

# SOME THOUGHTS ON APOLOGETICS

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## Introduction

The topic assigned to me is apologetics. That is quite a subject because apologetics means the science of defending the faith. An apologist is a person who has the ability to defend the Christian faith against the objections raised by its opponents. Such a person must be knowledgeable and well-versed in philosophy, theology, history, science and other branches of human learning. He has to be able to argue logically and have an answer for every question put to him by the other side. I do not claim to have all these qualifications. Theology, yes, I know something about that. And I have taken several courses in philosophy during my university and seminary years, so I can hold my own in a discussion about Plato and Kant and Hegel, but about science I know very little. Am I, for that reason, excused from attempting to defend the faith against its detractors? No, I'm afraid not, and neither are you who know perhaps even less about the subjects I just mentioned than I do.

The Bible says that every Christian, whether he has Ph.D or barely made it through elementary school, is supposed to do his or her share in this exercise called apologetics. As the apostle Peter writes to his fellow believers, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"(I Peter 3:15). The Greek word for "give an answer" here is *apologian* or reasoned defence. Be prepared, Peter means, to give a reasonable explanation why you believe in Christ and hope to go to heaven when you die. You don't need to be highly educated for that, so apologetics is something that every believer can be and should be engaged in. Of course, education helps and therefore the great apologists of the Christian Church were very learned men. They could take on pagan philosophers who attacked the Christian faith and hold their own in any debate with the enemy.

Still, it is possible for ordinary Christians like ourselves to equip ourselves to such a degree that we can put up an adequate defence when challenged by unbelievers. What we need is a good grasp of the Bible and the key doctrines of the Christian faith. This will equip us to deal with people who are hostile to Christianity and who try to prove the Bible wrong. But more importantly, apologetics can be a real help in our evangelistic outreach. Many people are looking for answers to life's tough questions. In fact, every thinking person will at some point in his or her life wrestle with questions such as, "who am I?" "where do I come from?" "What is the meaning and purpose of life?" "where am I headed?" and so on. By helping our unbelieving friends and neighbours find Biblical answers to these questions they may become receptive to the message of the Gospel.

## Different Views on Apologetics

There are Christians who have no use for apologetics because it seeks to demonstrate the truth of Christianity by appealing to reason. The natural man, they feel, cannot and will not

understand the truth of God because of sin which has corrupted not only his heart and will, but also his mind. Apologetics, they feel, is based on the assumption that man's sinful mind is capable of judging spiritual matters. It exalts reason above revelation and makes it the arbiter of faith. This amounts to a betrayal of Christianity, they say. How can we say that Christ is the Truth and then call Him to the bar of human reason and put him on trial, so to speak. So it is wrong as well as useless to try to argue sinful man into faith by an appeal to his reason. Only the Holy Spirit can change his mind as well as his heart and will by the miracle of regeneration, it is contended.

This is a serious objection which does have some merit. There are schools of apologetics which do seem to proceed on the assumption that the human mind is still basically the same as it was before the fall. Therefore, by an appeal to man's mind you can argue the case for Christianity in the hope of persuading him. This was and still is the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Thomas Aquinas, e.g., taught that when man fell, his heart and will were adversely affected, but not his mind or intellect. The implication is that at least in one area sinful man was still more or less independent and autonomous. It was on this premise, namely on man's intellectual autonomy that Aquinas constructed his natural theology. In doing so he borrowed heavily from pagan philosophers like Aristotle. Aquinas believed there are certain truths which man by his unaided reason can arrive at. Such things as the existence of God and the soul, morality and the idea of a final judgment, man is aware of quite apart from special revelation. There are other truths, however, which only the Scriptures tell us about, namely the idea of a triune God, the divine and human natures of Christ, salvation by grace through faith,--these man can learn only from the Bible.

