

# MODUL II – ISTORIA APOLOGETICII

## Curs de Istoria Apologeticii Creștine (CIAC)

### Lectia 1 – INCEPUTUL APOLOGETICII CREȘTINE (secol 1)

Definiție și context timpuriu: creștinism și apologie (ortodoxie, erezie, iudaism, elenism, sincretism)

Repere retorice : rațiune, cultură, confesiune, inter-religii, pneumatologie

Teme apologetice în Noul Testament și tradiția creștină timpurie

Modelele predicării timpurii

Umanitatea și divinitatea lui Isus (naștere, înviere, minuni)

Imperiul roman și universalitatea Împărăției lui Hristos

Pivoturi istorice și argumentative: Fapte, Pavel, Evrei

Cei patru evangheliști ca apologeți: Marcu, Matei, Luca-Fapte, Ioan

**Definiție și context: creștinism și apologie (ortodoxie, erezie, iudaism, elenism, sincretism). Repere retorice : rațiune, cultură, confesiune, inter-religii, pneumatologie**

Apologetica – înseamnă „apărare” sau „răspuns” ori „pledoarie” (gr. *apologia*). Este disciplina care se ocupă cu organizarea unui răspuns sau a unei apărări cu privire la un sistem filosofic, o ideologie, o credință, un comportament, o ființă, etc. În general, termenul s-a împământenit cu sensul de apărare a unei credințe, iar contextul care l-a impus din punct de vedere istoric a fost apărarea credinței creștine în fața religiilor păgâne și a acuzațiilor de falsitate, de inconsistență, de credulitate.<sup>1</sup>

În ce privește apologetica, văzută ca o disciplină a apărării credinței, ea a fost înțeleasă în diverse feluri : ca o disciplină de analiză exegetică a afirmațiilor biblice (Planck), ca un studiu al istoriei gândirii teologice (Tzschirner), ca o teorie a teologiei (Rabiger), ca o filosofie a teologiei (Schleiermacher), ca o istorie a polemicii religioase, ca o încercare de a demonstra adevărul creștinismului în comparație cu alte religii, etc. (<https://bible.org/seriespage/what-apologetics>).

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<sup>1</sup> Steven B. Cowan, *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 8.

### Discipline ajutătoare generale

Am definit Apologetica drept știința apărării și justificării adevărilor fundamentale ale religiei prin mijloace oferite de rațiune. În sprijinul revelației divine utilizăm revelația naturală, în cel al dogmei, rațiunea, în ajutorul credinței, știința. Priveliștea și studiul naturii, eforturile și luminile rațiunii devin, astfel, sursele generale de alimentare ale Apologeticii, sub cele două înfățișări ale lor: științele naturale sau științele exacte; și științele filosofice. Așa că știința și filosofia în genere pot fi socotite auxiliarele de drept ale Apologeticii.

### Discipline ajutătoare speciale

Cum însă domeniul acestora e prea vast, el cuprinzând știința întreagă, iar pe de altă parte Apologetica își are obiectul său propriu de tratare, obiect bine precizat și care e fenomenul religios, titlul de știință ajutătoare trebuie să se dea, în chip special, acelor discipline, din marea masă a științelor naturale sau filosofice, care stau în contact imediat cu obiectul Apologeticii, adică cu *fenomenul religios*.

Și aceste discipline sunt: *Filosofia religiei, Psihologia religiei, Istoria religiei și Sociologia religiei*. Aceste discipline,

Ioan Gh. Savin, Apologetica, p.46.

Popescu, zice, p.44:

„Într-o continuitate de perspectivă, Apologetica nu mai poate fi tratată astăzi ca simplă disciplină teologică academică menită să învețe cum justificăm rațional credința. Apologetica nu este justificare, ci mărturie”...

## **Apologetica și NT**

Cuvântul apare de 17 ori în NT în limba greacă, fie ca substantiv, fie ca verb.

Luca 12:11, apărare: Isus încurajează creștinii în apărarea lor față de sinagogi și autoritățile de stat.

Luca 21:14, răspuns: Isus încurajează creștinii să nu se îngrijoreze cum se vor apăra.

Fapte 19:23, apărare: Alexandru, un creștin din Efes, este silit să-și apere credința.

Fapte 22:1, cuvânt de apărare: apărarea lui Pavel înaintea cetățenilor evrei ai Ierusalimului, când s-a întors din misiune, când fusese acuzat de necinstirea templului.

Fapte 24:10, apărare: Pavel se apără înaintea lui Felix

Fapte 25:8, apărare: Pavel se apără înaintea lui Festus

Fapte 25:16, apărare: Festus și Agripa vorbesc despre dreptul lui Pavel de a se apăra.

Fapte 26:2, apărare: Pavel se apără înaintea lui Agripa.

Fapte 26:24, apărare: Festus se apără înaintea adunării, ca să nu accepte credința vestită de Pavel.

Romani 2:15, dezvinovățire: păgânii se învinovățesc și se dezvinovățesc în conștiința lor.

1 Cor. 9:3, cuvânt de apărare: apărarea lui Pavel față de creștinii care îi contestă autoritatea apostolică.

2 Cor. 7:11, dezvinovățire: cei din Corint se dezvinovățesc de complicitate în cazul de adulter.

2 Cor. 12:19, apărare: unii corinteni credeau că Pavel și cei din echipa sa doresc să se apere sau să se dezvinovățesc, dar nu era așa.

Filipeni 1:7, apărare: Pavel și filipenii sunt împreună în apărarea evangheliei.

Filipeni 1:16, apărare: Unii din Roma îl ajută pe Pavel în apărarea sa.

2 Tim. 4:16, cuvânt de apărare: apărarea lui Pavel față de acușările aduse în tribunalul din Roma, la a doua întemnițare.

1 Pet. 3:15, dați socoteală: creștinii își prezintă și își explică, își apără credința atunci când li se cere.

## **Motive apologetice în NT și în tradiția primară**

### ***Înainte de a deveni o apologie, creștinismul a fost un mesaj – o evanghelie (E. Dulles)***

Mesajul creștin a început cu convingerea că Isus este Mesia și Domn, o convingere care a plecat din învățătura și minunile lui Isus și a fost puternic confirmată de învierea sa după moartea pe cruce, de arătările ca persoană înviată și din înălțarea la ceruri și autoritatea manifestată cu aceea ocazie.

