

The Tools Of Integrated-Apologetics: An Introduction

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Every person who is interested in Christian Apologetics has surely read one or more articles and books on apologetic topics. All of them generally delve directly into refuting error or expounding the truth, or both. However, almost none of them try to introduce the tools and techniques to be used by apologists. In fact they do not even mention that there are tools.

Most books on Apologetics do not discuss the tools because of historical reasons. So far most attacks coming against the Christian faith could be handled without any specialized tools. The attacks were mostly general and the counterattacks also could be kept at the general level, so that almost any motivated apologist could handle the job without detailed and specific study or preparation. Tools devoted to the specific task of Apologetics were not a pressing need. However, this scenario started changing in the nineteen fifties onwards.

The nineteen fifties saw the rise of highly organized opposition to the Christian faith. The opponents formed numerous organizations worldwide, launched many bulletins, magazines, and journals, and began capturing key seminaries and publishing houses of Christians. Even one of the key persons in the United Bible Societies was almost an atheist, and published his testimony in a book titled, "Leaving The Fold". The book was released by Prometheus, the largest atheist publishing house in the world. Many large and aggressive rationalist and atheist publishing houses and book clubs also came up around the world. This was also a time when techniques of propaganda, mind-manipulation, and debating were pressed into service against the Christian faith, and refined to a high level for this task.

The coming together of all these movements resulted in a synergy against the Bible and the Christian movement. This combination gave them great insights and helped them to refine the methodology of attacking the Bible. Instead of using general attacks, they became more specific. Using the insights gained from studies of propaganda techniques, methods to harness mass-movements, fuzzy-logic, and numerous other techniques, they started attacking the Christian faith in a more sophisticated way.

The last half of the twentieth century saw the rise of specialization in every field of science, technology, and social sciences. The tools used also became refined and sophisticated. The same became the norm in anti Christian movements of this period. Radicals, rationalists, and atheists developed specialized fields, techniques, and tools for attacking the Christian faith. Communist propagandists from the former USSR, China, and other Marxist countries greatly helped to refine and consolidated the techniques. Only an equal level of sophistication and specialization in the Apologetic camp could meet this new wave of assault.

For example, Prometheus, a publishing-house for atheist and radical books has widely promoted many of their techniques and strategies through books like The Atheist Debater's Handbook, Then Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy, etc. Written by experts in the art of debating and average apologist would stagger in front of the techniques and strategies presented in these books. A detailed and in-depth analysis of similar works went into refining these Tools Of Apologetics for more than two decades.

Just as there is a time-gap between the appearance of new diseases and an effective treatment or antidote, there was a gap between the refined attack from the anti Christian establishment and the Christian apologists. This is why most books on apologetics at the turn of the twenty first century do not talk about the tools of apologetics. Tools began to emerge only in the nineteen eighties, and will take some more decades to become widely talked about.

The first attempt to develop specific tools was done by Dr. Johnson C. Philip of Calvin Research Group. In the 1980s he started an analysis of the sophisticated techniques used by the radicals and rationalists. He also searched through the techniques used and proposed by Apologists before him. Results of these analysis, along with effective tools and strategies for counter-attack were then proposed by him in early 1980s through a large number of publications. Over the years these tools and strategies were refined further by him, based upon extensive reading and analysis of techniques used by the radical and atheists. Input was given by other apologists worldwide.

The tools and strategies presented here are the result of all these refinements

Why use Tools: Much can be done in any field without any tool or without proper tools. For example a stone can be used to drive in nails. Or heavy tools can also be used to do the same. But the efficiency takes a quantum leap when a hammer of proper size and shape is used for the same job. Similar is the situation in Christian Apologetics.

When a question or attack using a specific strategy is brought against the Christian faith, an Apologist without proper tools can take a stand and do something, but he will never be able to refute error and support the Bible efficiently. The more discerning inquirers will not be satisfied if his approach lacks efficiency. Thus the use of tools is essential for effectiveness. This is seen frequently these days in public debates and discussion fora where everybody tries to play an apologist, only to be humiliated by opponents of truth who are well prepared. It is not Truth that loses, but carelessness. But Truth does suffer because of it.

