

Problems, Pitfalls, and Perplexities, Part 2

Intro review

- ❖ Last week we started to take a look at some of the problems that arise inside the church in regard to apologetics. Many of which stem from misunderstandings of what apologetics is or what the Bible teaches on this issue. The Bible makes it clear that we are to study, preach, teach and defend the Gospel. Apologetics helps us accomplish these tasks.

Pitfalls – Vision loss

- Prov. 29.18 – “Where there is no vision the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”
- ❖ In his book *The End of Apologetics*, Dr. Myron Penner gives warning against the ‘Modern’ Apologist. While I do not agree with everything in his book, a few things stuck out to me. He tells a story on pages 77-80 about a friend named John who had lost his faith and unfortunately had a run in with modern apologists.
- ❖ Penner’s main concern with modern apologetics is that it has lost its vision. Winning souls and witnessing to the truth is swallowed up by impersonal disregard for the persons’ wellbeing. No attempt is made to address the real heart issues. He also laments that “Living” Faith or demonstrated faith takes a far back seat to reason. To these concerns I am deeply sympathetic as it is something I need to watch in myself.
- ❖ Apologetics then is no excuse to live like the world and should never take the place of righteous living. The way we show we believe is in our conversation or actions in Christ.
 - I Peter 3.1, Husbands won by the conversation of the godly wives
 - I Tim. 4.12. – be an example
 - II Tim. 3.17 – the Word equips us to good works
 - II Cor. 3.1-3 – We are the scriptures on display
 - In the words of Christ “if you love me keep my commandments.” We show we believe in and love God by how we choose to conduct ourselves in the church and amongst the unbelieving world.

- ❖ According to Penner “But whatever else Christian apologetics is, it must, at the very least involve witnessing to the truth of Christian belief.” I believe he is correct. We need to use apologetics as a tool to witness and edify, not just teardown and destroy. The people we witness to and their situations need to be taken into consideration. Penner says that “When I witness, I do not take up a self-centered, asymmetrical stance closed off to the needs, wants, desires, goals, dreams, story, or insights of the person to whom I witness.”(pg83)
- ❖ Our main concern then should be to show the world the love of Christ and share the gospel, not just win arguments with none believers in a no holds barred death match. Our manner must be respectful and caring for our lost neighbors, and not demining or nonchalant.

Perplexities – Lack of getting rid of God

- Psalm 53.1 – The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.
- Psalm 2.1 – Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
- ❖ As I think about issues pertaining to Apologetics and the debate surrounding God’s existence or the lack there of. I have come across some interesting and confusing ideas. These I commend to you with some small amount of information for your consideration. These are things I have been musing about but haven’t had the time to fully develop, test and put into coherent use.
- ❖ Much ado is made of the areas of Quantum Physics lately. Many people have heard some crazy sounding theories surrounding this area of the sciences, there seems to be a lot of confusion on what it is and what it does. So I will attempt to give a small glimpse into the topic to touch on its high spots.
- ❖ Quantum theories are essentially mathematical constructs of possible realities or worlds. This could also be possible series of events in the real world. It is very advanced and complicated but not something we should fear. Some important things to keep in mind are the difference between Possible worlds/events, plausible, and actual.
 - Possible – anything that is theoretically or mathematically demonstrable.
 - Plausible – anything possible with reason that it ought to be that way
 - Actual – things as they really are, existing in fact or reality, the actual state of affairs

- ❖ Here is where people get confused because people like Steven Hawkins act like possible events or worlds are actual. Yet he himself states in his book *The Grand Design*
 - “Quantum theories **can be** formulated in many different ways but what is **probably** the most intuitive description was given by Richard (Dick) Feynman,... Until the advent of modern physics it was generally thought that all knowledge of the world could be obtained through direct observation, **that things are what they seem**, as perceived through our senses. But the spectacular success of modern physics, which is based upon concepts such as Feynman’s that clash with everyday experience, has shown that that is not the case.”(emphasis mine)
 - Notice how he admits there are many ways to interoperate quantum theories and that there is no certainty in which way to go except his opinion. He further casts doubt on reality and science as we know it by saying things are no longer as they seem.
- ❖ In the end the atheist must dream up make believe worlds and scenarios in which God doesn’t exist and then say that because it exists in the realm of possibilities then we should consider it to be true in the actual world. This is the lengths one must travel to rid themselves of God. This is a difference in what is conceptually possible like a unicorn and what is not such as a married bachelor or a square circle.
- ❖ One example of this is that in Quantum theory an object traveling from point A to point B will take all possible paths simultaneously and arrive at the same time. However this is not how things occur in actuality. A bullet fired from a gun at a target in actuality only takes one path, it does not split in to an infinite amount of bullets and go every direction and end at the same place. (that would clearly make it the most devastating gun in the universe)

Further perplexities

- ❖ Other ideas I have based on the idea that in atheistic narrative of the begging and how we got to where we are today. (a random, directionless force) There cannot be any design, purpose, goal, target, good or bad, right or wrong, advantageous or disadvantageous. The Mantra must be “stuff happens then more stuff happens.” Yet in this world view oddities emerge such as...
 - If Christians are delusional why bother correcting them?
 - If there is no point to life or the universe then just let everyone do/believe whatever makes them happy. I believe the answer in part is contained in Rom 1.32 – If you study the whole passage vs18-4.16 you see that man has a knowledge of God by witness of his creation and his law on their hearts. I believe this willful suppression of the truth leads to a hardening of the heart and downright denial of the truth. I believe that deep down they have a

knowledge of God and his law and when they deny this they feel it that is why they have pleasure in others doing the same. This is like a person who knows his actions are wrong so he tries to get someone else to do it with him to ease his conscience.