Într-un fel, apologetic a fost de la bun început parte integral din kerygma, din proclamare.

Gh. Ioan Savin (Apologetica, vol.1).

Prima formă de înfățișare a Apologeticii a fost aceea a „Apologiei”. Creștinismul, fiind atacat, a răspuns la atacuri, apărându-și părțile de doctrină mai des și mai cu predilecție atacate de adversari. Și primii adversari ai Creștinismului, care apar odată cu însăși ivirea lui, sunt *iudeii și păgânii greco-romani*, pe de o parte, și creștinii iudaizanți, sau filosofi – *gnosticii*, pe de altă parte.

Armele de atac întrebuițate de adversari erau: *denaturarea* principiilor religiei creștine, pe care le prezentau sau ca *absurde* față de rațiune, sau ca *periculoase* față de stat, sau ca *imorale* și deci *dăunătoare* față de societate. Apologeții au căutat să răspundă rând pe rând tuturor acestor atacuri, arătând *spiritualitatea* doctrinei, *puritatea* moralei și *superioritatea* religiei creștine, atât față de iudei, cât și față de păgâni, ferind-o, în același timp, de *coruperea* încercată de gnostici.

Dogma creștină cea mai des și mai de timpuriu atacată a fost cea a Întrupării Dumnezeuului-Om și în jurul ei s-au grupat și primele apărări. De aceea Evanghelistul Ioan, care la începutul Evangheliei sale apără întruparea „Logosului”, față de erezia gnosticului iudaizant Cerint, poate fi socotit ca

primul Apologet creștin. La fel răspund apoi, fie iudeilor, fie păgânilor: un Iustin, un Atenagora, un Tatian, Tertulian etc.

### ***Temele predicării din NT***

An unquestionably early statement, which stands close to the primitive Christian kerygma, may be found in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. Here Paul, seeking to meet an objection concerning the general resurrection, adduces a standard series of testimonies to the Resurrection of Jesus and adds a personal recollection regarding his own encounter with the risen Lord. A similar mixture of proclamation and apologetic may be found in the so-called kerygmatic sermons of Acts (2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 13:13-41). C. H. Dodd and others have shown that these sermons contain statements that for the most part can be paralleled from the Epistles of Paul and that may therefore be presumed to stand close to the earliest proclamation.<sup>1</sup> From both sources one may infer that Christianity began as a proclamation that Jesus, being raised from the dead, had entered into His messianic lordship and was seated at God's right hand. Both Acts and Paul's Epistles, moreover, view Jesus's humiliations, suffering, and death as a divinely willed prelude to His glorious exaltation.

These Christian claims were of course contestable and had to be backed up by some kind of reasoned defense. The Christians appealed in the first instance to passages in the Psalms and the Prophets that

were, they maintained, fulfilled by the Resurrection. This event, as understood by Christians, was the literal realization of what had been prophesied, for example, by Psalm 2:7-8: "I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession'" (cf. Acts 2:26; 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).<sup>2</sup> So too the exaltation of Jesus could be interpreted by reference to Psalm 110:1, "The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool'" (cf. Mt 22:44 and parallels; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13).

The Church also interpreted the Resurrection in terms of the Servant Songs of Isaiah (especially 42:1) and the Son of Man texts in Daniel (e.g., 7:13). Psalm 118 contained many verses that could be applied both to the Passion and to the Resurrection. Verse 22, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner", as shall be seen, had many applications in controversy with the Jews. Psalm 16:9-10 was frequently quoted in the Septuagint version "Moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption." According to the argument that Luke places on the lips of Peter and Paul in Acts 2:25-28 and 13:35, this text was not literally verified in the case of David ("his tomb is with us to this day", Acts 2:29; and he "saw corruption", Acts 13:36) but only in the case of Jesus, whom God raised to life.

In several New Testament texts the point is made that Jesus's Resurrection "on the third day" fulfilled the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:4; cf. Lk 24:46). The insistence on the third day is not easy to explain by reference to Old Testament prophecy, though perhaps an allusion to Hosea 6:2 is intended. In answer to this difficulty some have suggested that Jesus Himself, in predicting His Passion and Resurrection, had called attention to the third day as the time of His revival (see, e.g., Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). This suggestion, of course, is not certainly correct, since we cannot know the exact words used by Jesus.

The positive redemptive value of the Passion and death of Jesus would presumably have been an ingredient in the primitive preaching itself and cannot therefore be written off as an afterthought introduced for apologetical reasons. The earliest preaching appears to have viewed the Passion in the light of certain Old Testament texts, such as Isaiah, chapter 53, and Zechariah, chapters 11 and 12, although these texts were not understood messianically by the Jews. In so utilizing the texts the Church may have been guided by Jesus's own understanding of His mission as servant, as He would have proposed it to His disciples.<sup>3</sup>

### Apologetic Development

Once the Church had set forth her view of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, interpreted in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures, certain objections would naturally have arisen, thus prompting developments that were simultaneously dogmatic and apologetic.

### **Învieria și înălțarea**

Una dintre problemele majore ale apologeticii din NT se referă la faptul și dovezile învierii și, apoi, ale înălțării la cer a lui Isus. Ele sunt fenomenele care atestă nu doar teologia Crucii, ci și eficacitatea, realitatea efectelor ei. Luca, Matei și Ioan, urmăresc atent dovezile învierii în trup, imaginile mormântului gol, implicarea îngerilor, arătarea lui Isus, înălțarea la cer și mesajul acestei înălțări. Parte din aceste dovezi sunt urmărite și în Fapte 1.

It would have been asked, for example, where is the Messiah now and what difference has His alleged triumph made? In response to questions such as these, the Church would have adduced and perhaps amplified its conviction that Jesus was presently in heaven, reigning at the right hand of the Father (Ps 16:11; 110:1). In Acts 3:21 Luke portrays Peter as telling the Israelites that heaven must keep Jesus "until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old". Paul in 1

Corinthians 15:25 teaches that Jesus must reign “until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (cf. Ps 110:1). Other texts stress that it is He who will return in power as judge of the living and of the dead.

