

### Attitudes and Actions (Chapter 8)

*...sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 1 Peter 3:15-16*

- **A Consistent Life - “Good conscience & good behavior” (v. 16)**

- The evidence of an exemplary life [contra William Bennett “The Moral Compass,” and “The Book of Virtues” reported \$8 million gambling losses].
- The necessity of close communion with God through the word & prayer

- **A Careful Approach - “Gentleness & reverence” (v. 15)**

- Our approach makes a difference (**Col. 4:5-6; 2 Tim. 2:23-26; Titus 3:1-2**)
  - Gentle firmness - gentleness ≠ acting uncertain about our allegiance to dependence upon God. *“I guess it is possible that I am wrong” vs. “invincible crusaders...pushing people off cliffs”* ETC. 66
  - Respectful challenging - they are Biblically a fool, but they are in the image of God and deserve to be treated with respect.
  - Directed answers - Twin dangers: ignoring the unbelievers questions; following every “rabbit trail.” *“There is no biblical support for assuming that we must answer every question without exception. Answering every person, as Peter says, is different from answering every question.”* ETC, pg. 67

- **A Correct Procedure - “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts” (v. 15)**

- A Biblical apologetic will keep in mind the basic principles of Scripture
  1. Biblical apologetics constructs a method based upon the teaching of Scripture (Biblical theology & Biblical examples).
  2. Biblical apologetics requires that the believer present his case for Christianity with the complete assurance that his faith is true and entirely defensible. *“The Christian must never admit to the possibility that Christ is not the Lord because he is limited and may discover some new ‘fact’ which will disprove Christianity. He knows for certain that his faith is true because God, who knows all, has revealed it as such.”* ETC, pg. 70
  3. Biblical apologetics must maintain the Creator-creature distinction. *“When defending the faith we must remember that human reason is never to be treated as the ultimate or final authority.”* ETC, pg. 70
  4. Biblical apologetics gives regard to the effects of sin and regeneration on man’s ability to know truly and to make correct moral decisions. *“There are no stepping stones to faith.”* ETC, pg. 70
  5. Biblical apologetics seeks to communicate effectively and convince the non-Christian on the basis that he is God’s image and is aware of his creatureliness. This is what is called the “Transcendental argument” which means the the unbeliever may deny God, but he can’t escape living in God’s world. *“Get your own dirt”*

### The Fallacy of Neutrality (Chapter nine)

In this chapter the author critiques the popular “evidentialist” approach to apologetics using the book “Know Why You Believe” by Paul E. Little as a accurate representation of the evidentialist approach.

- Reasoning to Faith - the evidentialist approach has an unbiblical view of human reason. It assumes that man’s rational faculties are capable of comprehending Christianity, but that the unbeliever’s problem is simply moral - he does not want to believe. For the evidentialist the unbeliever’s problem is his unwillingness to chose truth which he is fully capable of knowing. Therefore, if the unbeliever can be helped to think more clearly and rationally he will be convinced of the truth of Christianity. At that point the Holy Spirit will change the unbeliever’s unwillingness to willingness.

A. **The existence of God** - ‘proofs’ for the existence of God such as:

1. The universal belief in some kind of god or gods (**Ontological argument** - We have an idea of an absolute perfect being. Existence is an attribute of perfection. Therefore, an absolutely perfect being must exist)
2. The law of “cause and effect” point to a first cause or uncaused cause (**Cosmological argument** - Everything begun, whether substance or phenomenon, owes its existence to some producing cause. In the case of the universe, this first cause is God. It is illogical to have an infinite regression of causes)
3. The argument from design points to a divine designer (**Teleological argument** - order and noticeable arrangement pervading a system respectively imply intelligence and purpose as the cause of that order and arrangement i.e. watch and watchmaker)

*“To try to convince the unbeliever of the existence of a god of some undefined character, as Little does, is to lead him away from what true knowledge of the God of Scripture he already has.”* ETC, pg. 75 (Rom. 1:20-21)

B. **The Deity of Christ** - once the existence of God has been established, the next task is to prove the distinctively Christian notion that Jesus is God revealed in human flesh. This is done by Jesus’ own claims to deity (liar, lunatic, legend, or Lord) as well as the miracle of the resurrection. The fallacy hear is both a failure to insist on repentance and faith as the ground of true knowledge, as well as misunderstanding the evidence of the resurrection. *“Apart from dependance on the revelation of God, the empty tomb proves nothing. This is why Peter did not take his Jerusalem audience on the day of Pentecost to the empty tomb and say, “See, the tomb is empty. Now disprove that Jesus is the Christ!”* ETC. pg. 77-78 (**Cf. Luke 16:30-31**).

C. **The Authority of Scripture** - the defense of the Scriptures is based upon both the Bible’s own testimony to itself as well as the testimony of archeology, history and science. The weakness here is that it leaves the Scriptures continually in the place of dependence upon the latest archeological or scientific “discovery.” In other words, the same “science” which proves the Bible can become the science that destroys it.

**Evidentialism nourishes man’s rebellion by leaving the “verification machine of human wisdom” (ETC, 79) in place when it asks him to judge the truthfulness of God.**

**Constructing a Defense - Pt. 1**

***Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. Proverbs 26:4-5*** ESV

While the Scriptures have clear overall direction for constructing a biblically faithful apologetic, the exact methodology is not given. Therefore we are proposing one method among many

which adequately accounts for the biblical principles involved. This method is built off of Proverbs 26:4-5. When we are told not to answer a fool according to his folly it means *“we are to answer the non-Christian without forsaking our dependence on God’s revelation; we must answer from the perspective of Christian philosophy. On the other hand the proverb teaches that we should “answer a fool according to his folly” (v. 5). There is a sense in which we must defend the Christian faith by using the perspective of non-Christian philosophy.”* ETC, 85-86.