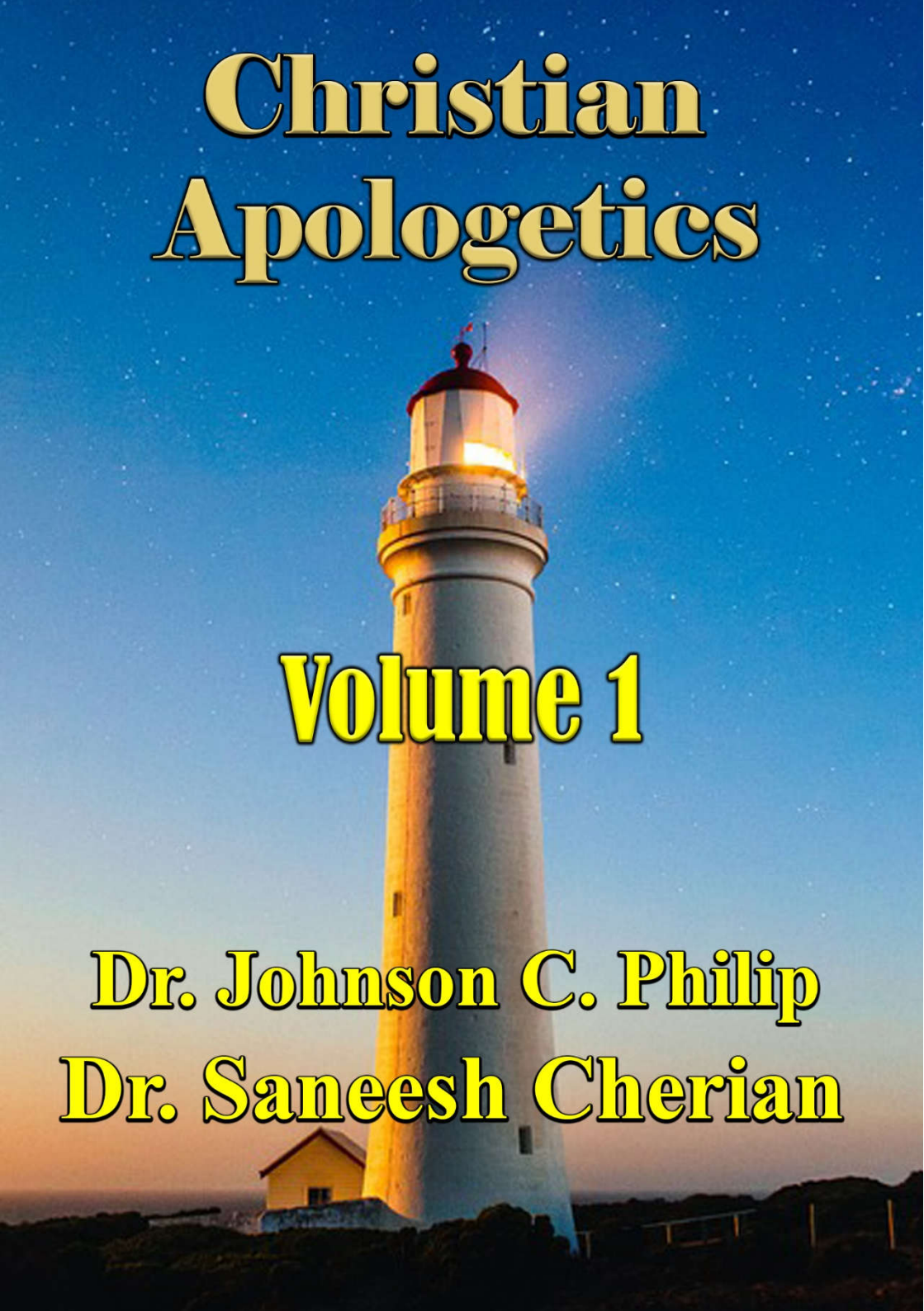


Christian Apologetics

Volume 1

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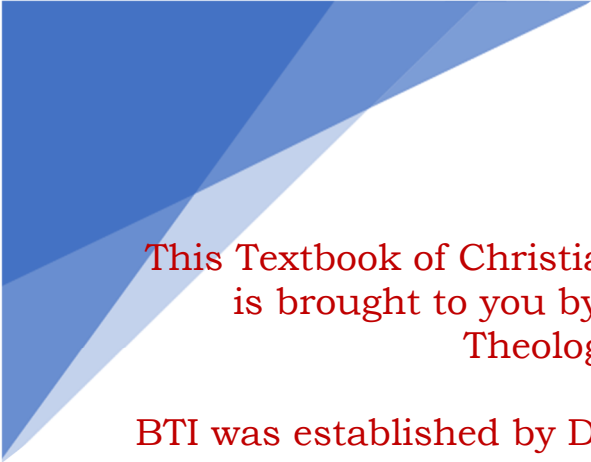
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Christian Apologetics: An Introduction

The word "apologetics" confuses many into thinking that it refers to some kind of apologizing. Actually this word is not derived from the English word "apology", but from the Greek word "apologia", which is a word referring to "making a defense". Apologetics is a general term, signifying a formal defense of any kind. On the other hand, Christian Apologetics is that branch of Christian theology that answers the question "is Christianity believable". Integrated Apologetics stands for the special approach developed by us in our course material where we integrate the

best from all schools of thought in Christian Apologetics.

