

APOLOGETICS

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Introduction

There was some static on the recording but the words were clear enough:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep..."

Then the producer's voice went on to say something to the effect: "But the Science which took men to the moon gives a very different account of creation!"

At that point the BBC and I parted company and I went away wondering whether the producer had any idea of the enormity of what he had been saying! Probably not, but how do we go about contending *"earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"* in an unbelieving world?

Apologetics

The subject of the 'Defence of the Faith' is given the name: Apologetics. Because, in a fallen world, we too easily cause pain or difficulties to others we will often, if we are wise, need to humble ourselves and apologize: so the name suggests something rather defensive. But its origin is much more vigorous. It means 'to speak in defence of' and, technically, is a 'systematic argumentative discourse in defence of the divine origin and authority of Christianity.'

God the Creator

First, the fact of the Creator is something borne in upon our lives by the natural order of the world in which we find ourselves:

Psalm 19: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."*

Romans 1: *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the*

invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God..."

The Lord Jesus Christ

Second, there is the Fact of Jesus Christ. As we turn the pages of the Old Testament we see from the earliest chapters the promise of a Redeemer. As we progress the delineation becomes more clear. The line of His descent, the place of His birth and, we believe, the time of it, are all recorded many hundreds of years before it came to pass. Then we can pick up the New Testament and, if we carefully and meditatively read through His life and teachings as recorded in the Gospels, we will say: "No man has spoken as this man has! But of course it does not end there. We read of His Death and Resurrection and we are told that one day He will come again to judge the living and the dead. And those same Scriptures testify that He is God.

John 1: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

The Holy Spirit and Scripture

Third, there is the Fact of Scripture. There is in existence, and may be found in many homes, a volume which gives an account of the Creation of the world by God, of the Fall and of the steps which God has taken for the redemption of mankind. That Book claims to be the Truth of God.

Take again Psalm 19: *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple... the judgments of the LORD are true..."*

Or again Psalm 119: *"Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."*

This whole Psalm is a paean of Praise as to the perfections and wonders of God's law.

Then when we turn over to the New Testament, we find our Lord implicitly accepting the Authority of the Old. *"It is written ..."* is with Him an end of all argument. *"The scripture cannot be broken."* *"Thy word is truth."*

And, of course, similar claims are made by the apostles:

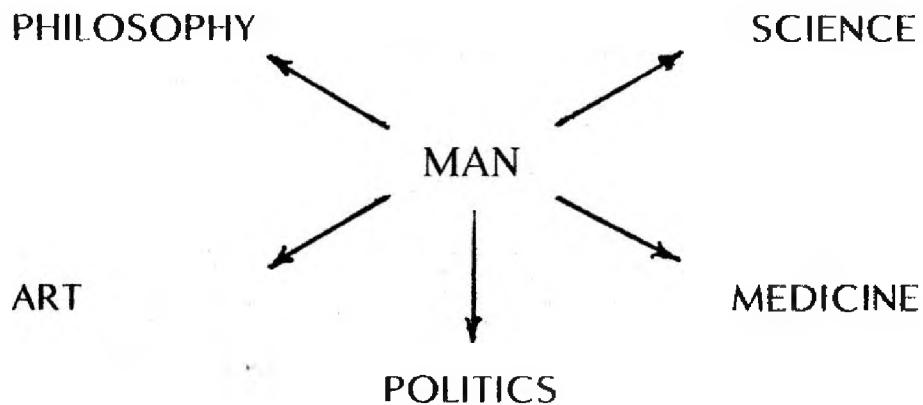
"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..."

"Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

In short, we have a three-fold testimony to the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