Introduction To The Tools: Close to ten tools have been developed and refined so far. Two more are under development. We will mention them developed tools briefly here, and then the readers can study the tools in depth by going to the write-up on each individual tool.

While the Tools of Apologetics can be studied in any order, it would benefit the Christian Apologist more if he studies them in the order in which we have arranged them. This is because some of these tools use principles and insights found in other tools, and if they are studied in the proper order, one's ability to understand and use them is maximized.

One of the first tools you should study is known as "**Analysis of Errors of Interpretation**". It deals with Bible interpretation. Each book needs to be interpreted in the light of the culture in which it was written and the values which it reflects. More so with a book like the Bible, which reflects values and attitudes totally at variance with the common secular values and attitudes. What's more, it records the customs and culture of hundreds of different people-group over 4000 years of history. Many objections raised against the Bible are deeply rooted in thinking totally contrary to the Bible, which is what the secular mind does. These errors are analyzed and exposed with the help of this tool.

Many who attack the Bible, such as the Cultists, Muslims, and Occultists, interpret

select passages of the Bible to mean what they wish it to mean. They always present their claims with such clever and believable interpretation of Biblical passages that even mature believers are not able to counter these arguments easily. Such is the level to which deliberate misinterpretation has been refined.

Many Christian writers, the most notable being James W. Sire, have explored the depths of deliberate misinterpretation or Scripture Twisting. These observations are presented in a more refined and accessible manner in the tool known as "**Analysis of Scripture Twisting**".

Scripture Twisting and Errors of Interpretation often look as though they are one and the same, but they are different. True, some of the outcome from both look similar, but it is true only of some results from both and not all the results. This is because Scripture Twisting is always deliberate, and subtle while errors of interpretation are many a times unintentional and more crude. The former is used by clever debaters while the latter is used by all kinds of anti Christian elements. The apologist needs to know both, and he should counter them with appropriate strategies.

A common method of attacking the Bible is to bring up what can be called "Bible difficulties". For example, some many want to know who Cain's wife was, while another person may ask how many times Peter denied Jesus. Yet another person may ask whether Jesus was really in the grave for three days and three nights. What they wish to imply is that if Cain married his sister, the Bible endorses incest; since Peter seems to have denied more than three times, therefore Jesus was wrong; if Jesus was buried on Friday then He could not have been in the, grave for three days and three nights as stipulated. In turn they imply that the Bible is full of errors and difficulties, and therefore it cannot be a divinely inspired book. This problem is handled with the tools that we call "**Analyzing Bible Difficulties**".

While almost any Christian can try his hand at tackling Bible difficulties, he will soon be worn out and will make mistakes if he does not approach the problem methodically. This tools comes to his help in this matter. Instead of handling each and every difficulty [which never seem to come to an end], this tools helps the Apologist to handle them in a small number of categories and deal effectively even with the most determined opponent.

Today we live in an era saturated with science and technology. Everyone is dazzled by the daily reports of scientific developments and breakthroughs. Critics of the Bible are quick to use this veneration of science to use science against the Bible. While most educated people can answer some of these objections, nobody can adequately handle all the science-based objections without preparation. Science is a highly specialized activity, and it has become highly complex from the twentieth century onwards.

Attacks against the Bible using science is handled with the tool and strategy known as "**Analysis of Scientific Information**". This tool in our Tools series will help even a person without a formal science background to hold the fort against those who attack.

Of the various divisions of science or scientific knowledge, the most fundamental ones are called the Normative Sciences. These lay down the qualitative and quantitative norms and standards for objective evaluation and deduction of information. Mathematics and Logic are the most important Normative sciences. Aesthetics and Ethics are also Normative Sciences, but being related to non-physical entities, it is difficult to understand or define them with precision comparable to that of Mathematics and Logic.