In the past four centuries, all kinds of religious and spiritual beliefs have come under intense attack at the hands of radical philosophers and critics. Of this assault, the Christian faith has received the major portion because of a number of historical reasons some of which will be mentioned later.

These criticisms against the Christian faith have received so much media coverage that even a good number of well-informed non-Christians are aware of some of the major charges labeled against the Christian faith. Interestingly,

books published against the Christian faith and sold from secular shops become bestsellers even in countries where the buyers are not Christians. This is the result of all this adverse publicity against the Christian faith.

Today all around us there is an atmosphere where criticism of the Bible and related subjects is widespread. Most of the Christian students have to face these attacks from other students in some form or other. It is quite common to meet Christian college-students who are perplexed by questions that are hurled against their faith. The volley of questions comes with such high frequency that they find themselves at a

loss in answering even a portion of them all. Moreover, since most of them never faced these questions before this assault, they usually do not know what to think and what to answer. Further, they often fall into the trap of thinking that if they do not know the answer, then correct or satisfactory answers do not exist.

Once a person erroneously concludes that answers do not exist for the questions raised against the Bible, his own faith is the next victim. His faith in the inspiration, authority, and the infallibility of the Scriptures suffer very much. He then finds himself in a split mentality: he knows that it is these

Scriptures which have brought the message of true salvation to him, but at the same time he does not know what all things written in this Book are believable!

Apologetics is the solution to this problem. A person who has some background in the Christian apologetics can help this person to see the answers to the problems and questions which he is facing. Further, a Christian Apologist can pass on information to the doubting person, using which he can better face the people who raise questions against the Bible.

The last four to five centuries have been a time in history when anti-Christian philosophies and thought patterns have flourished to the full extent in Christian societies. Humanism, a philosophy in which man has been elevated to the position of God, is the philosophy of the present times. It is the foundation of almost all the present-day ways of thinking and education. Therefore, students who have been brought up in any of the present-day schools or colleges learn many things which are contrary to the Word of God. By the time a person passes out of his college, he accumulates hundreds of such ideas against the Christian faith. The cumulative weight of these ideas give so

much doubt to young believers that all over the world they are struggling to overcome problems of distrust and doubt.

No individual can possibly solve each and every doubt that these people have, but with the help of apologetics they can definitely help the people in doubt. An apologist can give answers to a good number of their problems, and can then teach them the basics of the humanistic philosophy. This will help the inquirers not only to overcome their doubts, but will also help them to see the root causes of the problems. This will also give them a capability to deal effectively with at

least a good number of questions as they come to them in future.

There is no person in this world who does not face problems. Everyone faces puzzles, questions, and fears of different kinds. Such difficult situations will not go away merely by ignoring them or by pretending that they do not exist. Facing a problem is a difficult affair, and people do resort to tactics which avoid them instead of facing them. This can be seen frequently in relation to the Bible. The attacks against the Scriptures come from such diverse fields and sometimes from people of such high learning that it becomes difficult to answer all of them. No one can ever hope to master all the

disciplines of study from which these questions are raised. It is precisely this difficulty which induces many people to avoid facing the issues. But there is actually no need for doing this. Acquiring the basic tools of Christian apologetics will be sufficient to face most of the attacks.

No person can ever hope to answer all the questions that are put to him, but every Christian should definitely know something about what godly men are doing in the field of Christian apologetics. Today the Christian society has numerous highly qualified and dedicated men belonging to all disciplines of study who are trying to

answer each and every question that has been hurled against the Bible. No individual can face all of it, and it is natural for individuals to become fearful of these attacks, but once a person realizes that so many people are working on these problems, then he can rest assured that it will not be long before the answer is published. In fact, today there are several thousand scholars around the world who are publishing their conclusions in defense of the Christian faith through hundreds of professional journals and popular magazines. They are accessible to anyone who is willing to take interest.

The Bible shall always be attacked, and there will always be people whose faith will be shaken by such attacks. Only the proper use of Christian Apologetics will help such people.

A Biblical Basis for Christian Apologetics
We have already seen that Christian Apologetics is that branch of Christian studies that deals with the defense of the Christian faith. This is fully a Biblical activity because it has been advised and demonstrated in the Bible at various places. For example, the Scripture commands: "Always be prepared to make defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15, RSV). This means that

making a defense of one's faith to those who question the Christian faith is a part of our spiritual duty. The word "Apologetics" comes from the Greek word APOLOGIA used here, and translated as "defense". So apologetics is a defending of the faith, not making of apologies as some might wrongly conclude from the English word 'apologetics'.

