Classical Apologetics: It Stands to Reason

Historical Roots of Classical Apologetics
According to Bernard Ramm

*Varieties of Christian Apologetics*

- Systems Stressing Subjective Immediacy
- Systems Stressing Natural Theology
- Systems Stressing Revelation
According to Norman Geisler:
*Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*

- Classical
- Evidential
- Experiential
- Historical
- Presuppositional
According to Steven B. Cowan: *Five Views on Apologetics*

- Classical Method
- Evidential Method
- Cumulative Case Method
- Presuppositional Method
- Reformed Epistemological Method
According to Kenneth Boa/Bowman

*Faith Has Its Reasons*

- **Classical (rationalistic)** = Apologetics as Proof
- **Evidential (empirical)** = Apologetics as Defense
- **Reformed (authoritarian)** = Apologetics as Offense
- **Fideism** = Apologetics as Persuasion

Justin Martyr
AD 100-AD 165

Anselm
1033-1109

Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

Charles Hodge
1797-1878
The Classical Apologetics Model

For some time, the Classical model has been known as the "two step" method.
With the increasing influence of bad philosophy, it has become necessary to add an additional step at the beginning.
I. Philosophical Foundations

A. Classical Empiricism
B. Nature of Reality (Metaphysics)
C. Reality and Knowability of Truth
D. Laws of Logic
E. Argument

II. The Existence and Attributes of God

A. Theistic Arguments
   1. Cosmological
   2. Teleological (Design)
B. Philosophical Theology
   1. Nature of God
   2. God and Creation

III. The Truth of Christianity

A. The Historicity of the Bible
   1. Do We Have What They Wrote?
   2. Did What They Write Happen?
B. What Does the Bible Say About Jesus?
   1. Messianic Prophecies
   2. Life or miracles/Resurrection
   3. Lord, Liar, Lunatic
C. What Does Jesus Say About the Bible?
   1. What Jesus Affirmed About the OT
   2. Jesus Pre-authenticates the NT
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It should be observed that this third step in the Classical Model is hardly distinguishable from the Evidentialist Model.
Faith and Reason in Classical Apologetics

"Faith is believing in something when common sense tells you not to."
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"Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so."
"You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart."
### The Popular Misconception

#### Faith
- opinion
- values
- inner
- private
- emotional
- feelings
- subjective
- religion
- true for me

#### Reason
- truth
- facts
- outer
- public
- rational
- thoughts
- objective
- science
- true for all

### The Proper Conception

**Believing something on the basis of Divine authority.**
The Proper Conception

Faith
Believing something on the basis of authority.

Reason
Believing something on the basis of demonstration.
It can be demonstrated historically that Jesus Christ was crucified.
It can be demonstrated historically that Jesus Christ was crucified.

REASON

It had to be revealed to us what was different about His death from the other two men that died that day.

FAITH
The truth that Jesus died for our sins had to be revealed to us by God. But notice that it is no less a FACT than the fact that he died. They are both facts. The difference is how we discover them.

General and Special Revelation
Revelation Defined

That aspect of theology which deals with God making known to mankind His divine person and divine truths that would otherwise be unknown; to unveil

General Revelation

God's revelation through His creation of His existence, attributes, and goodness.
The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.

Psalm 19:1

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead …”

Rom. 1:20a
For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts ...
Rom. 2:14-15a

"... We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
Act 14:15-17
Special Revelation

God's revelation through His prophets, apostles, and His Son of His nature and will that could not be known through general revelation.

"... knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:20-21
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

θεόπνευστος (theopneustos) = God breathed
θεός (theos) - God
πνεύω, πνεῦμα (pneo, pneuma) - I breathe, breath, spirit

Boa and Bowman on Classical Apologetics
Boa and Bowman on the Strengths of Classical Apologetics

- Affirms the universal applicability of reason
- Raises awareness of the unavoidable role of worldviews
- Recognizes common ground with non-Christians
Boa and Bowman on the Weaknesses of Classical Apologetics

- Overestimates the adequacy of reason as a criterion of truth
- Depends on theistic arguments of debated validity and value
- Does not address the personal dimensions of belief and knowledge