

Awaiting Our Verdict?

By Dr. Greg Bahnsen

Inasmuch as J. W. Montgomery (*Current Religious Thought*, March 31) censured my essay, "The Impropriety of Evidentially Arguing for the Resurrection," and at the same time advanced a representation of presuppositional apologetics which is as confused as it is counterfeit, perhaps you would allow me to reply.

Contrary to Montgomery, presuppositional apologetics is neither *a priorism* nor pietism; it neither views fallen man as without evidential reasoning ability nor faith as anything akin to blind credulity. Montgomery's scholarship is here inaccurate. The presuppositional apologist is not indifferent to God's acts in history, and he certainly does not discourage rational, scholarly research into history! What my essay was demonstrating, on the other hand, was that evidential argumentation methodologically cannot and morally ought not become the *crux* or *foundation* of our apologetical witness.

An apologetic such as Montgomery's cannot offer any assured hope to an age longing to hear the meaningful affirmation, "He *is risen!*" Montgomery's case for the weakened profession, "He *probably* arose," is non-telling under cross-examination and is easily faulted as statistically *improbable*, as using the assumption of uniformity to prove non-uniformity (miracle), and (without scriptural presuppositions) as rendering the resurrection a freak event without theological implications (such as Romans 4:25)....

Building our apologetic upon the rock-words of Christ and not foolish sand (Matt. 7:24 ff.), we must in repentant faith renounce intellectual self-sufficiency which assigns God to the dock to await the creature's verdict. Not as Adam in the garden or Israel in the wilderness, Christ obediently presupposed the truth of God's word when tempted by Satan to adduce empirical proofs of God's veracity; he countered with authoritative Scripture: "*You shall not put the Lord your God to a test*" (Matt. 4:7). The special status of God's word is that one is not to demand proof of it. This self-attesting word must be central in our apologetic, for "*if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead*" (Luke 16:31).

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