In the interim, Christ exercises His dominion on earth through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The early community called attention to its charismatic gifts as evidence that Jesus, having received the Holy Spirit, had poured it out in the manner foretold of the messianic era. Peter in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:16-21) quotes Joel 3:1-5 to this effect. Other New Testament authors allude to texts such as Ezekiel 36:27-28, in which the Lord promises to put His own spirit in the heart of the new Israel. The gift of prophecy is, in Paul’s eyes, a particularly striking sign that God is among the Christian people (1 Cor 14:25).

### **Crucea**

Învierea a confirmat importanța și validitatea salvifică a morții de pe cruce. Crucea înseamnă mântuire, Învierea înseamnă confirmarea și efectul mântuirii.

The humiliations and death of Jesus gave rise to a number of serious objections that had to be met by the Church’s apologetic. The fact that Jesus was rejected by the leading authorities of the synagogue and was convicted of blasphemy was hard enough to explain. In addition, the very manner of His death was such as to call down upon Him the curse of Deuteronomy 21:23: “a hanged man is accursed by God”.

To these difficulties the Christians replied that the humiliations and sufferings of Jesus were part of the redemptive plan of God set forth in the Fourth Servant Song (Is 52-53): “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed” (Is 53:5). The objection regarding the curse incurred by Jesus is met by Paul with a somewhat complicated exegetical argument, the style of which would have been familiar to the rabbis of the time. All who seek justification through the Law, he maintains, are under a curse, for it is impossible to keep the Law in its entirety. To them applies the text, “Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them” (Gal 3:10, quoting Dt 27:26). To break the power of this curse, according to Paul, Jesus was made subject to the other curse mentioned in Deuteronomy 21:23. Having been cursed for the sake of humanity, Jesus liberates man to seek justice not through the works of the Law but through faith in Him (cf. Gal 3:10-14).

The widespread failure of the Jews to recognize Jesus as Messiah presumably constituted a major obstacle to the evangelization of Israel. In answer to this difficulty, a number of Old Testament quotations would seem to have been adduced. In addition to the Fourth Servant Song, mentioned above, the Christians appealed frequently to Isaiah 6:9-10, which describes God’s blinding of those who were to hear the preaching of Isaiah. This text, cited in all four Gospels and in Acts 28:26-27, was doubtless one of the pillars of the primitive apologetic.<sup>4</sup>

Not content with alleging the mere fact that God foresaw and intended the blindness of the Jews, Paul in Romans elaborates a theological explanation of their present situation—a problem that seems to have tormented Paul personally. In Romans, chapters 9 to 11, he argues that this does not mean that God has broken His promises to Israel or ceases to love His people, but simply that a provisional failure of the Jews as a group to recognize Christ is necessary to further God’s total plan of salvation, which extends likewise to the Gentiles. Paul predicts that after the evangelization of the Gentiles is complete the Jews will claim their rightful inheritance and enrich both themselves and the Church by their acceptance of Christ.

A particular difficulty regarding the Passion that seems to have troubled the early Christians was the treachery of Judas. How could Jesus have miscalculated so seriously as to choose a traitor as one of the Twelve? This objection, like the others, was met in the first instance by scriptural quotations. John 13:18 cites Psalms 41:9: “Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his

heel against me.” Mark 14:18 seems to contain an allusion to the same text and likewise insists that Jesus Himself was fully aware of what Judas was about to do. The Judas-apologetic was then extended to include the subsequent actions of Judas in selling his Master, in buying the potter’s field, and in hanging himself (or in suffering some kind of violent death, if one follows the popular account in Acts 1:18 rather than that in Matthew 27:5). All these incidents are explained as fulfillments of Old Testament predictions, as one may see, for example, from Matthew 27:3-10.

A comparative study of the Passion narratives in the four Gospels reveals an increasing preponderance of apologetical motifs. This is apparent, first, in the growing insistence that every detail unfolds “as it was written” in the Old Testament. Also the Apostles are less unfavorably portrayed until, in the Fourth Gospel, the Beloved Disciple appears with Mary at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:26). Finally, the later traditions, especially in Luke and John, tend to exculpate the Romans, whereas there is a corresponding tendency to inculcate the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Originea divină și existența umană a lui Isus***

A further apologetical problem centered about the origins of Jesus. The early Church seems to have looked upon Him as having come from Galilee, without inquiring more closely into His descent and birthplace. Yet there was a tradition, supported by scriptural texts (e.g., 2 Sam 7:12-13; Ps 89:3-4; 132:11-12; Dan 9:25), to the effect that the Messiah would be a royal scion of David’s line and not an obscure villager from Galilee (cf. Jn 1:45-46). In response to this point of view, the Church seems to have taught at a relatively early period that Jesus was, in His human ancestry, a direct descendant of David (Rom 1:3; cf. Acts 13:17-23).

There was even an expectation that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David (Mic 5:1; cf. Mt 2:5; Jn 7:42). The infancy Gospels of Matthew and Luke explain that Jesus, although conceived in Nazareth, was born in Bethlehem. The manner in which the birth stories are told, especially in Matthew, indicates a strongly apologetic concern. This is evident, for example, from the way in which the term Nazoraios (which is subject to a variety of possible interpretations) is taken by Matthew as a reference to the town in which Jesus was to be conceived (Mt 2:23).<sup>6</sup>

### ***Învățătura și minunile lui Isus***

Once it was claimed that Jesus was eligible as the Messiah thanks to His Davidic descent and that the very town of His birth was a fulfillment of prophecy, a host of problems arose concerning His public life. At what time, if at all, did Jesus claim to be the Messiah, and why did He not succeed in winning general recognition for His claims in His public ministry?

