

Introduction to Christian Apologetics

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The word “Apologetics” is not derived from the English word “apology” but rather is from the Greek word “*apologia*” which denotes a defence (of something). In this context, we are referring to the defence of the Christian faith against attacks which are so common in these degenerate days.

The last four to five centuries has witnessed a rise in people questioning the authenticity and authority of the Bible. They have gone further to cast doubt and question the reliability of the Bible. These people highlight apparent inconsistencies, contradictions, mistakes and errors in the Bible. Once they have done that, they then publish abroad to demonstrate that the Bible is obsolete, valueless and must be discarded forthwith, hardly worth believing. They even go further to portray historical Christianity as vain, oppressive and primitive. Every day, and from every nation, a plethora of books, magazines, articles and talk shows pour out damaging information calculated at destroying the faith itself as well as the faith of adherents. In the educational institutions, Universities, laboratories and literary everywhere, the anti Christian philosophies have now taken the centre stage. Dr William Craig in his book *Reasonable faith* has highlighted this fact. God is relegated to the terraces while mortals replace Him. As the young Christian, vibrant in their faith enter these centres of learning, they soon encounter the rude shock at how godless people have become. The systems and attitudes in these places are all infiltrated with anti Christian sentiments. These naive young people’s faith is either ripped apart or seriously shaken. In comes a doubt phase which may make them stagger out of college as weaker saints than they first entered in to learn (if not altogether atheistic in some cases). Whilst they are sure about the evidence of God’s grace in their lives, these students suddenly have to grapple with real issues questioning the legitimacy of their faith. If they go into the psychology class for instance, they are told that what they believe was “imposed” upon their will and the concept of God forcefully implanted on their minds when they were young! This writer had his faith terribly shaken when he first entered University life. At first I had assumed that everyone on campus had the fear of God, although they might not necessarily be converted. I got the shock of his life. When he entered a Veterinary student’s room one evening to preach Christ, I was shocked at the response of the senior student. He simply said “*This is University my friend, God is just a figment of peoples’ imagination*”! That statement shook me to the core but in the same breathe prepared me for action. After that encounter, I met a

hundred others that held similar views while a good number of fellow “*Freshers*” also got engrafted into the University non-Christian mould of thinking. The Campus Christian Fellowship helped resolve and stabilise many of us. Those that did not take heed fell by the wayside and never rose again.

However, the changes in the world have necessitated the need to develop tools and approaches to handle these serious attacks against the Christian faith. Thus, this Christian apologetics introduction highlights some of the issues and attacks that have invaded the Christian camp from the religious world (e.g. Muslims, Mormons, Hindus, ATR, NAM, heretics, cults etc.), the non-religious world (e.g. secular) or indeed any other form being broad cast through the ever developing technology, electronic and print media among many. Christian apologetics also takes a keen interest in identifying the cults that continuously undercut the faith thereby hijacking the faith of some people. It also answers the question “Is Christianity Believable?”

Biblical basis for Christian Apologetics

Like in any other undertaking, there is need to define issues as well as know why we undertake some activity, let alone the path we take. Is there Biblical warrant and mandate to engage in this noble task? Is it supported by scripture and why? These questions are important and depending on how they are answered, they will affect how we engage in apologetics, assuming the Bible allows it. The onslaughts from every turn obviously make it a reasonable thing to undertake because if the faith will grow, it must have the right publicity. At the moment, there is so much all over the world that is arrayed against the Christian faith and needs someone to cleanse it, although not every problem can be sorted with the same satisfaction or degree. One thing is clear however, the Bible does recognise that Scoffers and enemies of the faith would arise (Jude, 2 Peter) and indeed have risen with increasing sophistry. In 1 Peter 3:15, the Bible talks about the Christian being able to give a reason for the hope they have in Christ. This means that they must not only own the faith but must be able to reasonably explain it. In another passage, the Bible talks about how this should be done (Titus 1:10-11, I Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Tim 2:15-19, 23-25). Elsewhere, the scriptures talks about Christians being able to hold on to the deep truths of the faith so that they can not only defend themselves but also those under their care (Acts 20:29-31). The mature Christian must be so trained that they can competently handle the sword of the Spirit as well as repel enemies of the cross. Hebrews 5:14 talks about Christians having trained themselves and able to discern wrong from right. This is high spiritual maturity. The weapons to be used and methods are not like those of this world but they are mighty to the demolishing of strong holds and reasoning of men (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). Thus, the Bible places a high premium on the mental preparedness of the Christian apologist who will be competent and apt to teach or defend the faith. This entails internalising the word of God so that

it dwells richly (Colossians 2:6-7; 3:16) in them as well as knowing the times so that they answer appropriately and clearly.