Of the Normative Sciences, Logic is important to arrive at right and valid deduction

on any subject whether it be Physical sciences, social sciences, or even Bible Interpretation. Logic and its rules need to be followed in a strictly laid down Protocol if these deductions are to be right. However it is easy to err in following Logic in any discussion. This can happen randomly, due to ignorance, or even due to the complexity of the topic under discussion. Worse, debaters and propagandists can deliberately mislead people using fallacious logic, and the audience would not even dream that they are being led into a bottomless pit of logical errors.

Errors and fallacies of logic have become powerful tools in the last one century or so, because the radical establishment has spent considerable energy to refine false-logic to attack the truth. A very large proportion of assertions against the Bible have their foundation in the fallacies of Logic. Even the most energetic and motivated Christian Apologist cannot counter these arguments without a basic background in formal Logic. The tool labeled "**Analyzing fallacies of Logic**" handles this problem. This Tool might seem a bit difficult to many in the first reading, but this subject cannot be ignored by any apologist of substance. It would benefit the apologetics if he spends a little extra time to reread and master this tool. Most people grasp the essence of the tool well in their second reading.

Propaganda and Mind Manipulation are not accepted as wholesome activities, though both of these are quite common in the modern world. Both these activities have existed for several millennia, but relatively at a superficial level. This changed in the twentieth century.

The rise of mass political movements and the rise of consumer economy made it necessary to refine Propaganda and Mind Manipulation Techniques to a high level. An unbelievably large amount of money was invested by Business Houses, Activist Organizations and by dictatorial governments (specially by the USSR and Chinese communists) to study these techniques in depth. Some of the best brains were put to the task between around 1900 and 1950.

A vast amount of information about influencing human mind was discovered. Techniques and approaches for Propaganda and Mind Manipulation were developed and refined. Once Business Houses and Political Parties started using these techniques, Rationalists and Radicals got an insight into these techniques and started using them to attack the conservative thinking as well as the Christian faith. This is how Propaganda Techniques and Mind Manipulation Techniques entered the arena to fight against the Christian faith.

Those who fight against the Christian faith liberally make use of techniques from both these fields. Since these are empirically and scientifically discovered techniques, a person ignorant of their methodology cannot counter them effectively. **Analysis of Propaganda Techniques and Analysis of Mind Manipulation Techniques** among the Tools of Apologetics provides the techniques and strategies needed to counter those who use Propaganda and Mind Manipulation to attack the Christian faith.

People have a notion that debating is a good way of bringing out truth. While all inquiries do have some kind of discussion built into it, that kind of discussion is not really a debate. The discussion associated with assessment of truth is more like continuous feedback and successive iteration till one reaches a reliable or objective conclusion. Debates usually do not take that route.

Right from the time of the Greek Sophists, pulpit-based public debates have been more a test of wits than truth. The more skilled debater is always able to sway people to his side, irrespective of whether he is right or wrong. Over the millennia from the Sophists on wards, pulpit-speakers have carefully discovered, devised, and refined techniques of debating which aim at winning and not at discovering the objective truth. People who belong to activist groups and camps routinely practice

these techniques, and use them from pulpits and through the media to win their campaign.

People who attack the Christian faith are all members of various activist groups, each with a clear-cut agenda. The Theological Radical wishes to do away with the doctrine of Bible Alone so that he is at liberty to order (or disorder) his life. The humanist, the atheist, and the communist have their own proclaimed goal. The false cults have a similar end in mind. Of late the Muslims have joined the fray, challenging Christians to debate them in public.

The average Christian lives under the illusion that the Activist Debater from the Muslim, the Communist, the Cultistic, or the Radical Theological Community is looking for the truth. He thinks that Christians can easily refute the debater and that defeated debater will quickly accept the Christian truth. Nothing could be farther from truth. No activist debater ever concedes defeat, even if all his points are unambiguously defeated. Worse, they are practically never defeated because they rely upon dishonest techniques of debate, which are often not understood by the average Christian debaters.

