

Five Views on Apologetics

Stan Gundry, series editor; Steven B. Cowan, general editor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. Pages, 398. Price \$19.99.

Chapter One, by William Lane Craig, defends what we call Classical Apologetics. It is a combination of evidence and foundational principles. Craig believes the apologist must show that God exists before he can show that Christianity is true.

Each contributor then responds. Then each of them offer a defense of their own view. Gary Habermas takes the evidentialist method and defends Christian faith from that perspective. Paul Feinberg tries to trump the others with what he calls a cumulative case approach. Most people would assume that a cumulative case would be the best approach, but there are numerous issues that must be resolved. No doubt, however, this is a strong way to make a case for a truth claim. John Frame takes the presuppositional method as the correct framework. The presupposition is not the existence of God, but it is the truthfulness of the word of God. Kelly James Clark argues for Reformed Epistemology.

Then Habermas offers his main essay, and each contributor offers a response. Each of the others in order do the same. This really allows a substantial amount of dialog and clarification of these views. My observation based on teaching this field of study is that most students are unaware of these five methodologies. They may know about evidentialism (because of Josh McDowell) and they may have heard of presuppositionalism (because of Van Till). They rarely know the other methods. Thus this is an important text for Apologetics students.

Cowan pulls together a good comparative summary in the final chapter, but without really taking a position. Steve is to be commended for his objectivity.

This is an important book for evangelicals. Catholic apologetics are not included, nor are our historical apologists. You must go to Avery Dulles for that. But I can certainly recommend this title for most students.

Habermas and Craig set forth two sides of the view I hold. They have been very effective in their writings (and very consistent).

I strongly recommend this title. It is a serious study of apologetic method.

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