Aquinas thus ended up teaching what is called a "nature-grace" dichotomy." Everything below the line belongs to nature and there man's reason is autonomous; for these things he doesn't need the Bible. Everything above the line belongs to the realm of grace and for those things man still needs the help of Holy Scripture. The word "still" here is significant. As time went on "nature" proceeded more and more to "eat up" grace. First philosophy, then science and finally every area of human thought and endeavour freed itself from the authority of Scripture, so that by the time of the Renaissance nature had almost completely swallowed up grace. That is to say, by the fifteenth century man thought he did not need special revelation anymore. He could explain everything in terms of nature or unaided reason. The final touches to this development were made by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century when man proclaimed himself fully independent and autonomous. Human reason was perfectly capable of judging all matters, including the Bible and its teaching. Anything found in the Scriptures that reason could not accept was for that reason rejected and that was that.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century had to deal with this problem which had already reached alarming proportions by that time. Calvin and the other reformers realized that there was a fundamental problem with Aquinas' theology, namely that he failed to understand the radical nature of the fall. For the Reformers man's fall was total. That is to say, the whole man as created by God fell into sin, including his intellect and will. There is no part or aspect of man that can be called autonomous or independent. Sinful man's mind is not neutral either, but biased against God. The carnal mind, says Paul in Romans 8:7 is

enmity against God. His reasoning powers are all directed against God and His Word.

It is this insight of the Reformers that has led some Calvinists to take a very dim view of apologetics. Look, they say, since the natural mind is corrupt through and through, unbelievers are not going to listen to arguments in defence of Christianity. All you can do is witness to them, calling them to repentance and faith, and letting the Spirit do the rest. You are simply wasting your time trying to persuade them with so-called proofs for the existence of God, the authority of Scripture, the divinity of Christ and other truths.

Theologians like Abraham Kuyper and Cornelis Van Til were convinced that sin has rendered man incapable of acquiring any significant knowledge of God apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. I think they went too far here. I do agree that the natural man cannot come to any saving knowledge of God apart from the miracle of the new birth, but we must make a distinction between the moral and cognitive powers of man's mind. Morally, indeed, man's mind is filled with enmity against God and will never turn to God in repentance and faith apart from grace, but on the basis of such passages as Psalm 19; John 1:4,9 and Romans 1:18-28; 2:14,15, I believe the natural man is capable of coming to some knowledge of God as a result of general revelation in nature and in man's conscience. These passages tell us that there is such a thing as a general illumination through the Logos that enables man, made in the image of God, to arrive at accurate judgments about God's existence, character, and righteous demands. By this "common" grace man is enabled not only to think logically about natural subjects, but also to acquire certain elementary truths about God and spiritual things. True, Romans 1 tells us also that this knowledge which the natural man receives from God's revelation in nature is suppressed by him. That does not mean that this suppressed knowledge is not real, however. The problem is not with man's ability to know God, but with his perverse response to this knowledge. What Paul seems to say in Romans 1 and 2 is that man, instead of making the right use this natural knowledge, because of the darkness of his heart and the stubbornness of his will, spurns that knowledge and suppresses it.

There is then, in every man an awareness of God which Calvin called a *sensus divinitatus*. This gives Christians a point of contact with unbelievers. We can talk to them about God and the creation, about life and its purpose and destiny in a meaningful way. We share with unbelievers the same universe and existence in the world. We have the same or similar experiences of pain and joy. We face the same facts of economic hardships, political unrest, wars, and ultimately death. The only difference is that we put a different interpretation on these shared facts and we must try to explain them from God's point of view, hoping that the Holy Spirit will open the unbeliever's eyes and so illumine his mind that he will also come to see it this way.

## **How To "Do" Apologetics**

Granted then that apologetics is a legitimate exercise, how shall we go about it? What should be our method in defending the Christian faith? I believe two things are very important here. In all our dealings with critics or inquirers we should 1) always speak the

truth and 2) always speak in love.

Our defence of the faith must be true to Scripture and authentically Christian. By that I mean that we should be concerned to defend the historic Christian faith, not denominational distinctives.

At the same time we must not accommodate the Christian faith to unbelievers. In our zeal to make Christianity attractive and acceptable we may not leave out what may be perceived as offensive elements of our faith. Paul speaks of the *skandalon* (scandal) of the Gospel, meaning the cross of Christ and the resurrection from the dead. These were offensive to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks and they still evoke resentment on the part of unbelievers.

We need to make sure, however, that the offence we give is not due to the way in which we present the Gospel. Great care must be taken to present the case for Christ tactfully and intelligibly. When people oppose us we should not immediately attribute this to hostility. Many times the problem may simply be one of misunderstanding. We should also know the person we are dealing with and what his or her views are. It is very easy to misrepresent your opponent's position so that you end up attacking a straw man. Next, size up your opponent's attitudes and motives. Is he merely interested in scoring points against Christianity or is he confused and doubting certain aspects of the Bible and the faith? Or is he perhaps a sincere seeker after truth?