Unfortunately, even many Christian Apologists take such debates lightly and plunge recklessly into debates with formidable opponents. The end result is humiliation for the apologist and loss for the Christian faith.

Christians are fond of relating the story of this or that Christian debater who "asked three questions and the infidel opposing him simply ran away from the pulpit". Such things happen only in stories and not in the real world. Yet too many Christian Apologists are swayed by all this fancy talk, overestimate their power to debate, and take the plunge without second thought. Without exception the result is fatal, and thereafter he wastes a lot of his precious time and energy to convince everyone that he was the real victor.

Debates these days are not fought over facts. They are fought for winning the war of ideas, and the radical establishment is well prepared with Debating Tactics. For example Prometheus Press, world's largest atheistic Publishing House distributes the Atheist Debater's Handbook. So powerful are the arguments in this book that an average Christian Apologist would shudder if confronted by those questions in public. The reason is not better facts on their side, but better strategies and preparation.

In the section titled **Analysis of Debating Techniques** we present the tools and strategies to be used to counter the techniques used by the radical thinkers against the Christian faith. Christian Apologists should not take debates lightly and should not rush recklessly into public debates without first mastering this tool.

An interrogator can frame questions in such a way that the responder is automatically incriminated every time irrespective of the answer. A question like "Did you stop beating your wife" falls into this category. Radical thinkers and communicators have refined to a high degree the techniques for asking deceptive Leading Questions. Thus the formulation of deceptive questions and the effective antidote to them should both be studied by the Christian Apologist. The anti-Christian establishment liberally uses Leading Questions to drive the unsuspecting masses, and even the untrained apologist, away from truth and into totally false conclusions. **Analysis And Formulation of Leading Questions** is a Tool we offer to counter this line of attack.

Most Christian, and a large number of Apologists, have not understood the nature and complexity of the art of questioning. Thus they keep emphasizing irrelevant questions while the important questions remain unasked. A battle is lost due to wrong strategy on the part of the ignorant Christian, and not because of any fault in

Christian Truth. In the modules on Leading Questions we introduce this tool and explain how to use it to effectively counter the anti Christian interrogator.

In summary, those who argue against the Christian faith refined their art and craft to a high level of perfection in the twentieth century. Insights gained from the whole spectrum of Social Sciences have been pressed into service to enhance the potency and power of these attacks. Christian Apologists cannot win against them without an equally powerful set of tools and strategies. Thus the need for Tool of Apologetics.

How Do These Tools Work: The radical establishment has developed numerous techniques and strategies to attack the Christian faith. All these approaches depend upon dishonesty: they sidetrack, confuse, build stories upon false premises, misguide, and (most often) cheat the process of logical reasoning. Worse, they do this in such a subtle and convincing manner that the average Christian is not able to spot the catch.

The trained Christian apologist may be able to spot the deception, but his private perception is not sufficient to convince the audience or win the argument. Unless he is able to make the people also to see the tricks in the radical's arguments, they will never be convinced of the truth. Worse, unless they be made to see the truth, they will keep believing the critic to be true, more knowledgeable, and sophisticated. The Christian side loses not because of any inherent weakness, but because the defender was not prepared for the task.

The Christian Apologist should also keep man's depravity and rebellion in mind. He should never forget that the Old Sin Nature exerts considerable influence upon the choices and outlook of the believer. Consequently, hidden in a corner of their subconscious many of them have an inclination towards error. At times they [I mean, Christians] long for that which is wrong that it would prevail. You need to see some of these Christians who lose their temper and become hysterical when a conservative Christian Apologist is able to win the audience or the argument.

Many apologists simplistically assume that everyone would accede to and accept their arguments in favor of the Christian faith as soon as they make their pronouncement. Things do not happen that way. On the contrary, they will have to peel the opponent's arguments layer by layer, and dismantle his artificially contrived edifice brick by brick. Then and then only will most people among even a Christian audience accept the contention of the Apologist. This is where the tools come into play. [Never forget that today a good number of Christians in the audience want the Christian Apologist to fail, and the opponent to win. With this kind of "friends" The Apologist does not need many enemies to make his task difficult. Adequate preparation is the key].