Apologetics scenarios in the Bible

The Bible gives several examples of defending the faith. It shows through such lives as of Moses (before Pharaoh), Daniel (colleagues), Jesus' Ministry (Miracles etc.), Paul (before Felix and King Agrippa) among many others. The Bible is replete with instances where people defended the faith or showed proof that they had been sent by God or to authenticate some act. Thus, the Bible is never against reason, thinking or proof as some people might mistakenly believe.

Apologetics and polemics

Apologetics is wide and encompasses polemics. People define these differently and in some instances swap their true function. In this paper, we take one of such positions While being alive to alternative classifications (e.g. positive or negative apologetics) or descriptions. While apologetics primarily concerns itself with attacks raised against the Christian faith from the outside world (i.e. non-Christians etc.), polemics focuses on defending the faith within (though some like Jay Smith extend it to include demolishing views of non-Christian faiths like Islam for instance) the brackets of the Christian faith. This defence includes exposing cults, defusing their venom as well as defending fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. In polemics, a defence is given against people "within the fold" who have arisen to attack the faith in different ways either by tearing apart the Bible, questioning its legitimacy and authority or even out rightly imbibing and then rejecting the faith. The attacks hail principally from two sources. Firstly, it is a misinterpretation of the word which lends itself to faulty practice and belief. The second source is from the cults infiltrating the ranks of the church claiming to be part of the main line churches or even claim to be the only true Children of God while the rest are lost or misled. This latter group includes the Jehovah's witnesses, SDA, Moonies, Mormons among many. Thus, polemics studies these cults and refutes them based on facts. These attackers of the faith would include those that teach perverted doctrines not in line with the entirety of scripture. The ultimate aim of both polemics and apologetics is one-refute error (i.e. negative apologetics) and establish truth (i.e. positive apologetics).

History of Apologetics

Apologetics is as old as the church itself contrary what many people assume. The church has been in constant combat from the early days. The first two centuries witnessed a lot of divisions consistent with what the lord himself and the apostles Paul & Peter warned about. Thus, the church had to contend with

these matters. With the progression of the centuries, more and more problems arose which demanded different types of apologists and polemical giants. For now, we take a brief tour of apologetics from the early Biblical times right across to recent time our first stop is the Old Testament.

Apologetics in the Old Testament

As earlier intimated, apologetics is as ancient as the church, yea, even in the old Testament. As the Jewish nation was set apart and developed, the pagans and people around them not only doubted whether their God was the true God, they also detested this thought and claim. The Jewish God is unique and stands alone. He transcends time and is infinite. Time and time again, God's children were challenged to demonstrate and prove that their God indeed existed. When it pleased God, he showed abundant proof.

Apologetics among the Jewish fathers

The Bible states right from Genesis that man is sinful, depraved and unable to change his own state or destiny. The Bible consistently maintains this thought throughout the scriptures apart from providing a divine remedy in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is only in Christ (Acts 4:12) that salvation is and therein lies the only hope for the world. It is this thought/claim that has consistently infuriated the pagans who detest this all powerful God. They claim that all men will be saved regardless of what they believe or do in life. The Bible comes along and makes exclusive statements which hit hard against all their false beliefs. Thus, they naturally oppose all Bible truth or doctrine. Even today, many people hate the gospel because of its sharpness, convicting power and directness. Apologists and any Christian for that matter, has to contend with such attitudes and thoughts. Josephus (though unregenerate Jewish historian) was one of the earliest and finest apologists we have on record, though he was not the only one at the time.

Apologetics in the New Testament

The New Testament is replete with statements suggesting that a lot of opposition to the word existed even in the early days of the gospel times. Prior to the New Testament, specialised groups took advantage and taught things that they thought were the "correct things" and opposed anything that suggested otherwise. For instance, some of their teaching was porous, syncretic, unnecessarily accommodating, universalistic etc. while others like the Essenes, Sadducees or Pharisees were unduly exclusive but when the Gospel light came along, things were made very clear and duly easily explainable. Recall that the Old Testament was but a shadow of things to come and thus had some veiled

things which the New Testament opened up. Thus, some of the extant false teachers were exposed for what they were. The various books in the Bible each deal with a specific issue while others are historical narratives. Peter for instance warns about scoffers appearing the last days. Jude urges the saints to contend for the faith while John (1, 2 & 3 John) wrestles with false teaching (such as Gnosticism, Arianism/ Socinianism etc.). The same problems that were dealt with in the early days of the faith have repeatedly popped up in different forms across the centuries and have had apologists equal to the task.