As regards Jesus’s messianic claims, the early apologetic showed no interest in establishing, as many modern writers wish to do, the messianic consciousness of Jesus and its development. Rather, stress was placed on the fact that God pointed to Jesus as His beloved Son. Texts such as Psalms 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, which originally had been taken to refer to the manifestation of Jesus at the Resurrection, gradually transferred to the baptism of Jesus and even to His Transfiguration (Mk 9:7; Acts 10:38; 2 Pet 1:17). According to some scholars the time of Jesus’s manifestation as Messiah, originally viewed as the Resurrection, was gradually advanced in date until at length His birth was identified as the moment of revelation.<sup>7</sup>

As a means of reconciling the fact that Jesus really was the Son of God with the recollections concerning His actual ministry, which had not been conspicuously messianic, Mark uses the device known as the messianic secret. The manifestations of Jesus’s messiahship in Mark usually occur only in the presence of a relatively small group of disciples, and Jesus on these occasions frequently commands the witnesses to be silent about what they have seen and heard until after he has risen from the dead (e.g., Mk K34, 44; 3:12; 5:42; 7:36; 8:30, 49). The messianic secret, of course, may have been something more than an apologetic device. In Mark’s theology it brings out the hidden and mysterious character of the dawning of the kingdom, which is not intended to be revealed except to a small band of elite until the time for its general diffusion has arrived. Moreover, it is entirely possible that Jesus Himself

may have wished to keep His identity secret from the majority of the Jews, since they would not have been capable of grasping His messiahship in accordance with Jesus's own conceptions.

The other synoptic Evangelists, while they do not stress the messianic secret except in passages borrowed from Mark, record Jesus's ambivalent attitude toward messianic appellations. On the one hand Jesus does not deny that He is the Messiah, thus giving an indication that He really is such; but on the other hand He never uses the term of Himself, and when others use it of Him He generally replies by substituting the term "Son of Man". This term, which has its roots in Daniel 7:13 and in the expectations of sectarian apocalyptic (1 Enoch, chaps. 31 to 71; 2 Esdras 13:25-26, 29-32, 52), was perhaps more congenial to the self-understanding of Jesus than crudely messianic terms such as "Messiah" and "Son of David".<sup>8</sup>

In order to account for the fact that Jesus's teaching became the property of a small band of disciples, the early Church made much of the mysterious and veiled manner of His public proclamation. He was said to have spoken for the most part in parables, the meaning of which eluded the majority of His hearers, whose minds were blinded. In this connection the Evangelists make use of the text previously mentioned, Isaiah 6:9-10, which is now placed upon the lips of Jesus Himself (Mk 4:12 and parallels). This quotation would seem to imply that Jesus, according to the early apologetic, deliberately used parables to prevent His doctrine from being understood by the generality of His hearers. Thus a point that the early community insisted upon for apologetic reasons ironically became an embarrassment to the apologetics of later centuries, which seeks to explain away the apparent harshness of Jesus's exclusivism!

Yet even the Twelve, as portrayed by Mark, are far from successful in penetrating the secret of the kingdom of God. The Evangelist keeps repeating that "their hearts were hardened" (6:52; cf. 3:5; 8:17). On one occasion Jesus, alluding to the Old Testament, puts to them the question, "Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?" (Mk 8:17; cf. Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2). Even Peter thinks in a human rather than a divine way (Mt 8:33). Consequently none of the disciples understands the Passion predictions (8:32). The risen Jesus has to rebuke them roundly for their unbelief (Lk 24:25, 45; cf. Mk 16:14).

This obtuseness of the disciples, while it doubtless rests upon authentic recollections, serves the purposes of apologetics insofar as it explains why the disciples, during Jesus's lifetime, understood so little of His person and mission. It also makes more impressive the conversion that they underwent under the impact of the Easter events.

### The Miracles of Jesus

Just as the preaching of Jesus is presented as intelligible only to a few and as very imperfectly understood even by them, so too, according to the Evangelists, the miracles were of limited evidential value. They furnished sufficient indications of Jesus's mission but were not so overwhelming as to convince all who saw them. Thus the early Church could point to the miracles as signs truly marking Jesus out as one "attested to you by God" (Acts 2:22) and yet could explain why, in spite of these signs, Jesus's contemporaries did not recognize Him as Son of God until after His Resurrection.

While all the Gospels present the miracles as aids to faith, a difference of emphasis may be noted between the Synoptic Gospels and John. The Synoptic Gospels portray the miracles as works of divine power, evoking wonder and amazement. They are seen predominantly as acts by which Satan is overthrown and the kingdom of God is inaugurated, and only in connection with this efficacy does their sign value become apparent.<sup>9</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, however, the miracles are studied more reflectively from the point of view of their symbolic or didactic significance. The number of miracles is sharply reduced; only seven are narrated in the public ministry. The significance of these seven is brought out by long interpretative discourses, and in these discourses the miracles are related to the person of Jesus rather than primarily, as in the Synoptics, to the dawning of the kingdom of God.<sup>10</sup>



Notwithstanding this difference of emphasis, all four Gospels recognize the miracles as providing motives of credibility. Jesus does not indeed consent to perform miracles merely in order to display His supernatural power, as if to overwhelm and compel the assent of others. Ordinarily speaking, some measure or degree of faith is pre-required on the part of those who ask for miracles.<sup>11</sup> Jesus rebukes those who demand extraordinary signs as a condition for faith in Him and praises those who believe in simple reliance on His word. Yet He insists also that the signs He works are such as to increase the culpability of those who, having seen His works, still refuse to believe (cf. Mt 11:20-24; Jn 15:24). If the miracles authenticate the message of Jesus, this is in great part because they blend harmoniously with the good news of salvation that He brings into the world, in accordance with the promises and expectations that stem from the Old Testament.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Apologetica din cele patru evanghelii***

Before concluding this analysis of the New Testament one must ask to what extent the four Gospels (and Acts, which is the second part of Luke's work) fit into the category of apologetic documents. As is obvious at a glance, they bear little resemblance to modern apologetical treatises. They are narrative in form and contain little sustained argumentation. They purport to tell a story rather than to prove a case. Yet the question may still be asked to what degree they are motivated by the intention of persuading unbelievers to accept Christianity or of helping believers to overcome their doubts and hesitations. If one defines apologetics in terms of this general intention, one will find at least an apologetical ingredient in all these writings.

### ***Marcu: Isus ca împărat***

Of the four Evangelists, Mark stands closest to the primitive kerygma. He is content to do little more than present the figure of Jesus as the Church remembers Him in faith and to watch Him in action as He struggles against the demonic forces that hold mankind in weakness, ignorance, and fear. Mark presents an unforgettable portrait of the Son of God at war with the Satanic powers arrayed against Him. With divine power Jesus casts out demons, cures illnesses, forgives sins. Even the unruly elements are subject to His mighty word. When unjustly accused by the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus majestically silences their objections. When the disciples begin to doubt or to weaken, Jesus confirms their wavering faith with a word of comfort, rebuke, or explanation. The event of the Resurrection, toward which the whole Gospel ineluctably moves, signifies the triumph of Jesus's power over all the forces of evil—sin, sickness, death, blindness, and unbelief.

