

“Inquirers’ Class”
(Part 7b: Apologetics)

I. Introduction.

A. There are three basic approaches to Apologetics:

1. Evidential Apologetics.

- a. Adherents: Josh McDowell, ICR, John Warwick Montgomery, Norm Geisler, etc.
- b. Method: Seeks to prove the truth of the Bible through internal and external evidence (archeology), to show the fulfillment of prophecy, the evidence for the resurrection, accuracy of its recorded history, etc. If the Bible is reliable in the areas that can be examined, we can trust it in those areas that can't be examined.

2. Classical Apologetics.

- a. Adherents: Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Puritans, Jonathan Edwards, John Gerstner and R. C. Sproul.
- b. Method: A more philosophical approach to showing the existence of God and validity of Scripture using logical proofs, usually based on causality (why).
 - (i) The character and characteristics of God are deduced from the creation and then compared to the accounts given of Him in various faiths, to show that the Bible alone reveals the God we see in nature.
 - (ii) The arguments from the internal and external evidence also help to verify the Bible as God's Word.

3. Presuppositional Apologetics.

- a. Adherents: Cornelius VanTil, Greg Bahnsen, and John Frame.
- b. Method: Begins with the existence of God and the validity of Scripture, arguing that these are necessary presuppositions to reason correctly. Focuses on showing the absurdity of other systems of thought and then shows the absolute reasonableness of the Christian life and world view.

B. This morning, we'll consider the Classical method.

- 1. We'll begin with a classic argument for God's existence.
- 2. Then we'll look at a simplified approach.

II. Edwards' Argument for God's Existence.

A. Basic form.

- 1. Something must exist necessarily, because nothing can't exist.
- 2. That something (necessary Being) is God.

B. Edwards' argument explained.

- 1. Something exists now, therefore something must always have existed.
 - a. If something exists now, something must always have existed: something

- can't come from nothing.
- b. It's impossible for nothing to exist, therefore there must have always been something (eternal).
2. This eternal something must be infinite, one, independent, and unchangeable.
 - a. It must be infinite because it is impossible that nothing could be anywhere.
 - b. It must also be *one* because you can't have *two* infinities: they would necessarily limit each other (make each other finite).
 - c. It must be independent because there is nothing upon which it could depend.
 - d. It must be unchangeable because there is nothing beside it to cause any change.
 3. This eternal, infinite, one, independent, and unchangeable Being must be something other than what appears.
 - a. What we see is not eternal: it has a beginning.
 - b. What we see is not infinite: it has limits.
 - c. What we see is not one, but many.
 - d. What we see is not independent, but dependent on something else.
 - e. What we see is not unchangeable, but is constantly changing.
 - f. The only exception to this is space. For this reason, Edwards believed that God is the space in which we live, as Paul also tells us, "For in Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28).
 4. This Being must be the Creator of what we see, because there is nothing else that could be its Creator.
 5. This Being must be conscious, personal, intelligent, volitional, moral, benevolent and angry.
 - a. The cause must be greater than the effect: the greater does not come from what is less.
 - b. In the creation, we see consciousness, personality, intelligence, volition, and morality. The cause must therefore have these characteristics.
 - c. He must have these characteristics in limitless measure, because He is infinite.
 - d. He is benevolent, for we see His goodness throughout the Creation.
 - e. He is also angry, for we see the effects of His anger in the creation.
 6. He must also be the author of the Bible because the Bible is the only book that reveals this Being.
- C. The causal argument in an even simpler form.
1. It is a fact that God reveals Himself through the Creation.
 - a. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being

understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:18-19).

- b. We call this General Revelation: a revelation of God that reaches and gets through to everyone.
 - (i) It began at Creation, “since the creation of the world.”
 - (ii) It gets through to every man: it is “clearly seen, understood through what has been made” (v. 20); “They knew God” (v. 21).
 - (iii) It leaves everyone without excuse for their unbelief: “So that they are without excuse” (v. 19).
2. How does God reveal Himself?
- a. Again, the cause must be greater than the effects: Just as we know a man couldn’t hatch from a chicken egg, or spring spontaneously out of the ground – since the cause isn’t great enough – so we know the universe couldn’t come from a great rock, a microscopic particle or from nothing.
 - b. What can we know about the Cause of the world?
 - (i) That He is alive: Everywhere we see life – plants, insects, animals, and man. Whatever made us must be alive, because life can’t come from non-life.
 - (ii) That He is an infinitely wise designer: things work together in systems.
 - (a) We have a *pulmonary* system that allows us to get oxygen from the air, an *alimentary* system that allow us to digest food to nourish our bodies, a *circulatory* system that carries food and oxygen to our cells and that carries off waste, a *skeletal* system that gives structure and support to our bodies, a *muscular* system that allows us to move, a *nervous* system that allows our brain to control these functions, an *immune* system that fights off bacteria and viruses allowing us to live, a *sensory* system that allows us to gain information about the things outside of us. All of this takes place through very complex cells working independently, yet collectively.
 - (b) We see this design in the plants, insects and animals; we see plants and animals that need each other: symbiosis.
 - (c) We see it on the cellular level: the cell is a Galaxy in itself; each DNA molecule contains a Gigabyte of information.
 - (d) We see it in the universe – even the word “universe” denotes the fact that it works together as a system. An explosion could not have created this any more than a bomb in a print shop could produce the works of William Shakespeare.
 - (iii) That He is conscious: we are intelligent (have the ability to reason), have a memory (ability to remember), consciousness (self-awareness), and will (inclinations and purpose).
 - (iv) That He has the ability to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, since we do.
 - (v) That He is a Being of variety: consider the differing sizes, shapes, colors, sounds, scents, tastes, plants, insects, animals in His Creation.

- (vi) That He has a sense of beauty: consider the shapes, symmetry, and colors.
- (vii) That He is good: He created a variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts and berries, grains, meats, fish and fowl (Acts 14:14-17).
- (viii) That He is angry: we also see earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, volcanoes, diseases, etc., in this world.
- (ix) That He is just: Our conscience tells us we've done something wrong and deserve punishment.
- (x) Dirt, water and solar energy don't possess these attributes and so could not have caused them in us.
- (xi) The One who made us must have all these things in a greater degree.