

04.12.2020 EDUCATION IN ARTS AND SCIENCES

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” Psalm 19:1

From the beginning of Time, God’s people have seen God’s hand in Creation and Redemption. They recognise that science is the study of God’s book of nature. They recognise that man, created in the image of God, has the gift of creativity – not only in the procreation of life but creativity in the arts and sciences.

During the 18 centuries after Christ, Christianity was at the forefront of education in the arts and sciences. Christianity was the basis of the scientific revolution which began in the 15th century. Apart from folk and traditional music, most of the music of Europe was written for the church. JS Bach signed off every piece of church music he wrote with the words ‘soli Deo gloria’ (glory to God alone). Most of the great art and literature of that time followed the same tradition.

It was only after the French Revolution and the Age of Enlightenment that men refused to acknowledge that science and scientific laws, the arts and their form and structure had their basis in God and His creation. Professing themselves wise, their foolish hearts were darkened. Today, most of the world walks in darkness, believing the lies of Satan propagated by scientists and artists who do not believe in God.

The Lord Alone

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. Psalm 19:1

The heavens declare His righteousness and all the peoples see His glory. Psalm 97:6

The laws of nature and science reflect the attributes of God, the Creator.

In reality, what people call “scientific law” is divine. We are speaking of God Himself and His revelation of Himself through His governing of the world.

The laws of nature are governed by God. He governs the seasons; He governs Day and Night. What we call the laws of nature is really the law of God or the Word of God. Real laws are in fact the word of God, specifying how the world of creatures is to function.

Scientific law is universal in time and space. All true scientific laws hold for all times and all places. **The classic terms are omnipresence (all places) and eternity (all times). Law has these two attributes that are classically attributed to God.**

Scientific law does not change with time. **It is immutable.**

Real laws are also absolutely, infallibly true. Truthfulness is an attribute of God.

Adam and Eve learnt that the universe runs according to laws that already exist. Scientists do not invent scientific laws; they discover laws that are already there. The laws must already be there. They must actually hold. The power of these real laws is absolute, in fact, infinite. **In classical language, the law is omnipotent (“all powerful”).**

Transcendence and immanence are characteristics of God. Scientific law is both transcendent and immanent. The laws of science have supremacy over all the created world and yet are evident in the smallest parts of this world e.g. quarks and protons.

God is a personal and rational Being. Scientific Law is personal and rational. Law implies a Law-giver. Someone must think the law and enforce it, if it is to be effective. Scientific law is articulated in language and symbols which can be understood rationally. Reason and rationality are characteristics of humans. If science is rational, then it is also personal.

Why is it that we can depend on the laws of nature to apply consistently throughout time? The secular scientists cannot justify this important assumption. But the Christian can because the Bible gives us the answer. God is Lord over all creation and sustains the universe in a consistent and logical way. God does not change, and so He upholds the universe in a consistent, uniform way throughout time.

A Christian has freedom to study nature, because he does not worship nature as gods.

Nature has a uniformity of cause and effect. There is a How and there is a Why.

However, the Christian view also maintains that in this cause and effect universe, God and Man lie OUTSIDE this uniformity - God because He is God and not bound by time-space. Man, because God has created him with free will and personality, therefore he is not a machine i.e. not an automaton. The great evidence for this is the Fall and Redemption.

The Beauty of Holiness

Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. Psalm 96:9

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both. Proverbs 20:12

Does beauty have a moral aspect to it? One of the greatest arguments for God is the beauty that surrounds us. The fact that we humans crave, appreciate, recognise, and delight in beauty, points to all people being created in the image of a God of beauty; that God created beautiful things is confirmed by our observation of beautiful things (CS Lewis). The materialist denies that such beauty actually exists. Instead, the materialist asserts that the viewer merely *feels* that something is beautiful.

'Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers. All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are all really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers.' AC Doyle

The Bible continues to place tremendous value on the importance of getting our ideas right. In a world that often celebrates nonsensical ideas, it sounds almost out of step with culture for someone to say that an idea can be wrong or false. While it's true that all people are equal, it is not, however, true that all the ideas are equal. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans about people who refused to acknowledge their Creator as having become darkened (misled) in their thinking.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:18-20

Foolishness and Wisdom

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

When we look at the arts today, much of it reflects man's rejection of God. God is a God of form and structure and harmony; a God of truth and beauty.

When men believed in the Creator God, this was reflected in the arts. Music, art, literature had form and structure and portrayed an accurate view of nature and God as found in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, we see Spirit-filled men called to be artisans and craftsmen in the tabernacle to be built for God to dwell among His people. They were also given the task of teaching their craft to others (Exodus 31). We find the craft of the perfumer described in Exodus 30:25.

When men and women chose to deny God, the arts too began to reflect their world view. Instead of following form and structure based on objective principles of art and music, they chose to become subjective and conceptual... 'I will produce based on my feelings...' The artists' moral compass no longer was God, it was Man. And so art and music and to

an extent, literature too, denied form and structure and instead became, 'without form, impressionistic and abstract'; similar to the description of this world was before God came down and filled it with life, structure, form and beauty.

"For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."

I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; and the heavens, they had no light. Jeremiah 4:22, 23

The LORD answers Job

We are familiar with the story of Job; a righteous man who underwent suffering because God removed His protective hedge. Job responds in faith at first, but with ongoing trials, starts to complain:

"Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless because of my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. Job 23:2-5

God now comes to Job in the whirlwind. Not as a still small voice, but in awe-inspiring splendour and glory and majesty. He has come in answer to Job's complaints. But He doesn't actually address Job's complaints. Instead, in chapters 38 and 39 and 40:15 to the end of 41, He presents Job with a series of questions about God's mighty acts in nature.

God is in effect, asking Job, 'If you cannot answer My questions about creation and nature which you can see, how can you hope to understand everything about my Person and righteous decisions?'

In the world today, we see scientists who refuse to believe in God and yet cannot answer the first question God put to Job:

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!

Or who stretched the measuring line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:4-7

Conclusion:

We live in a world where men and women are taught not to believe in God, and where their philosophy (if they are honest), drives them to despair. This despair and hostility to God is seen all around us. Scientists do not believe in a God who has written the book of nature. Most of the arts – music, literature, painting and sculpture have lost the elements of form and structure and are 'without form and void'; abstract, arrogant and nihilistic.

In such a world, we as Christians are to live and demonstrate to a world in despair that we believe in God the Creator, the One who is Love and Light; who is the source of Grace and Truth, of morality, science and the arts.

We are to have compassion for those who through ignorance are caught up in this worldview, this current culture that dominates the world. As Christians, it is imperative that we demonstrate an alternative worldview, a counter-culture that will attract those who have found no hope in what they currently believe. We are to proclaim 'liberty to the captives' of the kingdom of Satan and provide 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' (Isaiah 61:1-3)

God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11