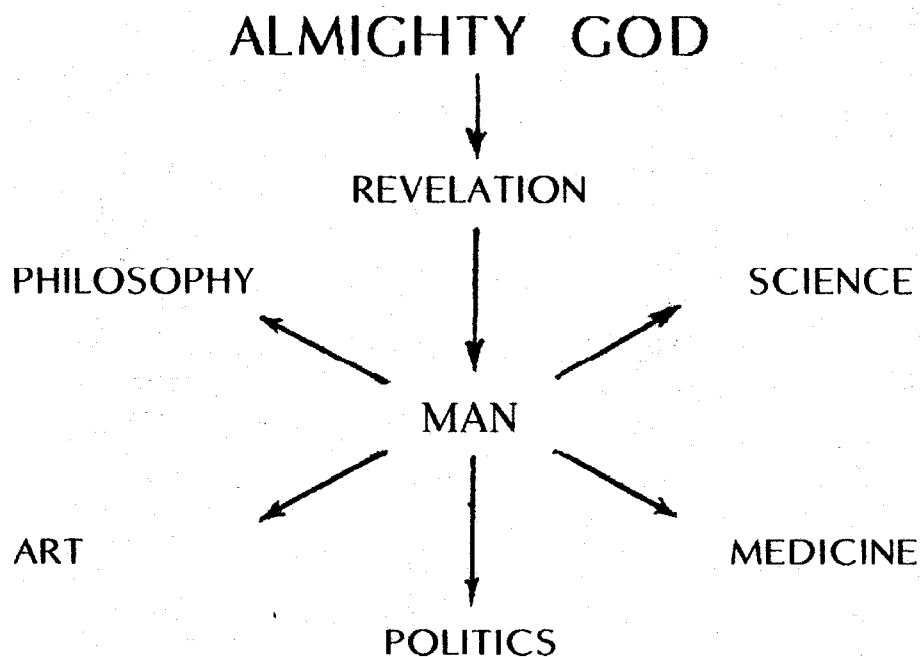
Illustration

A couple of Diagrams may help to clarify our position. Let us take man and place him in a central position. Then we can see that he is in a position to investigate various aspects of the Created order:



The actual arrangement of subjects might vary from thinker to thinker but the essential point is that man is able to go out and investigate these subjects, collect information about them and arrange that information in logical categories. The progress that has been made in these matters – and in particular the progress that has been made in Science and Medicine in the last three or four centuries – is mute testimony to his position in the created order!

But where in all this comes Religion? Many would position it alongside, say, Philosophy or Politics, as another area to be investigated. But this will not do! Our position is simply that we are dealing, not with religion, but with *Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth*. In all other subjects man goes out and gets information; but in respect of God he is not in that position – he cannot investigate the Almighty! He must simply accept His Revelation of Himself. So let us take our diagram again and modify it. We now get the following picture:



Now at this point we can take the argument one stage further. It is precisely because man is created in the image of God and placed in an orderly world to tend and subdue it that he can carry out his investigations. It is no accident that the progress that has occurred in Science and Medicine to which we have already referred, has occurred in the Christian west – and most obviously in the Protestant section since the blessed Reformation.

Conclusion

We are now, then, in a position to see the failure in the BBC's Science Correspondent's thinking with which we began this article. He simply rejected the Biblical view in the interests of the supposed autonomy of 'thinking and scientific man.' But this is to cut off the branch one is sitting on! Science, for instance, involves the two aspects of investigation and deduction. Any competent person who has been taught to measure or weigh will come up with the same answers. But when we take the information so obtained and seek to deduce theories from it, we will inevitably go wrong if we, *a priori*, rule out certain information. But this is precisely what the unbelieving scientist or economist or sociologist or, come to that, unbelieving theologian, does when he rejects the Revelation that God has given of Himself. Inevitably, a false view is held – and inevitably that false view produces evil results.

To give an obvious example. The Bible rules out sodomy. Accordingly in better times our laws treated it as a crime. Unbelieving politicians, however, both in this country and

America, repealed those laws. But God is not mocked. One result is AIDS – spreading disease and death, not only amongst the sodomites, but inevitably further afield. Similar arguments might be made about abortion. The unborn are murdered and, with an ageing population, the politicians are now beginning to wonder who are going to support the elderly. And so we might go on – with unmarried mothers etc. But by now the bankruptcy of liberal humanism is surely becoming obvious, so doubtless the point is, or should be, taken. Unfortunately, unbelieving man is not yet prepared to go back and start unwinding all the evil notions in Church and State that have been imposed on us in the last hundred years.

Our position, then, as Christians is this: God exists. He has made a Revelation of Himself to us in Scripture. Inevitably unregenerate man, who is in rebellion against God, will reject that Revelation. *"The fool has said in his heart: There is no God."* But there is – and He has spoken. Our wisdom, then, is to live *"by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY *(Continued from page 1)*

Scripture comes to us with its command (NB. not an offer), "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). None can plead before God that he is not responsible for his actions because God is Sovereign. The command still comes with all its force to us today. He who does not repent and believe shall be damned but all those who do believe shall be saved (Mark 16:16). In the great Judgment Day Jesus Himself shall say so.

REFORMED LIFE AND WORLD VIEW *(Continued from p 9)*

objective of travelling to other planets.

The main message of the Gospel is summarised by the Apostle Paul: "GOD... now commandeth all men everywhere to REPENT: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30–31).

Salvation is to be found only in the *Lord Jesus Christ*: "...the FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14), and it is He who will be the *Judge*: "The FATHER... hath committed all judgment unto the SON" (John 5:22).