A good definition of the character and function of Christian apologetics can be found in Scripture when it says: "We live in the flesh, of course, but the muscles that we fight with are not flesh. Our war is not fought with weapons of flesh, yet are strong enough, in God's cause, to demolish sophistries, and the arrogance

that tries to resist the knowledge of God ; every thought is our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ" (II Corinthians 10:3-6, Phillips)

Almost all of the book of Job is an apologetics to justify God's dealings with man. In the face of opposition from his friends and family, Job tries to vindicate the reasons for his loyalty and confidence in the Lord. He makes it very clear that the Lord of Israel was not like the gods of pagans around them; rather, He is a faithful God who would never fail those who trust in Him.

Psalms 14 and 19 are also apologetic in character. Romans 1:20 confirms this

when it says that the marvels of the nature are enough to indicate the existence of an intelligent and all powerful God. The message which the Holy Spirit delivered through Paul in Acts 17 is another example where an apologetic approach is used to preach the gospel to skeptical unbelievers.

Apologetic Approaches In The Bible

Though the Bible places great stress upon faith and belief, and though it condemns deliberate skepticism and unbelief, it does not speak against reason and investigation. The Bible encourages the use of reason and investigation when they are done

sincerely and as an aid to honest inquiry. Both the Old as well as the New Testament furnish ample evidence of this. What's more, God Himself gives evidence in numerous places to lead people into faith.

When God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh, He gave two signs to Moses so that he could establish that it is God who sent Him. Whether Pharaoh believed or not is a different subject, but we should not ignore that God provided demonstration when Pharaoh asked for it. We see the same thing in the case of Gideon who twice requested for signs, and was granted the request both the times. We see the same in the case of

Hezekiah who was given a choice of signs to confirm that the Lord has spoken (1 Kings 20:5-12).

When Daniel and his friends spoke to the man who was in-charge over them, he suggested that this steward should "prove" (investigate and conclude) them for ten days. Again this is the experimental approach, where a decision is taken on the basis of investigation.

Jesus and his biographers repeatedly stressed that the primary purpose of the miracles performed by Jesus were to demonstrate who He was, and not merely to bring health to the world. In

many other places the Scripture stress that the miracles in the New Testament church were meant to ATTEST that God was behind all these things. Though Jesus chided "doubting Thomas" for his skepticism, He did not refuse to give proof. Rather, He invited Thomas and even other disciples to examine Him physically and conclude that He is risen. Thus the Bible furnishes ample examples to indicate the necessity and the important role played by apologetics for the Christians as well as non-Christian hearers of God's message. Though the Bible condemns unbelief, it encourages sincere inquiry. And that is where Apologetics plays an important role.

Apologetics Versus Polemics

An important companion of Apologetics is Polemics. While Apologetics deals with objections and attacks originating from people outside the Christian faith, Polemics deals with attacks originating from within the Church. Many of the readers might be surprised when we mention attacks from "within" the church because none of us expects our own people to attack our blessed faith. However, people have always existed within the Jewish and the Christian faith who have attacked the Old and the New Testament.

These attacks come in two forms. First, in the form of distorted Bible interpretation. Second, through those false cults who claim that they are a true Christian group.

People who attack the Bible from inside the Church would include everyone who teaches perverted doctrines. During the New Testament period this included the Ebionites, Pelegians, Montanists, Nestorians, Arians, and many others from within the Church. At the dawn of the twenty-first century this would include the radicals, the ecumenists, the Christian New Agers. This would also include those who teach salvation through baptism, those who attack the

person of Christ (Smithism/Poonenism), and those who Hinduize Christian doctrines (Prajapati Proponents, Christian Vedantists), etc.

False Cults which claim to be Christian but who still attack the fundamentals of the Christian faith include, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, TPM (Ceylon Pentecostal Mission), Roman Catholics, The Toronto Movement, etc. Their number is growing constantly, and the leaven of their erroneous teachings is also spreading.

About The Authors



Dr. Johnson C. Philip is an expert in Quantum-nuclear Physics and has done research about the inner structure of Protons and Neutrons (Hadrons). He has doctorates in Theology, Alternative Medicine, Archaeology, and Communication also. He has authored hundreds of books and he hopes to join hands with Dr. Saneesh Cherian to produce a large number of ebooks.

Dr. Saneesh Cherian is an expert in Communication and Sociology. Having completed two doctorates in theology and a masters in



Sociology from a prestigious University, he has been working towards his next doctorate in sociology. He has authored more than 100 books so far.

The two writers have jointly authored several major hardbound books in Apologetics and Theology, Theology Dictionary and Bible Encyclopedias.

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