contradictory, but can be combined in some way. These apologists will use the approach that seems to best fit the situation or the person being talked to. For example, these apologists would use scientific arguments with people who are influenced by science in a more positive way than a presuppositionalist would, but would use philosophical arguments with other people. With some they may forgo evidences altogether, appealing to the emotions—a fideist approach.

Typical adherents: Edward J. Carnell, Francis A. Schaeffer, David K. Clark, C. Stephen Evans, John M. Frame.

## **The classic arguments for the existence of God**

Through the centuries apologists and theologians have developed several ways to demonstrate the existence of God, using logic and observations. These methods have been called the classic arguments. They can be divided into two major types: *a priori* (logically independent of sense perception), and *a posteriori* (logically dependent on sense perception).

The *a priori* arguments are considered to be deductive in nature, and their conclusions are said to be certain. The *a posteriori* arguments, being based on sense experience and on limited observation, are inductive in nature, and can yield only probable conclusions.

These arguments are discussed in all standard theologies and standard apologetics texts. A well thought out historical summary is provided in the *Great Books Syntopicon*, ch. 29, esp. pp. 551-557, with detailed index following. A helpful summary in chart form is in H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, pp. 34-38.

Here is a brief list of these arguments, in the approximate order in which they have been discussed in Christian apologetics:

### ***Ontological argument***

Propounded by Anselm; supported by Descartes and Spinoza; opposed by Aquinas and Kant.

Assumes that God must be conceived as “a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.” And since necessary existence is greater than possible existence, this idea must include the idea of absolute existence. Hence, the non-existence of God would involve the thinker in a logical contradiction, which is impossible. Hence, God must exist.

Aquinas and others answer that while the non-existence of God may involve us in a logical contradiction of thought, such a difficulty does not preclude his non-existence in reality.

### ***Innate knowledge argument***

Propounded by Augustine, Calvin, Locke, Hodge.

States that all people have a natural knowledge or understanding of God’s existence and claims on them. This knowledge may come from reflection on our own existence or that of the universe (when it does, it overlaps the cosmological argument). Evidence for this view is seen in the nearly universal belief in some sort of God or gods. Atheists are the exception.

Opponents argue that apparently not all men have this innate knowledge, and that the various views of God are contradictory. Beliefs in God may be the result of cultural environment.

## **Cosmological argument**

Propounded by Augustine, Aquinas, Newton, Berkeley, Descartes, some modern creationists, recently by Craig; opposed by many philosophers (e.g., Hume, Kant).

The existence of the universe must have a cause; this cause must be separate from the universe and greater than the universe, that is, God.

Aquinas expanded this argument with five major sub-points, called the “five ways” to prove the existence of God: argument from motion (echoing Aristotle), argument from efficient cause (as Berkeley and Locke), argument from potentiality (similar to Platonists), argument from the gradation of things (similar to Descartes), and argument from the governance of the world (similar to the teleological argument, as in Newton).

William Lane Craig (*Apologetics: An Introduction*) points out that the reigning theory of the beginning of the universe (the “big bang”) requires us to believe that the universe is finite in time, with a beginning and an end; hence, it is not eternal, and something or someone other than itself must have started it. There is a detailed description of this argument as developed by Islamic scholars in the Middle Ages by Craig (*The Kalām Cosmological Argument*, also his *Time and Eternity: An Exploration of God’s Relationship to Time*).

Critics of this argument maintain that whatever caused the universe, it need not be a personal God. Perhaps the universe is eternal (materialism, oscillating universe theory); perhaps other natural events can account for the “big bang.” In any case, the development of our present universe after the “big bang” can be accounted for by natural forces and laws, with adequate time for chance events. And wouldn’t God himself need a cause?

The common idea that the universe developed “by chance” is refuted by R. C. Sproul, *Not a Chance: The Myth of Chance in Modern Science and Cosmology* (1994).