Another important part of apologetics is knowing how to structure our defence of Christianity. In apologetics Christianity is seen as a philosophy or world and life view. It is the Christian way of understanding reality as opposed to other world views. Now there are two methods you can follow in apologetics. Either you argue from the facts to the thing (Christianity) or you argue from the thing to the facts. The former method I do not recommend because what you end up with in that case is not Biblical Christianity but some perverted version of it. Yet this method has been and continues to be employed by many. According to this approach Christianity can be arrived at by *impartially* examining all the facts. To accomplish this you and your opponent must start from scratch and look at the facts there are with an unbiased mind. Both the Christian and the non-Christian supposedly look at these facts that are as yet not interpreted. The Christian must try to distil out of these so-called "neutral" facts the case for Christianity.

This method is wrong for the following reasons: 1) Christianity is more than a philosophy arrived at by examining certain facts and arranged into a system called Christianity. Rather, Christianity is the product of divine revelation or disclosure. 2) We cannot conclude from the facts to the truth of Christianity because the facts are never all in. We can only look at the facts as they appear to us today, but tomorrow things may look different. A person can always say, let's wait and see what the facts may bring us tomorrow or next week or next year. On this basis Christianity can never be presented as anything but tentative. A Christian, therefore, should never accept creation as a hypothesis or a theory based on his interpretation of facts such as fossils, dinosaur footprints and so on. Many do this, but they forget that in this way they put their theory of creation on equal footing with the theory of

evolution. Something may come up next year that proves my interpretation of the facts wrong and then what do I do?

The problem here is that facts are presumed to be "out there" prior to anyone knowing of their existence. But this is not so. *We* may be unaware of their existence, but God is not. Before facts were created they existed in the divine mind as ideas or concepts. Behind the facts lies God's determination to construe them in a certain way. How He has construed them He has told us in His Word. Therefore, we must look at the facts through the spectacles of Scripture, for only then we can arrive at a sound interpretation of them.

All traditional arguments for the existence of God start from this false premise: I don't know whether there is a God, but I do know there are facts out there that seem to point to the existence of some intelligent Being. Let's see if we can deduce from the facts a concept of God.

This is wrong thinking, for the assumption here is that there is a path to Christianity from below. But there isn't! All we have is a path from above. God has revealed Himself to us and He has laid down that revelation in Scripture.

What then is the right way of doing apologetics? We must stand squarely on the Bible and take our starting point in our Christian faith. We need to be aware that every man speaks out of some faith. Underlying every philosophy is a religious commitment of some sort. Opposition to Christianity is not really rooted in a conflict between faith and reason, but between rival faiths. It is very important to make your opponent see this and admit this. It is not just the Christian who starts from the perspective of faith. The non-Christian does the same. He too looks at life and reality from a certain point of view. Everything he says is determined by that basic viewpoint. For instance, if he is convinced that there is no God Who intervenes in the affairs of man and the world, he will never believe miracles are possible. No matter what you say in an effort to prove that a certain miracle did take place, e.g., the resurrection of Christ, he will not accept this. His faith in a non-existing God, or at least in a non-intervening God, prevents him from giving credence to anything miraculous. All you can do, therefore, is to try to show that the Christian faith provides a perspective upon the world that is fuller, deeper and more meaningful than that is offered by any other faith. It accounts for *all* the facts, while other faith-systems either ignore or misinterpret them.

## **How to Answer Objections of Non-Christians**

Keeping all these things in mind, how do we approach an unbeliever and how do we answer his objections? Experience shows that non-Christians have specific questions about the Christian faith which they raise again and again. Paul Little, in his book **How to Give Away your Faith**, identifies seven basic questions that come up almost every time in conversations and debates with non-Christians.

They are: 1. What about the heathen? 2. Is Christ the only way to God? 3. Why do innocent

people suffer? 4. How can miracles happen? 5. Isn't the Bible full of errors? 6. Isn't Christianity a psychological crutch for weak people? 7. Why can't I go to heaven if I live a good moral life?

