

03.10.2020 EDUCATION: EDUCATION IN EDEN

“Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him?” Job 36:22

Education is the process of imparting knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgement and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. One of the goals of education is to prepare oneself for mature life as a citizen of this world and of the world to come.

“True education means more than pursuing a certain course of study. It has to do with the whole person, and with the whole period of existence possible to human beings. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.” *EG White: Education p.13*

When we go back to Creation before the Fall, we find a perfect model of education. God and the angels were the teachers of Adam and Eve. Their education included:

1. Language and Communication

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. Psalm 33:6

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. Psalm 148:5

The first chapter of Genesis introduces us to God the Creator. Christ is the Word and by His word, this earth became a fitting dwelling place for man.

God chooses to communicate with Man. In Eden He did it face to face.

Language is wonderful. It is so because it is a gift of God to us. It reflects and reveals Him. How does language reflect God? According to the Bible, God himself can speak, and does speak. We are made like Him, and that is why we can speak. When we use language, we rely on resources and powers that find their origin in God. Language is one of the defining characteristics that separates man from animals.

The first recorded interaction between God and man involved God speaking in language concerning man’s task... *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Genesis 1:28*

2. The Laws of Nature and Science

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

Adam and Eve learnt that the laws of nature and science reflect the attributes of God, the Creator. The Garden of Eden was the perfect setting for them to learn the laws of nature and science.

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.

- a. 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.
- b. 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.**

- c. Scientific law does not change with time. **It is immutable.**
- d. **Real laws are also absolutely, infallibly true. Truthfulness is an attribute of God.**
- e. 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”).**
- f. **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.
- g. **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.

God’s logic is built into the universe, and so the universe is not haphazard or arbitrary. It obeys laws of chemistry that are logically derived from the laws of physics, many of which can be logically derived from other laws of physics and laws of mathematics. The most fundamental laws of nature exist only because God wills them to; they are the logical, orderly way that the Lord upholds and sustains the universe He has created. The atheist is unable to account for the logical, orderly state of the universe. Why should the universe obey laws if there is no law-giver? But laws of nature are perfectly consistent with biblical creation. In fact, the Bible is the foundation for natural laws.

The laws of nature are uniform. They do not (arbitrarily) change, and they apply throughout the whole cosmos. The laws of nature apply in the future just as they have applied in the past; this is one of the most basic assumptions in all of science. Without this assumption, science would be impossible. If the laws of nature suddenly and arbitrarily changed tomorrow, then past experimental results would tell us nothing about the future. 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.

“The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.” *Ibid. p.20*

3. Spiritual Laws

- The Law of Love
- The Law of Rest/Dependence
- Moral Law

God revealed to Adam and Eve that unselfish love is to be basis of all relationships and all action.

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16

After they were created, God invited Adam and Eve to rest as an acknowledgement that that could add nothing to His perfect Creation. Thus they acknowledged their complete and voluntary dependence on Him and Creator, Sustainer and Provider.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Exodus 20:8-11

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Hebrews 4:9, 10

The Bible makes it plain that God's character is the ultimate source of the Moral Law. God's righteousness is displayed pre-eminently in the moral law and in the rightness of His judgments i.e. His rewards and punishments based on moral law.

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you..." Deuteronomy 30:15, 16

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. Psalm 19:7-9

God is a holy God. And when He created beings (mankind) with reasoning, He provided them with moral laws, laws that would be a reflection of His character of love, righteousness and justice. Above all, they are an expression of His will. While the laws of nature are ordained by God and will always respond in the same way (unless God chooses to intervene in a supernatural way), mankind has been given free-will, the freedom to choose whether they will follow God's moral law or not.

Intrusion: the Fall

When the serpent arrived in Eden, he came as the great deceiver, the great Liar. When he arrives, there is a marked change in language. Instead of beauty, truth and goodness, the language becomes negative. The serpent's language also misrepresented God. He cast doubts on the instruction Adam and Eve had received. He cast doubts on the truthfulness of God; the God of righteousness and truth.

"The Devil was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." John 8:44

'Satan is the liar behind all liars and produces the lie of all lies-that the creature can be equal with God. This was his own point of rebellion against his Creator, God. Every other lie is only an extension of this one. And this is who the devil is- he the originator of "The Lie".' Francis Schaeffer

Since God created man with free-will, Adam and Eve could choose to believe God or transfer their allegiance to Satan. Since they chose Satan, he became the Ruler of this world and since then has presided over a world system that denies God in every aspect of life. He invites men to reject the spiritual laws of God; he delights in destroying true communication and language. In the past few centuries he has persuaded men to believe that even scientific law is a matter of chance or at most, the work of an impersonal god who created the universe and then left it to its own devices.

But the destiny of Satan's kingdom is destruction and eternal death.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:7, 8

Regaining what was Lost

But thanks be to God... the Godhead made a covenant of redemption in eternity past, before Time began, to remove the curse that sin had brought to the world and to restore man once more to the image of God.

God the Father planned our redemption, God the Son provided redemption for mankind and the Holy Spirit makes that redemption real in the life of every person who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:3-4

Whose Authority will you recognise?

We each have a choice as did Adam and Eve. Who will be our teacher - God or Satan? Whose authority will we accept – God’s authority or Satan’s?

Our decision will have eternal consequences - eternal life or eternal death.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36