Once the Apologist starts using the Tools, both his opponent as well as his listeners will have to reckon with the subject, not merely with what the opponent has presented from the pulpit, but at the foundational level. Once they see him dismantling the critic at the root level, they will realize that the critic's arguments cannot be sustained, and the criticisms will be exposed as false. This is how these tools work. But they do at least one more thing. They help to systematize the counterattack.

A determined opponent would never easily give up. He will keep piling up objection after objection against the Christian faith. Thousands of questions can be single category such as "Bible Difficulties". The radical will never tire bringing up the next objection because for him doing that is a hit-or-miss affair involving very little energy. However, solving and diffusing the objection requires much more effort and soon the Apologist as well as the audience will be worn out, handling hundreds or

even thousands of questions that keep coming in a seemingly endless stream. However, the Tool-based approach helps here in a special way.

While the opponent can bring an endless stream of questions from a single category such as Bible Difficulties, the tool-wielding Apologist knows that these are not really thousands, or even hundreds, of different objections. There are not more than 15 categories of Bible difficulties. Thus as each objection comes up, he explains the category to which it belongs. Once a second or third question that belongs to an already introduced category comes up, he only points to the category to which it belongs, and does not waste his time in solving the problem from scratch. The audience, having already understood that category, is able to grasp the solution to each new problem from that category without another elaborate explanation from the Apologist. The critic will also realize soon that piling up any more objections from one and the same category is not going to take him anywhere. This is a powerful way in which proper tools and strategies help the Christian Apologist.

How To Practice Using The Tools: There are at least ten powerful Tools of Apologetics, each with at least ten categories, and many subcategories. This means an Apologist has to remember anywhere from five hundred to one thousand subcategories or more to practice Christian Apologetics effectively. This can may look like an impossible excise, intimidating him. But this need not be so.

Almost every practical subject contains thousand of sub categories of information, and yet people are able to handle them well. A medical doctor studies about hundreds of body-parts with thousands of possible abnormalities, medicines, and corrective measures. All of them together make hundreds of thousands of pieces of information. Yet he is able to use this knowledge because of a corpus of categorized information, regular exposure, deduction, action, and feedback. The more he passes through this process, the better adapted he becomes to the use of the tools learnt. He seems to pull out information on the rarest of the rare cases seeming like a magician's trick. Practice makes a man perfect. The same is the case with the Christian Apologist.

Just as a medical doctor works first as an intern, the prospective apologist should submit himself for a period of formal or informal training. He should read everything he can get. He should pay special attention to question-answer columns in Christian (and even conservative non Christian) magazines. He should buy every question-answer book on Apologetics and Issues that he can find. He should search the Net for question-answer columns that are handled by experts. He should also take time to listen to question-answer sessions handled by experts in Christian programs.

He should then take time to reflect upon how he would answer these questions. He should compare his own answers with those of others, and discover the best possible response. He should also invest in studying the art of communication. Plenty of printed and electronic resources are available on effective communication. He should then try to write down answers in his own words. He can even try to get them published, but that is not the main aim of this exercise. He should try to write the answers because writing makes a man exact.

Mastery over a set of tools is both a science as well as an art. It never comes to an end, and therefore the Apologist should keep reading, he should keep listening to question-answers, and reflection over these topics should become a life-long passion. Reflection produces a cumulative and also a synergistic effect in his mind, helping him to weed out the useless and present the rest in the best possible way.

Summary: The Christian Apologist has two choices. He can try to handle each and

every objection individually, wearing himself out but without being able to stop the adversary who keeps piling up objections. Alternately the Apologist can use the tools and strategies explained in the next sections, do an efficient job of dismantling the opposition, and silence the critic more efficiently.

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