1. What about the person who has never heard of Jesus Christ? Will he be condemned to hell? I'm sure you have often heard that question. Maybe you have asked it yourself. Often the question is phrased this way: what about the poor innocent native who never heard of Christ? The background to this question is, of course, the idea that Christ is the only way to heaven. That is the real problem people have with Christianity. To prove how absurd this notion is, they will bring up this supposedly poor innocent pagan who lives and dies without ever hearing the Gospel, and so--if Christianity is true--he must perish. The unspoken objection is that this would be unfair. How do we answer this charge?

First of all, if the question is phrased this way there is no problem at all. I mean this: if the native in question is really innocent, we don't need to worry about his salvation, do we? An innocent person does not even need to hear of Christ. He does not need salvation because God never punishes an innocent person. Such a person saves himself by his innocence.

This question can be framed in this way, however, only on the assumption that there are innocent people in this world. But Scripture tells us that no such people exist. What the questioner probably means is that such people living in the jungle are *relatively* innocent. Compared to those who know the Bible and the way of salvation, the poor native has less guilt than they. On what basis then does God punish such a person? Wherein lies this man's guilt? Can he be punished for not believing in a Christ he never heard of? Not likely, for God is just. If He condemned to hell someone for not responding to a message that was never presented to him, that would be a gross injustice, and the objector would have scored a valid point against the Christian faith.

We may be sure God would never do such a thing. But does that let the pagan off the hook? It would, if rejection of Christ were the only sin. Scripture tells us, however, that there are other damnable offences against God. What if the person who never heard of Christ has heard of God and has rejected Him? Does that act make him guilty in God's eyes? The Bible says it does. According to Romans 1, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness hold down or suppress the truth. These people "know" God from nature, but they refuse to acknowledge what they know to be true. They can be and will be punished for this sin as well as for the sin of violating their own moral standards as Paul explains in Romans 2. It is true that the pagan will be punished less severely than those who have been exposed to the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Everyone will be judged according to the light he has received.

2. Is Christ the only way to God? This is the second most frequently asked question posed by opponents of Christianity. Actually this is basically a variation of the first question. It is often put this way: Doesn't the sincere Moslem or Buddhist or Hindu worship the same God as the Christian, only under a different name?

Our answer has to be something like this: Sincerity or intensity of faith cannot create truth. The validity of a person's faith depends entirely on the object in which it is placed. Believing alone does not make something true, nor does refusing to believe a truth make it false.

At stake here is the question of truth. Let's compare Islam and Christianity for a moment. In the moral sphere there are quite a few similarities between these two world religions. Yet they are diametrically opposed on the most important question: Who is Jesus Christ? Islam denies that Christ is the Son of God. It acknowledges that He died on the cross, but not that He did so as a sacrifice for man's sins. Islam certainly denies that Christ rose from the grave. Christianity, on the other hand, affirms both, therefore these two religions cannot both be true at this particular point. One is correct; the other is incorrect. If Christ did not rise from the dead, Paul says, our faith is vain (futile).

When we speak to unbelievers about this issue we must avoid the appearance of bigotry and prejudice when claiming that Christ is the only way to God. We should simply state that we have no other option but to believe this because Christ, the Founder of Christianity, Himself has made this claim. We have no right to change this central doctrine of the Christian faith any more than a Muslim has the right to change the tenets of his religion. If we are going to be faithful to Jesus Christ we must take our stand on what He said. Obviously, if He is God He is the only Saviour.

3. Another question non-Christians often raise in debates with Christians concerns the problem of evil. Why do the innocent suffer? Why are some babies born blind or mentally defective or deformed? Why does God allow wars and diseases and all sorts of terrible things to happen? Why? Either God is all-good but He is not powerful enough to eliminate disease and disaster; or He is all-powerful but He is not all-good and therefore He does not end all evil.

Here we frankly have to admit our partial ignorance. We simply do not have the full explanation of the origin and problem of evil because God has chosen to reveal only a small part of it to us. What we do know is that God created the universe perfect. Man was given the freedom to obey God or disobey. Evil came into the universe through man's disobedience. Because God chose to appoint Adam as the representative of all mankind, his sinful action affected us all and we are all born with a sinful nature. Also man's sin affected the world and the entire universe so that evil now pervades all of created reality.

