

Title - Is Christianity Too Good Not to Be True? Establishing the Role of Plausibility in the Realm of Moral Apologetics

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Is Christianity Too Good Not to Be True? Establishing the Role of Plausibility in the Realm of Moral Apologetics

This paper analyzes the argument of the equal importance of both credibility and plausibility in terms of approaching apologetics within Christianity as argued by David Horner, Christian Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Talbot School of Theology. In terms of classical apologetics, it is customary to present evidence to argue that the Christian worldview is viable. Even though it is important to establish evidence, the evidence given within classical apologetics is not sufficient in terms of the evidence being considered believable. This paper will posit that there is a filter that takes place within the mind prior to an individual reflecting whether or not the evidence will be considered. This filter will be explained as the plausibility filter. Based on this filter, one will consider whether or not the Christian worldview could be true. Credibility goes through a straining process before the mind determines if it is true. However, before the testing, or straining, begins, the mind has a filter in which the evidence is considered sufficient enough for belief. This is the plausibility filter which asks, can it be true? Evidence can be thrown out prima facie if it does not meet the criterion of the plausibility filter. The purpose of this paper is to explore the argument that plausibility is equally as important as credibility. In order for this point to prove sufficient, there must be credible evidence that one

must first decide if the Christian worldview can be true prior to weighing the evidence. There is sufficient evidence through both testimony and reason to suggest that there is such a filter. This paper will also examine the role that moral apologetics plays in making the argument for God's existence plausible to an individual and what that process of making that argument entails. Finally, the point of this paper is to explain what implications establishing plausibility as a filter should have in other disciplines of philosophy like epistemology, metaphysics, politics, and esthetics.

Christian Worldview

As a Christian, the way that I conduct all research is funneled through a Christian Worldview. With attention to research design, I approach my research with the lifestyle that Paul admonishes Timothy to follow in 2 Timothy 2:2. "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."¹ This fits very closely, if not identically, with Liberty's motto "training champions from Christ." The research that I will be interacting with will be prepared and communicated in such a way that the information can be taught to men and women in a positive and loving manner. Apologetics is a tool through which the love of God can be communicated in a rational way to share evidence for the warranted belief of God. In terms of a goal, the goal is to ultimately bring God glory through an honorable study of His nature and to enjoy God forever. Research within Christianity should not be viewed as completely knowledge based but it also carries the relational aspect of enjoyment as well. The goal of this kind of research is not limited to the increase in knowledge

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, Crossway, 2007).

of God, but the goal is to also engage in a more meaningful relationship with God. In terms of research design, the aim of course is an honest attempt to arrive at truth. However, the journey in which I attempt to arrive at the truth is held to a much higher standard because of my worldview. It is my pursuit to treat the evidence that I encounter with the highest degree of academic honesty and convey the truth that I arrive at in a manner that is pleasing to God and reflective of my love and enjoyment of Him. The research is impactful within the culture at large because identifying a problem within the ability, or willingness, to process credible information without careful consideration cannot be remedied by throwing more scientific data at the recipient. A positive discussion can be had by identifying and satisfying the heart of the problem by ultimately helping another person to the conclusion that belief in God can be true. This will ultimately allow for credible evidence to be properly reviewed by someone who had previously objected these credentials.