

Sabbath School Lesson #10 – Education in Arts and Sciences – 28 Nov-4 Dec 2020

Christ is the very essence of the glory of God. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalms 19:1). No pen can describe and no artist’s brush can depict the wondrous glory of the heavens; yet that glory is but a flection of the glory of Christ.

Sunday: The Lord Alone – Many do not know that the world could not create itself, but it “may be known” (Romans 1:21-32). How does it come that men do not know? – They know so much. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” The most unreasonable thing in the universe is human reason. It is utter foolishness with God (1 Corinthians 1:19-31). Paul says those who do the things described in the latter part of the first of Romans, know that they are worthy of death, and you cannot find a people who do not know it. The heathenism that Paul was speaking of, as represented at Athens and elsewhere, was not ignorance of things of this world. It embraced men whose work in the arts and sciences is studied today. A man may know without God, just as the beast may know; and where is the difference, save in degree? There is no wisdom apart from God. This is what Paul means when he says, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). And be not deceived “after the rudiments of this world.” “When we were children,” we were in bondage under the rudiments of the world. No one who has the slightest acquaintance with the Lord needs to be told that the rudiments of the world have nothing in common with Him, and do not proceed from Him. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (1 John 2:16-17). The friendship of the world is enmity with God. “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). It is from “this present evil world” that Christ came to deliver us. We are warned to “take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Bondage to the rudiments of the world is the condition of walking “according to the course of this world,” “in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;” being “by nature the children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:1-3). It is the same bondage seen in Galatians 3:22-24, before faith came, when we were under the law, “under sin.” It is the condition of men who are “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).

Monday: The Beauty of Holiness – Men’s judgment concerning beauty has been very much perverted. They call many things beautiful, which are really ugly; and many things in which men see no beauty at all, are the very soul of beauty. “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). That is why when Christ, who is “fairer than the sons of men” (Psalms 45:2), came to this earth, He had no beauty that men should desire Him when they looked upon Him (Isaiah 53:2). They looked at what He appeared to be, and not at what He really was. Have you never had the experience of meeting with a person who at first seemed ugly, but who, after intimate acquaintance, was really beautiful? The first sight was not repossessing, but when you saw what who, after intimate acquaintance, was really beautiful? The first sight was not prepossessing, but when you saw what the person really was, the ugliness of feature was entirely forgotten. This shows that beauty of character is the only real beauty. The saints of God may be very plain outwardly, but when the hidden things are brought to light, then shall they shine forth in the beauty of holiness. The beauty of Israel is as the beauty of the olive tree (Hosea 14:6). An olive tree is one of the most gnarled, twisted, and ungainly of trees. It grows on hard, stony soil, and more often than not will have the appearance of an old willow tree that has been torn by storms until it is almost dead. Its beauty is the abundant crop of fruit that it bears, in the evidence that it shows of the richness of life in it. So the life of God in the soul is the real beauty of men, and that alone will constitute their beauty in the ages to come. Their beauty will be “the beauty of holiness.”

Tuesday: Experts in Error – We are to avoid “oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Timothy 6:20). Everything that may be learned in creation, is epitomised in the Bible. Just because Christians have not appreciated the Bible, has there been so great a mass of “science falsely so called” accepted in the Church as true wisdom. No school that ignores God’s written and living Word can ever make a scholar equal to the man who may never have studied in the schools, but who has lived by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The wonder exhibited by those who heard the child Jesus in the temple wait was the same as that afterward manifested by those who heard Him teach as a man. They said, “Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Matthew 13:54). The reason why the people were so astonished at the understanding of Jesus was that He held to the simple Word of God, while they knew nothing but the tradition of men. They were great sticklers to custom: He wished to know only what was right. The doctors dealt in imagination – the product of their own heads; Jesus held to facts – the infinite thoughts of God. Truth is simple, and very easy to comprehend; it is only man’s envelopment of it with speculation, that has made it seem obscure. The Word of God is light (Psalms 119:105), and the opening of it given light; “it giveth understanding to the simple” (Psalms 119:130). On Christ rested “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; making Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2-3); but the same Spirit is given freely to all who wish to receive in order to obey wisdom in seeking men, and begging them to accept her. She “crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scoring, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at My reproof; behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you” (Proverbs 1:20-23). Whoever heeds will have wisdom that this world knows nothing about.

Wednesday: Foolishness and Wisdom – “Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13). We are told the characteristics of true wisdom: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (verse 17). This is the wisdom that descendeth from above. It is nothing else than the manifestation of the knowledge of God. And if these things are not a part of your life, then whatever knowledge you may have, you have not true wisdom but foolishness. If knowledge points not to God, it tends to destruction.

Thursday: The Lord Answered Job – “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2). This question would be very fitting today to be directed at evolutionists. The theory of evolution, for which Darwin stood, is very generally accepted in the religious world in place of the Bible account. As it has, according to this notion, been reserved for wise scientists of modern times to get at the real truth about the methods of creation, very naturally Moses is not held in good repute. Yet the One who made the world, the Creator Himself, “made known His ways unto Moses” and told him what to write. But so poor an opinion do many hold of Moses that the fact that the Ten Commandments, written on tables by the finger of God, were committed to him to preserve, leads many to lightly regard the Sabbath and the law of God. Moses was familiar with the ways of critics. “This man,” the people contemptuously called him, while he was communing with God in the mount. But as he was “very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth,” he minded none of these things. God called him “My servant,” and “the man of God.” And He said He would not talk with Moses as with the ordinary prophet, but “face to face.” What shallow folly for vain men, whatever their powers of observation, to affect a superiority over Moses and regard him as a recorder merely of unintelligent tradition. Moses was so eminent a Christian that he was a type of Christ Himself. When God promised the Messiah He said to Moses, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth” (Deuteronomy 18:18). As Moses spoke God’s words, so Jesus spoke not His own words but the words of the Father. Christ was faithful even as Moses was faithful (Hebrews 3). Those who refused to receive Jesus would not receive the testimony of His meek prophet Moses: “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me” (John 5:46).