As we discuss this question, we should not overlook the fact that evil is present in everyone of us, including our opponents. Many people ask, Why doesn't God step in and get rid of all evil? They do not realize what would happen to them if He did that. Not one of us would survive.

After pointing out every man's involvement with evil we must be sure to add that God has done something about evil, namely by sending His Son to die for man's sin on the cross. Whoever responds in faith to this Gift of God's love receives a full and free pardon of all his sins. It was C. S. Lewis who observed that it is idle for us to speculate about the origin of evil. The problem we all face is the *fact* of evil. The only solution to this fact is God's

solution, Jesus Christ.

4. What about miracles? That's the next question people like to ask. Usually this is how this question is put: In this scientific age, how can any intelligent person still believe in miracles? The real issue here is whether or not God exists. If God exists then miracles should be expected to happen. Of course, if there is no God, miracles are impossible because by definition only an almighty God as presented in the Bible is able to suspend the laws of nature. A Japanese Shintoist once said to a Christian missionary, I have a hard time believing that a man could become God. The missionary quickly responded by saying: I find that hard to believe too, frankly, but I have no trouble believing that God can become man. There's all the difference in the world between these two concepts. By definition God is all-powerful. He can and He does intervene in the universe that He Himself has created.

The real question is, how do we know God exists? There are various answers you can try in an effort to make a case for the existence of God, but as I said already, we can never prove that the God of the Bible exists. At best we can make a plausible argument for the existence of a superior power or intellect.

5. The Bible is full of errors. This is another objection that is frequently raised by opponents of Christianity. The problem is that if you ask what some of these errors are, most people can't think of any. They've heard someone else say that the Bible has a lot of contradictions in it and they have simply swallowed the assumption. Occasionally you will meet a person who is genuinely troubled by what seem to be problem texts. In such cases you must try and come up with answers. You may not have an answer right away, but don't panic. Just be honest and tell your inquirer, "I don't have the answer to that one, but I'll be glad to dig it up for you."

Volumes have been written on so-called contradictions in the Bible and there are good explanations for most, if not all, of them. After two thousand years of church history no one is going to raise the question that will bring Christianity crashing down.

6. Christianity is a psychological crutch. This too is a favourite weapon in the arsenal of the enemies of Biblical religion. It is a variation on the theme first articulated by Karl Marx, when he said: "Religion is the opiate of the masses." Here religion--all religions--but especially Christianity, is seen as a kind of narcotic or drug for the depressed, the downhearted and the weak. Overwhelmed by the harsh realities of life, people will often turn for comfort and emotional support to religion. According to this view, the things the Bible talks about, God, heaven, salvation, Christ, sin, etc., have no objective existence, but they are merely the creations of the human mind. All spiritual and religious ideas can be traced to man's feeling the need for comfort. So he creates an image of a loving God or sympathetic Jesus in his mind and then worships this mental projection. Philosophers like Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and psychologists like Freud, Adler and Jung, have all contributed to this very popular explanation of the origin of religion. Despite differences in detail, what all have in common is the conviction that religion owes its origin and sustaining power to psychological needs.

How do we respond to this theory? We have to grant that man has the power of creative imagination as well as the capacity to turn his fantasies into theories and full-blown religious systems. Just think of the many false religions and cults that abound everywhere. Also, it must be admitted that many people find in religion an important resource for comfort and consolation. If that were not so religion would have but very little appeal. People are obviously attracted to religion by emotional needs--that is not in dispute. Neither should we deny that religion has often been used as a tool of exploitation. The French revolution was caused in part, at least, by the corruption of the clergy. There are also profound psychological and emotional reasons that motivate people to reject religion. Being mistreated by a clergyman, disillusioned by "religious" parents as Karl Marx was and in recent times Ernest Hemingway, can all become subjective motives for turning one's back on Christianity.

There can also be other factors at work, however. An atheist may also wish that God does not exist because his guilty conscience cannot tolerate the idea of a holy and just Being to Whom he must give an account. In other words, it is not only the Christian who has a vested interest in the existence of God. The atheist also has a vested interest in the non-existence of God (cf. Romans 1).

Ultimately, of course, the decisive factor is not whether we feel or do not feel the need for God and the after-life, a day of judgment and so on, but whether God really exists. If He does not, the theories set forth by Marx, Freud and others are plausible. But if God does exist, their hypotheses merely confirm what Scripture teaches all along, namely that man created in the image of God does need God and cannot be happy or fulfilled apart from Him.