Apologetics among the church fathers and their heirs

The church continued to receive attacks from every front, turn and angle. Attacks flew in from within and without the church. Mortals uncomfortable with the Bible and its claims went to great lengths to discredit and malign the faith. What made it worse for them is that many people progressively imbibed the faith remaining steadfast in the ways of the Lord. To counter and slow this process, men like Porphyry wrote volumes upon volumes to attack the Christian faith. Others joined him equally throwing in their deadly arsenals. This development did not deter the Church fathers from responding. In fact, this attack forced them to rise to the occasion and put pen to paper, refuting, correcting, clarifying and establishing the faith. It was not easy work by any standards but they fought a good fight and left the life centre stage having fought a good fight. These defenders of the faith, including Polycarp, Clement, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Tertullian, Eusebius, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas A Kempis, Savonarola, Martin Luther, Calvin, The Puritans among a long line of others, stressed the inspiration of scripture, the uniqueness of the god of Israel, his attributes, Holiness, Justification by faith among many doctrines before some of them were hijacked by later enemies of the cross.

Modern Creationism and Apologetics

The Roman Catholic Church took over the Christian Church and reigned unrivalled for a thousand years from about the 4th century all the way to the 14th when the Reformation came about. In that "Dark age", no dissenting voice or questioning mind was allowed its liberty of expression. The Roman Church became so potent and ruled both politically and ecclesiastically. Myriads were martyred for their faith. When the new dawn arrived, Christian liberty was rediscovered but along with it came a lot of other offshoots, some good and others bad. The down side of the Reformation/dissent was the rise of many anti-Christian elements that really reacted against the churches' tyranny. They did not see any difference between Biblical Christianity (Championed by the Dissenters/Reformers) and traditional earthly ecclesiastical politics (Championed by the Roman Catholic Church). The former stood on the five solas while the latter stood on church tradition. The enemies of the cross threw the baby with the

bath and generated a plethora of propaganda material aimed at destroying or opposing all religion. That partly explains why many people in Europe today for instance consider religion as a private matter not to be discussed in public. That equally explains why many people in Europe today resist the Church because it still is branded/stigmatized as oppressive. Stereotypes die hard for sure. Science seems to have explained all the questions that the Church has historically exploited to oppress the world keeping it in subjection, so the worldlings claim. Evolution is one such issue, so they claim. I once was shocked to hear a long time saintly friend claim that science had almost supplanted the Christian faith when I visited the UK at one point. What was disturbing was that this friend was supposed to be a sound Evangelical! Without critically processing, even Christians can drink in defective narratives! This is most troubling.

As the centuries have gone by, more and more changes have developed. New theories have arisen directly challenging the Christian faith. One major challenge of all time was the suggestion and establishment of the Theory of Evolution put forward by Charles Darwin in the 1850's (A British Theologian). Darwin's 1859 *Origin of species* came with a bang, received wide acceptance and has worked very hard and effectively against the Christian faith. This theory spread like bush fire all over the world and invaded German theological schools who soon taught evolution rather than creation as a fact. What did this theory actually do/suggest and imply? Firstly, the theory suggested that the world evolved from lower species rather than created by a supreme being. This negated the Creation story in the Bible. Secondly, this theory caught on so fast in the academic circles because it was an alternative to the Creation story. Within a short time, the books were rewritten and soon evolution became the established theory in all learning institutions. Today's science is based on Evolution rather than Creation. Thirdly, evolution gave birth to other things such as humanism, no value for sacred life (e.g. abortion, communism etc.). There are many other off-shoots of this theory. Fourthly, the introduction of this theory brought about serious compromise in the Church and belief in the Bible. The book (Bible) was in the dock and was believed by some in addition to the 'new found facts of evolution'. To counter this new threat, a new breed of apologists have arisen. The first group contends that creation rather than evolution is the basis of all origins (in fact, Evolution itself does not even answer the question of origins!). Creation is more reasonable by all standards and many more scientists today attest to this. These apologists have and continue to work hard at adducing evidence to prove the creation claims. Among the Young Earth creation apologists have been Drs. Henry Morris and John Whitcomb. The second group of has been that of "integrated apologists" that seek to combine the best approaches to apologetics from both the Evidential as well as Presuppositional school of thought. Dr Johnson C Philip and Dr Saneesh Cherian fall into this category. A lot of work has gone into investigating and coming up with tools, approaches and ways of handling modern attacks against the Bible. This latter work has become necessary and ongoing.

