



C·S· LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

October 2013 - *Freedom in Defending the Truth of Christ*

During World War II, C.S. Lewis gave a series of BBC radio broadcast talks on the Christian faith. These talks established Lewis as a gifted apologist and defender of orthodox Christianity.

As a result, he was asked to address a group of clergy and youth leaders in Wales on Apologetics. He begins by stating that our faith is not based on our preferences or likes, but rather on solid truth. Lewis writes,

I am to talk about apologetics. Apologetics means of course Defence. The first question is—What do you propose to defend? Christianity, of course...We are to defend Christianity itself—the faith preached by the Apostles, attested by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, expounded by the Fathers. This must be clearly distinguished from the whole of what any one of us may think about God and man. Each of us has his individual emphasis: each holds, in addition to the faith, many opinions which seem to him to be consistent with it and true and important. And so perhaps they are. But as apologists it is not our business to defend them. We are defending Christianity; not “my religion.”



When we mention our personal opinions we must always make quite clear the difference between them and the Faith itself... This distinction, which is demanded by honesty, also gives the apologist a great tactical advantage. The great difficulty is to get modern audiences to realize that you are preaching Christianity solely and simply because you happen to think it true; they always suppose you are preaching it because you like it or think it good for society or something of that sort. Now a clearly maintained distinction between what the Faith actually says and what you would like it to have said or what you understand or what you personally find helpful or think probable, forces your audience to realize that you are tied to your data just as the scientist is tied by the results of the experiments; that you are not just saying what you like. This immediately helps them to realize that what is being discussed is a question about objective fact—not gas about ideals and points of view.

Knowing that our faith is based on solid truth as revealed to us by Jesus Himself, rather than being dependent on public opinion polls, fad theology or the whims of people, should give us confidence as we explain our faith to others. It is also freeing, to know that we can be open, transparent and honest with others about our beliefs pointing them to the objective fact of Scripture as our guide.

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31-32 (NIV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, “Christian Apologetics,” in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 89-91.