- So back to the question why bother correcting Christians- I believe it's because there is something different about Christianity and the God it serves.
- Why do atheists seem to deify the processes of evolution?
 - This one is interesting. I brought this up to a friend turned atheist and he was very surprised and admitted he had never thought about it. Basically what I have noticed is that there seems to be an impossibility to escape God build into our languages. What I mean is, almost every atheist or secular humanist writer that I have read eventually starts ascribing volition and direction to the evolutionary process as well as the big bang and singularities. It seems like describing the beginning and the process is not possible without a design or bigger picture in the background. The end result I often walk away with is that the process chooses and dictates events to a certain future goal. The process seems to take on a personality yet this seems to go largely unnoticed.
- In a model where there is no point to life or death; why is survivability of a species desirable and note worthy?
 - So if stuff happens and there is no reason for it in the end how can we positively (or negatively) ascribe any sort of better or worse stuff. If death is non existence and life has no ultimate purpose why would longevity or survivability of an organism or species be a good thing? Yet many act like this is the case and we should strive to keep things from going extinct and increase longevity. They also talk as if this is the goal of the evolutionary process even though it can have no goal.
- Why is human advancement a good thing?
 - So like the last one, why is advancement of humans as a species the goal? Humans like all other things are doomed to extinction like all other life. This is an inescapable problem. Nothing we do can stop it or prolong it we all will die. So why is advancement seen as such a must. Again this seems to take the form

of the goal of natural selection to advance the species to a point of ultimate survivability and intellectual and physical prowess.

- Why is any form of prejudice wrong?(racism, sexism, disregard of the elderly)
 - “Equality is a lie concocted by inferior people who arrange themselves in herds to overpower those who are naturally superior to them. The morality of ‘equal rights’ is herd morality, and because it opposes the cultivation of superior individuals, it leads to the corruption of the human species.” –Neitzche
- Why be tolerant of alternate lifestyles? (LGBTQ)
 - Advancement seems to be big to humanists but how does the LGBTQ community advance the species? If a homosexual has desirable physical and mental attributes but never mates and produces offspring, doesn't that hurt the process? If nature dictates why not follow nature?
- So as you can see there are many inconsistencies in the narrative when God is removed but that is to be expected and we will see more as we move through the next few weeks. Since Romans 1 says these individuals were given up, given up, and given over. Also as II Cor 4.4 that the God of this world i.e. Satan has blinded the minds of the lost so that they don't see Christ. Their situation is dire, not only is their spirit dead in trespasses and sins but the adversary is doing all he can to keep people from seeing the truth of the gospel. As Penner says we need to see the unbeliever not so much as an enemy but as a soul for whom Christ died, in need of a savior. For lest we forget we too were once one of them, as in Eph 2.1-9. We all walked in the course of this world and were by nature children of Satan. And again in I Cor 6.9-11, Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit isn't saying some of us were bad he says all of us were bad. We all had our conversation in the world. Remember from lesson 1 that we need to use apologetics properly.
 - To defend the faith against objections or alternate worldviews II Cor 10.3-5
 - To communicate the Gospel II Tim 2.24-25
 - Confirm the truth of the Gospel to yourself Heb 11.1-3, Phil 1.7,17
- All things need to be done in order, in relation to the Gospel, and ultimately for his glory. Our focus needs to be on winning souls and standing strong.

- If God does not exist then what hope do we have? If life has no purpose, no eternal reward or punishment, what is the point of going on with living? Some honest naturalists and atheists have also made this point. In Nietzsche's parable of the madman there is a line that says "How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us?...Must we ourselves become gods simply to appear worthy of it?" Nietzsche recognized that life without God had many far reaching consequences that most people did not think about. As the scoffers first mocked the madman who sought God, but fell silent when they realized the dilemma he presented. For the Christian we see this in I Cor 15.12-19 where Paul says without Christ our faith is useless and we have no hope. Life without God is meaningless, purposeless, pointless, goalless, directionless, useless and ultimately hopeless. This is why many have to try to invent things of worth. "Look to yourself to find meaning and purpose." "Find fulfillment in what makes you happy." "Live for today for tomorrow we die." These and more are popular slogans that leave man as the inventor of purpose and hope. It falls to us to find our own worth, which many sadly never do and decide to end themselves.

- ❖ One last thought I would leave you with is on the issue of Human intelligence and reason. Some may say that we should above all hold to reason and rationality even if it apparently runs contrary to what scripture teaches.(I believe this is actually impossible) the problem is whose idea of reason and rationality are we to trust? If man's wisdom let me ask you a series of questions.
 1. Have you ever told a lie?

 2. Have you ever lied to make yourself look better or not as bad as you were?

 3. Have you ever forgotten the true events or started thinking your lie was the way it really happened?
 - If you answered yes to these, like I have, then consider this; we humans are smart enough to question our own existence, build robots, fly to space, do all sorts of incredible things yet we are stupid enough to lie to ourselves and then believe our own lie. Let that sink in we are so stupid we can successfully lie to ourselves. Why would I believe man over God?