Creationist apologetics in India

Indian Theology, being a replica of western theology has not been spared by the “wind of change” earlier on alluded to. The liberal theological, evangelical radical views, theistic evolution, Gap theory, process evolution and a whole host of other teachings invaded and have weakened the Church badly in India. However, God always has a remnant in each age. A group of churches like Baptists, Brethren and Pentecostals have never abandoned their belief in the Bible. They have defended the faith as entrusted to them. Dr Cherish and Philip have written extensively on the Indian scenario for which we are indebted.

That said, several individuals stand out among the Indian saints to have taken a stand against liberalism as well as asserting Biblical Christianity. Among these are Professor H Enoch, Dr Thomas Matthews (through the Cross and Crown magazine), A.K Skariah, Dr Johnson George, Dr Ezhamkulam Sumkutty, J.C Dev, E.s. Thomas, Paul K. Ramakrishnan, Dr Ravi Zacharias and John C Philip among many worthy others.

Apologetics in Zambia

Not much tangible gains have been systematically developed/recorded in Zambia by indigenous Zambians as at 2020, though aspects of this apologetic prowess was present in verbal form between 1987 and 1999. A gradual decline ensued there after. One probable reason could be attributed to Zambia's polite culture, not wanting to offend any one. Even well trained apologists would rather remain quiet to avoid ruffling feathers, even in the light of clear error. However, two people stand out in Zambia today, Logan Nyasulu and Kennedy Gondwe. While Gondwe has focused on the cults in Zambia, Nyasulu has been polemical, vigorously identifying, exposing and refuting doctrinal errors within the Evangelical fraternity. That said, much remains to be done in raising effective potent apologists within the context. One thing needs to be addressed for this to happen, a transformation to a biblical world view not hijacked by cultural lenses. Gondwe and Nyasulu seem to have both escaped this trap, at great cost of course.

Gains of Modern apologetics

What has all this arduous work earned for the church? What has been the benefit of pouring in thousands of resources, man hours in polemics? For one thing, there has been a rise in the return to the Bible in some quarters. Many more people are increasingly now far more confident in the Bible. For another thing, people now respect the Bible better than before. In the third place, Creation is now increasingly a more serious and reasonable approach to origins than Evolution which is at the verge of being vomited by some scientists. The faith of

many has been strengthened and solidified as a result of apologetics. This in turn has largely, though not completely sealed the loop holes and bleeding side of the church which saw thousands of young Christians imbibe wrong teaching or even have their faith wrecked in the process. The Church is certainly on better standing than in the past because materials on about any subject in relation to the Christian faith abound everywhere.

The importance of apologetics

As earlier alluded to in the previous sections, Christian apologetics is now non-negotiable. Every Christian worth their salt has to engage in some form of apologetics. Even more, if one is to counter the sophisticated theories on the market place today arrayed against Biblical Christianity and the Bible itself, one must be thoroughly prepared. In attempting to state the importance of apologetics, we suggest a few things:

1. The rise of many dissenting views: since the Reformation onward to the industrial revolution and beyond, many people have risen who have vigorously antagonized the faith from every and any conceivable angle. Apologetics is therefore more than relevant.
2. Establishing confidence in the Bible (although inherently authoritative in itself since divinely inspired): The damaging effect of liberal theology and higher criticism nearly evaporated all authority and importance of the Bible in many minds, though the divine text itself never lost its intrinsic inspirational power. In the public eye however, the Bible was not respected or viewed as highly as it once was. Apologetics is key towards re-establishing the affected confidence in the public eye.
3. Asserting Creation over evolution: For a long time now, people think that evolution is a scientific fact. This is not true, it is rather called "*Scientism*" as Dr Ferrell Griswold once dubbed it. Apologetics sets the record straight.
4. Establishing standards: Apologetics sets the standards for polemics as well as debate on issues relating to the Christian faith. Many tools and methods are constantly being developed that will help counter the for ever rising barrage of attacks arrayed against the faith/Bible. This avalanche will not stop any time soon but apologetics research sets a standard against these relentless onslaughts of Bible enemies.
5. Edifying the saints: Apologetics edifies and builds many people. It sobers them and brings them to a correct view and position in the faith.