## **Teleological argument**

Propounded by Aquinas, Newton, Butler, Paley, modern creationists; opposed by many philosophers (e.g., Russell); brought up to date by Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biomedical Challenge to Evolution* (1996); excellent summary of use of this argument by Thomas C. Oden, “Without Excuse: Classic Christian Exegesis of General Revelation,” *JETS* 41/1 (Mar., 1998), 55-68; also John C. Hutchison, “The Design Argument in Scientific Discourse: Historical-Theological Perspective from the Seventeenth Century,” *JETS* 41/1 (Mar., 1998), 85-105. Recently astronomer and physicist Hugh Ross has contributed much to this argument: *The Fingerprint of God: Recent Scientific Discoveries Reveal the Unmistakeable Identity of the Creator* (1991),

and *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2001), *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy* (2004), *Origins of Life Biblical and Evolutionary Models Face Off* (co-authored with Fazale Rana, 2004); these arguments continue to expand with new discoveries of the fine-tuning of the universe (cf. the frequently updated list of items at [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org), under “Evidence for Design”). [For additional resources, see the discussion on Intelligent Design in the previous chapter.]

There is apparent design in nature (*telos* in Greek means end, purpose, goal). Random chance cannot account for the intricate, complex, beautiful workings of nature. These are seen in inanimate laws and objects, and in living things. A purposeful God, a grand Designer must stand behind what we see. The modern Intelligent Design movement has published many updated forms of this argument.

Opponents answer that there is much chaos in nature; there is no apparent design or purpose. By and large the universe is cold, uninviting, and cruel. Life as we know it can be explained through random chance and evolution, which is a scientific certainty.

For a recent attempt to explain the complexity of the universe by natural causes, see Charles W Petit, “The Cosmic Code: Does the Universe Run on a Simple Computer Program?” *U. S. News* (Aug. 19, 2002); this article popularizes the book by Stephen Wolfram, *A New Kind of Science* (2002). Atheistic physicist Murray Gell Mann has founded the Santa Fe Institute, to study ways to explain design from naturalistic causes (see his *The Quark and the Jaguar* [1994]). A fairly technical defense of the necessity of intelligent design of the information found in complex systems is William A. Dembski, *No Free Lunch: Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased without Intelligence* (2002); the cover features a molecular depiction of the flagellum of one-celled bacteria—the example made famous by Michael Behe’s *Darwin’s Black Box*.

For the objection of the problem of evil in the universe, see John E. Hare, “The Problem of Evil,” ch. 5.1 of *Evidence for Faith*, ed. by John Warwick Montgomery, pp. 231-52; also the entire issue of the *WRS Journal* (*Theodicy: God’s Justice in an Evil World*) 3/1 (Winter, 1996)

### **Moral argument**

Propounded by Kant, Pascal, recently by C. S. Lewis.

All people know that certain thoughts or actions are “right” or “wrong.” But these categories would have no meaning without the existence of some moral standard outside of ourselves. This is God, the supreme moral law giver. Without God’s existence, there could be no moral categories.

Pascal's variation: "Pascal's Wager": better to assume Christianity true, with resulting goodness, holiness, happiness, hope of eternal life, than to assume it false, with resulting discord, meaninglessness, and death.

Critics say that the world does not show a moral bias; moral laws made by society for its own purposes; concepts of morality not the same in various cultures. Christianity has produced much evil, they say.

## **Debate over Presuppositionalism versus Evidentialism**

Presuppositionalists strongly reject using the classical arguments for the existence of God. These arguments, they say, give up too much. These arguments assume that the person with whom you are arguing has an open mind to the truth, and that it is possible to begin where sinful man is mentally and proceed through reasoning he will accept to demonstrate the existence of the true God. It also assumes that often these arguments are valid, a point presuppositionalists are not always ready to accept.

This procedure is considered to be impossible. Sin has so darkened the mind in both its presuppositions and in its operations that it is impossible to believe in the true God through this means. If any god could be arrived at, it would not be the true God, against whom Adam and Eve rebelled in the Garden. One procedure used by presuppositionalists can be called the argument from consistency.

Consistency argument. Propounded by many Reformed apologists (Bavinck, Van Til, Clark, to some extent Schaeffer).

Christian theism is the only system which accounts for all points observable in the human condition and the revelation given by God. Without Christian theism no fact has meaning, and even meaningful communication becomes impossible. Rational thought and communication are possible only because of the God of Christianity.

