

Apologetics

Originally Apologia (Greek: ἀπολογία) was simply a verbal religious defense against objections.

1 Peter 1: ³Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....

1 Peter 2: ¹¹Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹²having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

¹³Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good....

¹⁸Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear....

1 Peter 3: ¹Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands....

⁷Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife....

⁸Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another....

¹³And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, **and always be ready to give a defense{ἀπολογία} to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,** with meekness and fear; ¹⁶having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit....

Acts 22:1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense{ἀπολογία} before you now."

Philippians 1:16-17 "The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense{ἀπολογία} of the gospel."

Acts 19:33 "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense{ἀπολογείσθαι} to the people."

Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse{ἀναπολογήτους}.

Nevertheless, the term apologetics has come to have a more specific meaning.

"Apologetics (Christian).

1. *Definition.* Christian Apologetics is the scientific vindication of the truth and absoluteness of the Christian religion against unbelief. The expression "Christian Evidence" more properly denotes the scientific proof of the divine authority of Christianity. The term "Apology" denotes an argument in defense of a doctrine that has been attacked.

2. *Relation to Other Branches of Theology.** Apologetics is a branch of Systematic Theology. While Christian Dogmatics sets forth and expounds the Christian religion on the basis of Scriptures,

Apologetics concerns itself with errorists outside the church, Polemics with errorists within Christendom...

4. *Methodology of Apologetics*. The apologetic method may be either historical or philosophical, or it may combine both approaches. The 1st vindicates Christianity chiefly by defending Scripture, its fact and importance in human history, and the value of its teachings in human society. The 2nd vindicates such fundamentals of Christianity as the doctrine of God, of man's ethical obligation, and the like, on the basis of pure reason. A simple, but very practical grouping is the following: Fundamental, Historical, and Philosophical Apologetics..."(Lutheran Cyclopedia, p.40-42).

- A. Historical – human history, human society
 - B. Philosophical – ethical obligations, pure reason
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- I. Fundamental – existence of God, cosmology, anthropology, ethical, immortality of man.
 - II. Historical – Supernatural, Bible, Christ, Church
 - III. Philosophical – essence of religion

Four Points Raised in John Warwick Montgomery's article, "Christian Apologetics in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions"

1. The problem of Reason – "it gives reason a place in man's salvation..."
--Meaning of the 3rd Article
2. The problem of "historical knowledge" – it elevates "historical knowledge" to the level of saving faith and ignores the monergistic work of the Holy Spirit in salvation"
--Not merely knowledge/facts
3. The problem of original sin – "disregard the total depravity produced by the fall and the noetic effects of original sin"
--only a dim spark, doesn't know who God is
4. The problem of spiritual illumination – "Scriptures does not make sense to the unbeliever through argumentation but solely through illumination of the Holy Spirit and the influence of justification by grace through faith."

He answers these objections with the following

Fundamental Apologetic Axioms in the Lutheran Confessions and the Their Contemporary Application:

1. Fallen man retains the ability to reason deductively—to employ logic.
2. Fallen man also retains the ability to reason inductively—to draw correct factual inferences from empirical data
3. A common ground of logic and fact unite the believer and unbeliever, so that the believer can persuasively employ the unbeliever's own reasoning against him.
4. The common ground of logic and fact uniting believer and unbeliever permits the effective use of analogy-reasoning to convince the unbeliever.
5. Fallen man is capable of acquiring natural knowledge of God's existence, historical knowledge ("*fides historica*") of Biblical events, and understanding as to the meaning of the perspicuous Scriptural text.
6. None of the above capacities of the unregenerate man are such as to permit him to mend his broken God-relationship.