In narrating this sublime history Mark furnishes abundant materials for the defense of the Christian faith. He explains why the disciples were first drawn to Jesus and strongly held to Him and why Jesus in spite of His sovereign power was rejected and put to death. He makes much of the enthusiasm of the crowds who followed Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem and shows how the very popularity of Jesus aroused the jealousy of the chief priests. He quite frankly exposes the doubts, confusion, and discouragement of the disciples, which prevented them from fully understanding what Jesus was saying until He had risen from the dead.

Much of the apologetical material in Mark is simply taken over from the pre-Markan tradition. But Mark adds, as has been noted, his own special emphasis on the messianic secret and on the explicitness with which Jesus predicted the events of the Passion.

Summarizing Mark's intentions, Bishop A. E. J. Rawlinson remarked that this Gospel was written "partly to edify converts, and to satisfy a natural curiosity about how Christianity began, and partly to supply Christian preachers with materials for missionary preaching, and partly also to furnish a kind of armory of apologetical arguments for use in controversy with opponents, whether Jewish or

heathen”.<sup>17</sup> Far from excluding one another, these various motives would have been mutually supportive.

### ***Matei: Isus ca al doilea Moise***

Matthew’s Gospel, like Mark’s, is undoubtedly written for a community of believing Christians, not for outsiders. Yet it has considerable apologetical significance, for it contains materials developed for the use of converts from Judaism. In all probability the Evangelist was writing for a group that “was still beset by antagonistic Jews at close quarters and therefore required both directly apologetical material and also the narrative of ‘how it all began’ which is indirectly of great apologetical importance”.<sup>18</sup> Although some have called Matthew the Gospel for the Jews, C. F. D. Moule remarks that it might more correctly be called the “Gospel against the Jews”, for it contains an abundance of ammunition for Christians under attack from non-Christian Jews.<sup>19</sup> Matthew’s pervasive use of prophetic texts with assertions of their fulfillment in the life of Jesus is obviously designed to prove to rabbinic readers that Jesus is, as the Church claims, the divinely promised Messiah. As a subsidiary purpose, Matthew aims to explain to Jewish-Christian readers why the Gentiles are taking over the kingdom of God, and this too pertains to his apologetic.<sup>20</sup>

In the narrative sections peculiar to Matthew, apologetical concerns are evident. For example, the Matthean infancy narrative is built around five scriptural quotations with solemn assertions regarding their fulfillment in particular incidents. Later, to account for the humble and unobtrusive character of Jesus’s public ministry, Matthew introduces a long quotation from Isaiah 42:1-4, which may be taken as Matthew’s summary of Jesus’s career, ending with the prediction that the beloved Servant will bring “justice to victory; and in his name will the Gentiles hope” (Mt 12:21). In the central section of his Gospel, Matthew introduces a number of important pericopes regarding the Church and Peter’s position in it. These texts, the most famous of which deals with Peter’s reception of the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Mt 16:19), have provided materials for ecclesiastical apologetics in subsequent centuries. The long series of woes against the Scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23 is presumably designed to combat the claims of rabbinic Judaism in the Evangelist’s own time. The story of the Passion and Resurrection, as Matthew presents it, has a great number of features, regarded by some scholars as legendary, that were evidently introduced for apologetical motives. Among these one may signalize the suicide of Judas (27:3-6), Pilate’s wife’s dream (27:19), and the stationing and the bribery of the guards at the tomb of Jesus (27:62-66; 28:11-15).<sup>21</sup>

### ***Luca-Fapte: Isus ca Mesia Universal, glorios***

Luke and Acts constitute a two-volume work, the purpose of which is stated in the preface to the Gospel, Luke 1:3-4, the operative words of which are: “it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.”

There has been much speculation as to the identity of Theophilus, a name that is literally translated “God-loving” (or possibly, “loved by God”). Some have supposed that he was the lawyer who undertook Paul’s defense at Rome and that Luke was supplying materials for use at the trial, but this scarcely seems likely in view of the abundance of material in Luke and Acts that would not be useful for forensic purposes. Others have suggested that Theophilus was the secret name by which Flavius Clemens, the first cousin of the Emperor Domitian, was known in the Roman Church.<sup>22</sup> Clemens’s wife, Domitilla, is

known to have been a Christian, and he himself was at least an inquirer. In support of this theory is the fact that the title Your Excellency implies a high position in Roman society. If Luke wrote for Clemens, the work would have been written about A.D. 95 and its purpose would presumably have been, in part, to win civil toleration for the Christian religion.

Whoever Theophilus may have been, there are some indications that Luke hopes through his history to win favor for Christianity on the part of Roman authorities. He gives a generally flattering portrait of the Romans who enter his story. In the Gospel he is at pains to show that Pilate was not responsible for the death of Jesus—three times over he declares him innocent (23:4, 14, 22)—but that the guilt rested upon the Jewish priests and the mob incited by them. At the moment of Jesus's death the Roman centurion loudly proclaims His innocence (23:47). Throughout the book of Acts Luke shows esteem for Roman justice. Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7, 12), the magistrates at Philippi (Acts 16:37-39), Gallio at Corinth (18:12-17), the Asiarchs and other officers at Ephesus (19:31, 35-41), Felix, Festus, and others in Palestine (Acts, chaps. 24 to 26) exemplify the positive value of the imperial law in protecting Paul from the unjust allegations of hostile Jews, even though Felix at one point hopes for a bribe (24:26) and Festus seeks to win favor from the Jews (24:27). All of this fits in well with the theory that Luke-Acts might have been a kind of political apologetic.