This view rejects the other "proofs" as inadequate or unsuitable for unbelievers. It will use evidential arguments only to demonstrate fallacies in the beliefs of opponents, not to demonstrate the truth of Christian theism.

It is called "presuppositionalism" because it begins by presupposing either the Christian or the non-Christian presuppositions for sake of argument. The non-Christian presuppositions are shown to lead inexorably to a universe of isolated "facts" which have no meaning for each other or for the universe at large. The Christian presuppositions, on the other hand, provide a meaningful universe, the creation of God, and a revelation from this God which leads to life and meaning.

[In addition to the writings of Cornelius Van Til and Gordon Clark, see Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready: Directions for Defending the Faith* (1996). A good, sympathetic assessment of Van Til is by Timothy I. McConel, “The Influence of Idealism on the Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til,” *JETS* 48:3 (September 2005) 557-588.]

Opponents say that this approach uses circular reasoning: assuming the truth of what is to be proved. It provides no reason acceptable to the inquirer for adopting Christian theism, any more than adopting any other claim to supernatural religion (e.g., Islam).

[See, e.g., criticism in *Evidence for Faith*, ed. by John Warwick Montgomery: Ch. 1: William J. Cairney, “The Value of an Evidential Approach; Ch. 2: Herman J. Eckelmann, “An Evidential Approach to Biblical Christianity”; also, for a good defense and illustration of Evidentialism, J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (1997).]

Other presuppositionalists tend to avoid this philosophical approach to apologetics, and emphasize the methods of direct evangelism, prayer, and the Christian life. Some combine these methods with particular evidential defenses of the Christian faith at points under attack (as John Whitcomb’s works on creationism; Whitcomb, however, says these scientific studies are useful primarily for helping to exegete the Scripture, not to confirm the Scripture).

Some have criticized the Princeton theologians (C. Hodge, A. A. Hodge, B. B. Warfield) for being rationalistic and ignoring the force of presuppositionalism’s arguments. However, more careful study shows this not to be the case; see Paul Kjoss Helseth, “‘Re-imagining’ the Princeton Mind: Postconservative Evangelicalism, Old Princeton, and the Rise of Neo-Fundamentalism” *JETS* 45:3 (Sept 2002) 427-450.

## **A biblical apologetic**

As seen in the section of apologetic passages in the NT, Christ and the apostles use a variety of evidences to show the truth of the biblical system. Some of the classic arguments are parallel to these passages. For example, the teleological argument is similar to passages in the Psalms (as Ps 19) and to Paul’s apologetic with Gentiles (Acts 14, 17; Rom 1), in that it directs our attention to the creation as revealing characteristics of its Creator, including power, intelligence, and will. The definition of a fool in Psalms 14 and 53 as one who denies any divine consequence for good or evil by saying “There is no God,” is similar in thrust to the classic moral argument.

In spite of these passages, the Bible more particularly points to the internal evidences of revelation. The very existence of God is never questioned. The Scriptures simply assume God to exist: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Many Bible passages

describe God's attributes. The prophecies of the Bible, fulfilled in Bible times, are often spoken of as giving evidence of the divine inspiration of the prophets (cf. his challenge to the idols in Isa. 41:21-29).

Of course, the life, miracles, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the primary apologetic in the NT. Not only did he fulfill the OT prophecies of the Messiah, but the testimonies of John the Baptist, of the Father, and of the eyewitnesses who saw him all show that he is indeed the one he claims to be, the Son of God.

The NT also emphasizes the vital nature of the testimony of Christians. Their witnessing, Christian lives, and prayers all lead to the salvation of people who know them.

Today it is imperative for Christians to follow this basic apologetic. In addition, Christian teachers should be able, as God enables, to answer particular objections to the faith in the various fields of history, archaeology, biblical study, or science, or at least be able to point the way for further help. While use of the classic arguments may not prove the God of the Bible, they can provide, with Christian presuppositions (if used cumulatively, as Hodge points out), further confirmation of the God of revelation. They also can be used in an ad hominem fashion to confound attacks against Christianity.

If we work diligently to witness for Christ in our day, we will, as Peter tells us, always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us. God has used faithful apologists to win many souls for Christ; may he use us as well!