6. A means of grace: Defending the faith entails getting deeper into the faith with a view to bring out the truth in any given situation. In the quest to give a reason for the faith we possess, we get grounded and know God better. Thus, a closer walk with God results. The word of Christ dwells in us richly as we admonish, build each other up as well as wad off the scorners or sceptics/enemies of the faith.

What are the aims of apologetics?

Although the aims or goals of apologetics do not change, the methods and strategies do.

These are soon revealed in the following points:

- Refute all accusations and allegations raised against the Church/Bible.
- To demonstrate that the Bible alone has answers to life's perplexing questions as well as Christianity being the only path to true happiness. While Science is battling to catch up with facts, the Bible stated truth ages ago.
- To remove/minimise doubts in Christians in relation to the faith or the Bible.
- Provide sufficient evidence for the Christian faith although total proof is not achievable for everything in the world.

What can apologetics do

Apologetics can achieve a lot. It has inherent potency to change the way people think and operate.

Below are some of these:

- Challenge the thinking of the times.
- Establish what is correct.
- Convince 'gainsayers' and enemies of the Bible that God is.
- Silence sceptics
- Generate interest in the Bible as well as respect from people.

- Point people to the cross for salvation.

There are different schools of thought/classes of people who perceive apologetics as either a necessity or waste of time. The one argues that the Bible does not need to be defended since it is of divine origin, it can stand on its own. Usually, these are not ready to think through issues though this blanket statement may not hold true in all cases. Usually Presuppositional apologists fall into this bracket. There is another group who do not really care or regard the scripture true not can it be fully trusted. Everything scripture says generates debate in their mind. This group is classified as the sceptics. Then there are the rationalists who hold that reason is sufficient to prove the Christian faith using all sorts of available arguments. The logical Christian thinks by logical deduction of points that can convince people. This starts from a certain premise and leads to a conclusion. It must be stated however that although logic and rational thinking/reason alone cannot convert some one in and of themselves, they do however have a place in that they can strengthen some one's faith. Reason definitely is helpful alongside faith as the Holy Spirit applies these truths to people's hearts.

The Purpose of apologetics:

Apologetics has a specific function, as a branch of Christian Theology. Below are some of the purposes of apologetics:

- To explain the Bible and faith in language people of today can understand. In the midst of rapid dynamics, apologetics clears questions, establishes the truth as well as builds confidence in the Bible. Apologetics establishes the Bible as the word of God, the final authority/court of appeal in all matters relating to the faith. It does not prove but asserts that the Bible is inspired.
- Apologetics does not deal with everything that comes along. It is limited in scope and design. The aim is to refute error as well as establish truth in the same breathe. That means that it may not be used to prove that the Bible is the word of God but assert this.
- Apologetics aims rather at removing barriers to faith, correct perception of the word rather than creating faith in some one. Only God can impart saving faith while apologetics engages the mind to ensure a correct view and opinion of truth is established.
- Apologetics is not for the purely logical mind but for the sincere enquirer about the faith. It removes barriers and shed light on some one's path leading to salvation in Christ. If you are sincere and ready to learn,

apologetics will help. If you approach it with other motives, it may not be helpful. Although logical and rational thinking is helpful to the faith as well, once taken on its own (for the sake of it), it is not profitable.

- Although apologetics can give amazing proofs about this point or the other, it cannot of itself generate faith in some one. Facts alone with the conviction of the spirit is useless. If someone is truly saved, they produce fruit, and fruit that will last. Only the Holy Spirit reverberates thereby imparting new life not human arguments.
- Apologetics will germinate and bear much fruit in a sincere field/heart. It is meant to clear doubts in those that may be assaulted by some “spiritual infirmity” only if they are willing to receive its healing balm.
- Seekers and people needing clarification about the Christian faith and the Bible can be helped by apologetics. However, it is important to note that Apologetics is not the gospel itself, but an aid. Therefore, the gospel must be explained first in its simplicity and power and should a person raise some doubts, the apologetics walking stick is then summoned to explain the truth.
- *Scientism* is the study of something using the aid of science. Not everything can be studied in that way and is thus restricted. True Science is undertaken exploiting the Scientific method arriving at empirical evidence. It follows laid down procedures and processes as Karl Popper has taught us. Thomas Kuhn (1996) further teaches us that Science is in consistent flux in the quest for Truth or knowledge. On the other hand, Faith cannot be proved using the Scientific method. The two approaches to establishing truth are different but not necessarily antagonistic.