This intention, however, by no means accounts for everything in Luke's work. Richard Cassidy, among others, has cast doubt on the apologetical motivation of Luke's account. By his own declaration, Luke is seeking to help Theophilus, not to become a believer (which he already is), but to become more fully grounded in the Christian tradition. If Luke were writing a political apologetic, he would not have so emphasized Jesus's terseness before Pilate, his choice of Simon the Zealot to be an Apostle, and his concern for the poor and the outcast. The fact that Paul appealed to Rome does not necessarily indicate any great confidence in the emperor's justice. That appeal may have been no more than the act of a clever man caught in a desperate and unjust situation.<sup>23</sup>

The most salient characteristic of Luke's work, as Hans Conzelmann points out,<sup>24</sup> is its original theology of redemptive history, which meets a theological need of the Church in the closing decades of the first century. As the years rolled on, it became apparent to the early Christians that the end of the world could no longer be regarded as imminent.<sup>25</sup> Luke was one of those who undertook to recast the Christian message in a way that would allow for a continuation of life in this world notwithstanding the fact that the "last age" had come with the Christ-event. In this connection he developed a new theology of the Church and of the Holy Spirit. He depicted the Church as the messianic society of mutual charity and peace. This larger theologico-apologetical purpose is connected with the political apologetic. Because Christianity was a continuing fact of history, the need to demonstrate that State citizenship and Church membership could be mutually beneficial was imperative.

### ***Ioan: Isus ca Hristos divin, dătătorul de viață***

The Fourth Gospel, like the third, contains an explicit declaration of the author's purpose: "these [signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). Exegetes, however, do not agree as to whether the author here has in mind the leading of unbelievers to Christian faith or the fostering of the life of faith in those who already believe in Christ.

From an analysis of the contents of the Gospel, in the light of what is known about the religious situation at the time in a locality such as Ephesus, one can think of various groups that the Evangelist might have been addressing. The constant insistence throughout the early chapters on the superiority of Jesus to John the Baptist (see 1:8-9, 1:20; 3:30, 3:38) suggests the possibility that one purpose of the Gospel may have been the refutation of the claims of some of the sectarian followers of the Baptist, who apparently flourished in and about Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7).

One of the most striking features of the Fourth Gospel is its recurrent use of the term “the Jews” as a technical term for the religious authorities hostile to Jesus (as contrasted with the term “Israel”, which for John is a title of honor). Jesus Himself, as portrayed by John, resorts to rabbinic techniques of argumentation in order to defend His right to be called the Son of God (10:34-36; cf. 8:44-47, 54-55). These disputes give the impression of reflecting the struggle going on in the Church in John’s own time rather than during the life of Jesus, when a term such as “the Jews” would not have had this restricted application. John’s Gospel, moreover, is studded with formula quotations from the Jewish Scriptures, somewhat similar to those of Matthew. He introduces such quotations to explain, for example, the unbelief of the Jews (12:38), the treachery of Judas (13:18), the parting of Jesus’s garments and the casting of lots for His seamless robe (19:24), and His limbs being unbroken (19:36).

Features such as these have suggested to some modern authors (W. C. van Unnik and J. A. T. Robinson) that the primary intent of the Gospel may have been to serve as a missionary handbook to help convert diaspora Jews. But Raymond E. Brown seems to be on safer ground when he emphasizes rather the defensive purpose of the Gospel, to sustain the faith of Christians who were under attack from Jewish propaganda. Yet Brown concedes that there was one group that John may have been addressing with a certain missionary hopefulness—Judeo-Christians in the diaspora synagogues who accepted Christ but had not yet broken with Judaism. Chapter 9, as Brown points out, lends itself easily to being interpreted as an invitation to such Judeo-Christians to imitate the courage of the man born blind and to accept excommunication from the synagogue for their faith in Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

But John’s horizons are far wider. He records the Christian witness in a way calculated to appeal to men looking for light in the Hellenistic world at the close of the first century. The universal significance of Christ as the light and savior of the world is clearly brought out. The Word who enlightens everyone (1:9) becomes flesh to save the world (3:17; 4:42) and is raised up in order to draw all human beings to Himself (12:32). His redemptive purposes extend not only to the Jewish nation but to all the scattered children of God (11:52), including the other sheep not of Israel’s fold (10:16). In his use of cosmic imagery (e.g., light, life, word) John draws upon a vocabulary that would have been familiar not only to Hellenistic Jews but to the cosmopolitan population of a city such as Ephesus, where Near Eastern faiths, entering into contact with Greek philosophy, were issuing in mystery religions and Gnostic speculations such as have survived in the Corpus hermeticum. While one has no proof of direct contact between John and the Hermetic literature, the two may easily be understood as coming out of a similar background; C. H. Dodd and C. K. Barrett have shown this.

Although various Church Fathers report that John’s Gospel was directed against heretics such as Cerinthus (Irenaeus), Ebion (Jerome), and Valentinus (Victorinus of Pettau), a careful study of the Gospel, as Brown points out, gives little support for the view that the refutation of Christian heresy was a major concern of the author.

All things considered, it seems likely that John had chiefly in mind as probable readers the Christians living in a city such as Ephesus. Barrett correctly observes that “it seems very doubtful whether anyone, however intelligent, who had not a good grounding in the gospel tradition and elementary Christian theology would appreciate it.”<sup>27</sup> The subtle liturgical and sacramental allusions throughout the Gospel would surely pass over the heads of even highly educated pagans. Thus it would be an error to look upon this work, any more than any other of the New Testament writings, as primarily addressed to those who did not yet profess the Christian faith. John’s Gospel is undoubtedly aimed at sustaining and intensifying the life of faith of all its readers, and in this sense has affinities with apologetical literature.

### ***Pivoturi istorice și argumentative: Fapte, Scrisorile lui Pavel, Epistola către Evrei***

In order to disentangle the various strands of New Testament apologetics, it will be helpful to keep in mind the contrasting situations in which the Church found herself at various stages in the second half of the first century.

### ***Fapte: de la iudei la Neamuri, de la Ierusalim la Roma, via Antiohia Siriei***

Some good indications concerning this development, especially in the early period, are furnished by the Book of Acts.<sup>13</sup> The original proclamation of the kerygma and the polemical encounters that this provoked between the young Church and normative Judaism have already been commented on here. In successive chapters of Acts, Luke has given miniature sketches of the Church's apologetic in various situations. Stephen's defense, in chapter 7, is in fact a counterattack on Palestinian Judaism from the point of view of the Greek-speaking, or Hellenist, wing of the early Church. Stephen proclaims in the boldest terms that God does not dwell in man-made temples but is to be sought through the Prophets and especially through Christ, whom Stephen identifies as the Prophet like himself predicted by Moses (Dt 18:15-18).

