

Apologetics

Apologetics is the study of what makes a certain doctrine, or system of belief correct, and all others that are not in agreement incorrect, (or to be more blunt – wrong). Apologetics then, necessarily points out the errors that exist in other doctrines. Whether we like it or not, this is inescapable.

It is just as inescapable that apologetics points out what is correct about the doctrine it is defending. In this way, the discipline of apologetics is an excellent tool for both learning doctrine, and teaching it. However, that is not what happens with many that engage in apologetics. To them, apologetics is a legitimized way to lambast something they do not like – and say they are doing it all “for the Lord.”

In the Scripture, the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy that he was to behave in the following manner:

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (*II Timothy 2:22-26*)

The above instruction given in the 1st Century is just as applicable today as it was then. The primary point with reference to apologetics is the instruction that one gives to those holding false doctrine. In every way, whether contrasting the truth of the Scripture with false religion or demonstrating how a certain interpretation of Scripture is

erroneous, this ought to be an occasion to teach the truth. After all, unless one teaches, there is no way in which someone can be brought to an understanding of their condition before God.

For those who claim that it is “not Christian” to point out errors and false teaching and explain how the false doctrine is wrong, it is instructive to read about deacon Stephen of the church at Jerusalem.

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. (Acts 6:8-10)

Thus, the authority for biblical apologetics comes from Scripture itself:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3)

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

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