Practical value of studying

The value of something is shown in the way it is protected, preserved or treated. In this regard, saints have a sacred trust, encapsulated in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For that reason, apologetics comes as its defender against outside onslaughts while polemics sorts out internal attacks. Briefly, we should say that apologetic study has the following advantages/value:

1. Preserves/conserves our faith: Apologetics study not only convinces or protects the faith, it also is a means to build our faith as well as preserve/conserves our heritage against wolves. Were it not for Athanasius, the doctrine of the Trinity would have been long overthrown

by the Arians. Apologetics equips the Christian against any possible external or internal onslaught and mitigates the shocking impact inflicted on them.

2. Better ability to contend for the faith: Although all types of arrows fly around the Christian's armour aiming to destroy him/her, the equipped apologist is better able to engage in combat against any foe. S/he does not flee or surrender easily. They daily discern and know what appropriate antidote to apply in a given context.
3. Sensitivity and ability to detect/identify enemy strategies: The trained apologist eye will have the ability to detect error or an attack against the faith from afar. While the enemy is still loading their muzzle in order to shoot, the apologist will have already put an antidote in place. In fact, they will be able to even prevent the combat in the first place because they know all about the enemies' ploy. As strategies and methods change to more sophistry, so also the apologist.
4. Lastly, apologetics helps in witnessing to the lost and doubting. The timid are emboldened, the weak strengthened, the doubting assured and the critical silenced.

Non-Interest in Christian Apologetics

Some Christians, as earlier on hinted at, do not see any value in apologetics. They think it is a needless undertaking that merely wastes people's time. The Bible alone is sufficient and needs not be defended using human logic or arguments, so they rightly argue. In a sense this is true but the dynamic world is rapidly changing and constantly needs fresh answers to fresh questions whose source is always the Bible. Some may go so far as to assert that apologetics is an expression little faith in the Bible! The reverse actually is true. Because the Bible is so valuable, every effort must be made to ensure that it is correctly understood by all and sundry. Christians vary in the way they respond to the study of apologetics. This is largely because of their hind orientation, misconceptions or just a sheer amount of laziness to exercise their minds. There are at least six categories of Christian responses to apologetics. We list them below and give a brief explanation of each:

- Those assured and never doubt their faith: The body of Christ has such saints whose faith is never shaken come what may. Their trust in the Lord is sincere and remains so throughout their lives or at least in the main.
- People preserved from scornful attacks on their faith: These are in the minority though but some exist in certain localities who have simply never

had their faith tried and tested or ridiculed. These have no reason to be shaken in their faith.

- People who flee from trouble (escapists): When people attack their faith, they swiftly and smoothly slither away and be at rest. They do not allow a deadly dosage enter their belief system to suffocate their faith, if such a thing can occur.
- Some believe the Bible may/does contain some errors. They magnify typographical or other apparent errors in their mind and thus focus only on these. In other words, they are blind to any positives about the Bible and in fact get irritated when someone defends the Bible inerrancy. They are agitated and summon whatever arguments they have in the name of being “open minded”.
- Some have reached a stage where nothing affects them anymore. Time was when they were disturbed by the slightest apparent error or deviation from the Bible but with time, they adjust and become accustomed to issues to the extent that they almost become numb to any deviation from the word of God. While others are perturbed, they smoothly sail by. They do not care what others face or struggle with.
- Pseudo-apologist are those that claim to know a lot and come across as genuine apologists when in fact all they crave prestige, honour, attention, glory or a big title tied to their names. They probably have been trained in some other discipline and not necessarily in genuine authentic apologetics. They may not know much but bits and pieces of things which they parrot around and impress some people in the process. Mark my words, I do not for a moment suggest that only formally trained mortals can or should engage in legitimate apologetics, what could be further from the truth! I would that all Christians were involved but must invest quality time in mastering the art so that they enter with the right motives, aims or aspirations, to serve the Lord, period!