The Jews of the first century are in Stephen's eyes—like their ancestors—a stubborn people “uncircumcised in heart and ears” who never cease resisting the Holy Spirit and who have persecuted all the true Prophets of God (7:51-52). Some of the same arguments urged by Stephen in his own defense will be taken up again in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In chapter 10, Luke briefly indicates the manner in which Christianity was proclaimed to the uncircumcised on Palestinian soil. The address of Peter to the household of Cornelius in verses 36 to 43 reads like an expanded version of the Christological sections of the Pentecost speech in chapter 2. As some have noted, the theology is characteristically Lucan—especially the idea that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (v. 37). Considerable stress is laid on the healings and exorcisms of Jesus and on the testimony of those who were privileged to eat and drink with Jesus in His risen life.

Beginning with chapter 11, the focus of interest in Acts shifts to the Gentile world. In chapter 14 Luke begins to show the shape that Christian proclamation took when confronted by paganism.

The population of Lystra, amazed at the healing of the cripple, addresses Barnabas and Paul respectively by the titles of Zeus and Hermes. The Apostles take the occasion to launch a vigorous attack on polytheism:

We also are men, of like nature with you, and bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:15-17).

This popular type of natural theology prepares for Paul's apologetic to the cultured Greeks at Athens.

Acts 17 gives Luke's account of Paul's address to the Council of the Areopagus. Opening with a tactful *captatio benevolentiae*, Paul is presented as complimenting the Athenians on their religiousness and as calling attention to one of the altars dedicated “To an unknown god”; this affords him grounds for declaring that he is not preaching any strange and outlandish deity. “What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you” (v. 23). He then declares firmly to the Athenians that God is the creator of all things, that He does not dwell in man-made shrines, and that He in no way depends upon His creatures for any benefit to Himself. All mankind is one, and all nations are intended by God to seek and find Him. That God is intimately near to each person Paul proves by quotations from two Greek poets, Epimenides and Aratus. Then, reiterating a point already made at Lystra, Paul adds that in times past God mercifully overlooked the idolatry of the pagans. Now, however, all are called upon to turn to

the true God, who has drawn near in Christ. In conclusion Paul warns his hearers that God will judge the whole world through this man, whom He has raised from the dead.

The doctrine of the Resurrection provoked scorn and incredulity among Paul's philosophically minded auditors at Athens. Even among Christian converts—as one learns from 1 Corinthians—this doctrine was to meet with misunderstanding and resistance. Paul's apologetic to the Athenians, while it seems to have met with success as long as he was talking about God and religion in general terms, was rejected at the point where he introduced Christology.

For the purposes here it is not necessary to settle the longstanding controversy as to how accurately Luke summarizes what Paul actually said on this or indeed on any occasion. M. Dibelius, M. Pohlenz, and others have maintained that the speech, shot through with Stoic natural theology, could not possibly represent the authentic thinking of Paul.<sup>14</sup> But in his widely noticed doctoral dissertation, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation*, Bertil Gartner plausibly contends that the leading ideas of the Areopagus speech are not those of pagan philosophical theology but of Jewish monotheistic propaganda, which had already, even before the time of Paul, taken up some Stoic themes and inserted them into the Israelite religious tradition.<sup>15</sup>

***Scrisorile lui Pavel: de la Israel la Biserică (Romani, Galateni), de la popoare naționaliste pagane la o singură umanitate salvată (1-2Cor), de la legământ extern la credință interioară și legământ interior, de la gnostici și iudei legalști la creștinism curat, înțelept, sfânt și practic (Efeseni, Coloseni, Filipeni, 1 Tim-Tit).***

In the earliest of his letters (A.D. 50-51), Paul writes from Corinth to his converts at Thessalonica, which he visited shortly before he visited Athens on his second missionary journey. He shows somewhat the same mentality that is reflected in the Areopagus sermon. Others report, he states in his congratulatory preface, "how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:9-10).

Romani

In his Letter to the Romans Paul gives the fullest statement of his case against idolatry, which he regards as the ultimate source of all the moral degradation in the pagan world. This idolatry is in Paul's view an inexcusable defection from the original worship of the one true God: "For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles" (Rom 1:21-23). Although Paul's primary intention here is to confirm his readers in their worship of the true God and to account for the depravity of their pagan contemporaries, he is probably aware of the apologetical implications of his remarks. To worship the true God is the only reliable safeguard against falling into the vices here described. In a full treatment of Paul's apologetic it would be necessary to consider also his answer to various heretical tendencies that he seeks to crush. Especially in his Letters to the Galatians and Colossians he argues against a servile reliance on the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law and a superstitious worship of angels. He shows how these deviations are basically incompatible with Christian faith and with the freedom of the Christian.

1-2 Corinteni

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, whom Paul had evangelized shortly after his stay at Athens, he again exhibits his distrust of Greek wisdom and his well-founded fear that philosophy, which for the Greeks always involves commitment to a determinate way of life, could corrupt the faith of his new converts. In the early chapters of this Letter, Paul draws a sharp contrast between two modes of religious knowledge, the one consisting of human wisdom, the other of obedience to divine revelation. For Paul, the first leads only to pride and delusion. In order to put an end to the boastfulness of

philosophy, God has chosen to save the world by what the unspiritual regard as foolishness, especially by the crowning foolishness of the Cross. Paul does not wish to support his preaching by any philosophical argumentation but solely by the power of the Holy Spirit, who gives fecundity to the preaching of the revealed word (1 Cor 3:6). Paul's discussion of the relationship between faith and reason in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians was to provide eloquent texts for all those theologians who in subsequent centuries were to glory in the contrast between the two.

As already mentioned, Greek philosophy seems to have led the Corinthians into difficulties regarding the resurrection of the body. Paul replied that if bodily resurrection were not possible, it would follow that Christ had not risen and hence that the cornerstone of the apostolic preaching was a falsehood. Lest anyone should entertain such a suspicion, Paul reiterated the grounds of the Church's Resurrection faith. He founded this exclusively on the testimonies of those to whom the risen Christ appeared, and his list of primitive testimonies still constitutes one of the strongest apologetic arguments for the actual occurrence of Jesus's Resurrection.