7. Finally, there is the objection that being a Christian is not necessary to salvation. As long as one lives a reasonably good and moral life, God will not keep him or her out of heaven. As someone said: if God grades on the curve, I'll probably make it. This is a very popular notion today. Many, if not most people, seem to think that all they need to do is their best and then things will turn out OK, or at least they will be able to squeak by. This is wishful thinking based on complete ignorance of what Scripture teaches about God's character and man's desperate condition as a sinner. God does not grade on a curve. He has an absolute standard: His holy law!

Light, when it is turned on, dispels darkness. Similarly, the character of God is so dazzling in its purity that it consumes all evil. Therefore, as we are, we could not abide in His presence. We would be consumed because of the corruption in our lives. The perfect righteousness of Christ is the only basis on which we can come into fellowship with the living God. Let me give an illustration.

Suppose the entire human race lined up on the east coast with one objective, to get to Europe. Let's equate this goal with God's standard of righteousness. The signal is given and all the swimmers jump in. As we look over the ocean we see the most moral of all: Professor James, a man who lives a very upright life and tries to set a good example for his students. He is not perfect, mind you, and he will admit as much. But there he goes,

swimming way ahead of the rest, about 75 miles from shore. Next, we see George Miller, a straight A student at McMaster. No criminal record, mostly because he's never been caught. He cheats on exams a little, goes on a binge now and then and sows a few wild oats here and there. But he's not too bad really, compared with some of his classmates. He's gotten about 25 miles out. Next, we see Joe Smith, just released from jail after serving five years for raping a 13-year old. He's practically drowning about a hundred yards offshore.

Thrashing about in the water between the two extremes of the spectrum we see the rest of humanity. As we look from Joe Smith to George Miller to Professor James we see quite a difference in the distance covered so far. The professor is 50 miles ahead of George and just about 75 miles ahead of Joe. Some difference! Yes, but what's the difference in terms of Europe? Everyone will drown.

A set of swimming instructions won't help at this point. We need somebody who will take us to Europe. This is where Christ comes in. If you can make it to Europe by yourself, if you can live a perfect life and never sin in thought, word and deed, you will make it to heaven on your own. No man, however, ever has or ever will succeed. All the other religions of the world are basically sets of swimming instructions, suggested codes of ethics for living the good life. Man's basic problem is not knowing *how* he ought to live; it is lacking the *power* to live as he ought. The Gospel of Christianity is that Jesus Christ has done for sinners what we could never do for ourselves. Only through Him and through faith in Him we can be reconciled to God, receive His perfect righteousness and His Holy Spirit Who enables us to do His will.

### **Man's Basic Problem**

The point of this illustration is that man's basic problem is not intellectual, but moral. This is the most important thing to remember in apologetics. Quite often the answers you give to people's questions won't satisfy them. Sometimes the problem is with you. You've done a lousy job. Try to do better next time.

Sometimes the questioner may be quite convinced you are right and still nothing happens. Paul Little, in the book mentioned earlier, says that every once in a while a student will tell him, "you've answered everyone of my questions to my satisfaction." After thanking him for the compliment, he will say, are you going to become a Christian then?" But with a sheepish smile he will reply, "well, no." And why not? "Frankly, it would mean too big a change in my lifestyle to become a Christian."

Sinful human beings are not prepared to let anyone else, not even God, run their lives. Not only because they *cannot* believe, but also--and really that is the real problem, because they *will* not believe. People often ask, "If Christianity is true, why do most intelligent people not believe it?" The answer is precisely the same as the reason why most unintelligent people don't believe it. They *don't want to* because they don't like the moral demands it would make on their lives. We can take a horse to water but we can't make it

drink.

In apologetics all we can do is take people who are often as stubborn as horses and mules to the water of life, but we cannot make them drink it. Only God can do that. He makes His people, His elect, willing in the day of His power. In that hope and in that confidence ministers preach. In that same hope and confidence you must witness and present the case for Christianity in our neo-pagan society. First, make sure that you yourself believe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and that you yourself have experienced the life-transforming power of the Holy Spirit. For only then you can say with Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20), and also with Paul who said: "I believed, therefore have I spoken" (2 Cor.4;13).