All said, apologetics is not for the faint hearted nor for those with wrong motives. It demands and calls for resilience, painstaking self exertion and consistency over the long haul.

Opposition to apologetics

Like any other branch of Theological pursuit, apologetics has suffered its own fair share of challenges from outside forces. Since it stands up to time held errors

and new heresies, it is despised, rejected, ridiculed and literary hated in many circles. While some think it is a waste of time, others feel it is a serious threat to their respective theories and heretical views they have held on to. For instance, those that hold on to process creation cannot stomach listening to an avowed literal creationist opting speedily shout them down! Some fall into fits of rage because their view is questioned and punctured at every turn. The bold however stand firm while the cowardly buckle out dreading to commit academic suicide. The latter fear man over God.

That said, apologetics has increasingly assumed an important position in Christian circles because it confronts and answers the world's assertions and claims. Alvin Plantinga's synopsis gave a very encouraging ring to it when he reviewed how Christian Philosophy had fared in the 20th Century.

Strangely, some Christians do not like apologetics because of the following reasons among many others:

- Distrust. They distrust reason and fear this may take the place of simple faith. They do not think human reason has place in the spiritual realm.
- Fear: Others fear apologetics and what it can generate. They think apologetics is all about arguments and endless verbal scuffles because they think a Christian should be quiet, soft spoken and non-responsive in the face of any attack. Others still dread losing a debate and thus hide behind "faith" when in fact they do not want to face the foe.
- Some Christians oppose apologetics because of ignorance and a wrong perception implanted into their minds by others. As a result of this serious faulty background, their sense of judgement is impaired. Others wilfully and knowingly oppose creationism and the Bible because of their stubbornness.

We can thus conclude that whatever route you take in apologetics, you will face opposition from certain quarters. This opposition may range from mild, remote to extreme hostility. There is need to read the writing on the wall from afar and steer away from endless verbal battles.

Proposed Mechanics of Public debates with hostile People

When you enter a debate with a hostile person, one thing is clear, they are there to win at any cost and become extremely angry when you corner or defeat them. Their hostility comes in different forms which may include verbal abuse, scolding, belittling, mockery, sarcasm, subtlety among many schemes. Hostile people can stir up a lot of dust on wet soil to the extent that the audience's attention is shifted

from the actual issue of debate. When an apologist encounters such, the best is to maintain their cool and ensure they do not lose sight of the ball. They should always keep their eyes there and ensure that facts and points are safely buttressed before proceeding to the next stage. Then logical deductions can be drawn to convince the person.

If they (i.e. opponent) become too emotionally charged, never be intimidated, maintain your cool and point to the issue at hand. At times, in their anger, they may get confused and lose track. That is the ripe time to strategically place in your leading questions which eventually carry the day. In extreme cases, it may be prudent to adjourn or call off the debate as no reasonable conclusion will be arrived at, hence the need of carefully weighing before hand before which crowd this debate takes place. All those tantrums are indicators that someone is threatened and their points impotent. Always remember that the purpose of debate is not winning the argument but establishing truth regardless of what context.

Apologetics through compromise

Whenever two opposing views are reconciled or merged, truth invariably suffers. Whichever way or route taken, there is need to watch lest one slides into a serious compromise. For instance, “theistic evolution” tries to marry the Genesis creation story with evolution. The argument goes something like this: *God created the world quite alright but he used evolution to get to where we are*”. If one buys into this view, then a lot of things get rejected or serious questions arise such as the Adam & Eve story. Some have even gone so far as to declare that the Adam & Eve stories are fairy tales, poetic writings and thus should not be taken literary! This removes the doctrine of original sin and therefore man is not born a sinner! The Reformers and other saints of old took issue at this and never compromised an inch. They tenaciously and uncompromisingly held on to the five solas willing to shed their blood (to die defending the faith, without physical weapons of course!) for the faith. This is the position held by every Christian worth their salt. They will not relent or move an inch to give the devil a foot hold!

Conclusion

Apologetics is a necessary aspect of the Christian faith. It has been there historically to today. It's mode and shape may vary but the aim is to glorify God. Christians need to develop not only the right attitude but competencies too if they are to be effective at defending the faith in a post-modern context. Like Plantings hoped, we desire to see a growth and development of a cadre of potent biblical apologists both positive or negative.

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