Galateni, Filipeni

Against the Judaizing false teachers. Against Judaistic accusers in Rome.

1-2 Tesaloniceni

Efeseni-Coloseni

Against Gnosticism.

Tit, Filimon, 1 Timotei

Against judaisers and pagan, myth-telling teachers.

2 Timotei.

### ***Epistola către Evrei: de la Israel la Biserica Universală, de la preoția lui Aaron la preoția Hristică (Melchisedehică)***

O apologie a creștinismului față de iudaism, "the first apology for Christianity".<sup>16</sup>

Christos este mai mare, și Christos este preotul universal.

In correspondence with a community of Christian converts from Judaism who were in danger of slipping away from their faith, the writer set out to commend Christianity as the perfect religion. He faced, in particular, three stumbling blocks: first, that the divinely appointed religion of Israel should have been eclipsed; second, that Jesus should have had to undergo suffering and humiliation; and third, that Christianity lacked a sacrificial ritual comparable to that of Judaism. In his reply the author showed that Christ fulfilled and surpassed everything that earlier generations had hoped to receive from Moses, Aaron, and the priests and Prophets of the Old Law. The detailed and systematic theology of mediation contained in this Epistle is of great dogmatic significance, but it also has, as Bruce contends, an apologetic aspect. In the first half of the twenty-first century, when the Christian churches are witnessing the collapse of many time-honored beliefs and practices, it is encouraging to

read again the message of Hebrews, which calls for a dynamic and forward-looking faith similar to that of Abraham when he set forth from Ur “not knowing where he was to go” (11:8).

## **Concluzii**

While none of the New Testament writings is directly and professedly apologetical, nearly all of them contain reflections of the Church’s efforts to exhibit the credibility of its message and to answer the obvious objections that would have arisen in the minds of adversaries, prospective converts, and candid believers. Parts of the New Testament—such as the major Pauline Letters, Hebrews, the four Gospels, and Acts—reveal an apologetical preoccupation in the minds of the authors themselves.

A critical sifting of the New Testament materials makes it indubitable that the Resurrection of Jesus held a place of unique importance in the earliest Christian apologetic. This event, interpreted in the light of biblical prophecy, was seen as the great sign that Jesus had been divinely constituted as Messiah and Lord. The charismatic phenomena in the early community, especially the gifts of prophecy and miracle-working, were viewed as evidences that the risen Lord had sent forth His Spirit upon the Christian community and was at work through it, establishing His messianic reign. The last age of the world, therefore, had already begun in the Church.

In addition to these arguments, which presumably belonged to the stock in trade of the entire community, Paul makes use of other arguments against the pagans. In particular he contends that those who fall away from the worship of the living and true God, who has now revealed Himself in Jesus, inevitably fall into idolatry, cruelty, mutual hatred, and all manner of perversion.

The Letter to the Hebrews, the best example of the early Christian apologetic to the Jews, shows how Christianity, thanks to the perfect mediatorship of Jesus, surpassingly fulfills all the authentic values of the Old Testament.

Each of the four Evangelists has his own distinctive slant on the way Jesus manifests Himself as the divine Redeemer. Mark conveys this realization by evoking numinous sentiments of awe and fascination. He vividly portrays the impact made by the Son of God upon the Apostles as He walked among men. They are dazzled and stupefied, as if by a brilliance too great for them to take in. Matthew, addressing Christians not as yet fully weaned from Judaism, depicts Jesus as the new Moses, teaching a new and higher justice. Luke—both in his Gospel and in his “second volume”, Acts—describes the insertion of the Church as a Spirit-filled community into world history and shows its links with Jerusalem and Rome. John, finally, proposes the image of Jesus as the Light who has come into the world to shine upon the children of God in every nation and to give them a more abundant life of freedom, truth, and mutual love.

The primary commendation of the good news as set forth in the Gospels would seem to be the attractiveness of the message itself—or rather of the reality that Christ brought into the world. But not all are drawn to the faith. The Evangelists, particularly John, teach that a sincere acceptance of the Christian message requires that one experience the inner attraction of grace and be willing to live up to the moral demands of the gospel. To those who are called and are willing to sacrifice all else for the following of Christ, the gospel gives a joy and peace that are not of this world.

The primary sign of credibility, to judge from the Gospels, would seem to be the person of Jesus, with His vitality, determination, and compassion, and His uniquely authoritative manner of teaching and acting. As secondary signs, not wholly separable from the person and work of Jesus, the Gospels



call attention to the miracles. Jesus Himself, according to the accounts, invokes His miracles as external confirmations of His divine mission.

Just as the Apostles explained the Resurrection of Jesus “according to the Scriptures”, so too Jesus, according to the Evangelists, interprets His miracles according to what “was written” of Him in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus in the New Testament the miracles, the Resurrection, and the messianic prophecies coalesce into a single argument made up of many converging elements.

The New Testament addresses itself primarily to persons who are familiar with and who fully accept the Jewish Scriptures. The Christian fulfillment is presented as the key to the proper interpretation of the ancient texts. New forms of apologetic would become necessary when the Church, primarily based on Hellenistic soil, was forced to deal continually with persons born and bred in a very different intellectual world.

### **Apologetica în NT: interacțiunea cu iudaismul, păgânismul și tendințele deviante (eretice) din comunitățile creștine.**

The New Testament is primarily concerned with telling the story of Jesus and with drawing the consequences of that story for belief, for worship, and for the practical conduct of human life. On the surface the Gospels and Epistles, the Acts, and the Apocalypse (Revelation) appear to be addressed to convinced Christians.

Unlike the apologists of the next centuries, the New Testament writers do not engage in arguments with unbelievers or vacillating believers as to why one should be a Christian. Reserving for later discussion the extent to which the authors of the New Testament may have been directly motivated by apologetical concerns, it is sufficient to affirm at the outset that a careful study of the New Testament throws considerable indirect evidence on the way in which the infant Church carried out her apologetical encounter with Judaism, with paganism, and with deviant tendencies that arose within the Christian community. This is apparent from the apologetically significant themes that are present, in a diffused way, throughout the New Testament.

*Tipuri de discurs apologetic. Clasificări*

*Inter-religioasă, ex: creștinism vs. islam,  
islam vs. hinduism, etc.*

*Intrareligioasă (interconfesională):*