

APPRECIATING GOD:

THE EFFECT OF THE LOSS OF INTELLECTUAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHRISTIANITY

or WHY THE CHURCH IS HEMORRHAGING CHILDREN TO THE WORLD, 12 pgs

In General

Years ago I read a book by **Wendy Shalit**, a young Jewish Girl, titled A Return To Modesty: Discover-ing the Lost Virtue because it was recommended by Charles Colson.^a I was profoundly influenced by the book because it sensitized me to its subject to such an extent that I saw her points being illustra-ted literally everywhere. This presentation is an attempt to bring that kind of sensitivity to realizing that **the church's intellectual poverty lies at the root of its decline.**

Human beings differ from animals chiefly in their ability to reason, understand, and communicate complex matters & concepts. Knowing and learning what, why, and how are fundamental pursuits of the human mind and necessary exercises of the spirit. Little can compare with discovering and figuring things out, tackling mysteries, and piecing together puzzles. Formulating questions and seeking answers is a reflection of what God built into our natures. Most of this is self-evident and rarely brought up for discussion. The intellectual desire to know and understand makes life interesting and joins other drives basic in our natures (like hunger and attraction to the opposite sex) **to form our psyche and integrate all aspects of our being into a whole and balanced people.**

At some point discipline and effort are required for all aspects of learning. **Basic skills** (reading, writing, observing, playing instruments, using tools, etc., some of which may require learning safety skills and procedures) **constitute a learning foundation to build upon.** As one progresses in developing his skill levels, he learns to appreciate and value them. An enjoyment often accompanies the work of learning and one moves from a disciplined endeavor to a labor of love. What used to be a chore becomes a delight. Mastering basic skills in turn becomes the means for learning more specialized subjects (reading electrical diagrams, designing electronic circuits, composing music, etc). One is constantly progressing from the easier to the more complicated and challenging.

More General Comments

The intellectual foundations upon which specific Christian teachings rest have been neglected for so long that they are no longer recognized as that nor understood and taught as important to the Christian framework as they once were. Therefore young people are wandering away from Christianity taught at home and in the churches once they are out of the house, working, or in college primarily because these integrating intellectual principles are and have been absent - intellectually left to languish, unidentified and unexplained - forgotten. [Of course their condition of unbelief underlies all this, but why don't they embrace the living God. Didn't we give them the truth? What happened to the power of the Gospel? See my discussion on the 3 levels or dimensions of spirituality in God's Training 1 & 2, and the 3 tier approach to truth in Beyond David] People, young or old, are unaware that they are missing a vital component of Christian doctrine and that its absence is devastating to their faith because **it is the part that ties it together** as something rational rather

than religious gobbledygook. Can these people be reclaimed? I don't know, but not to try is unthinkable.

There are **exceptions** of course. Some young people are blessed with very close Christian family relationships, some with strong youth groups and Christian friends who keep them focused on the work of the ministry. Teens especially need to be included in the lives of godly Christians. They need us to take an interest in them and to come along side them. Often their parents don't see them leaving the faith, but it is obvious to many outside of their world looking at what they are publicly displaying on Facebook for instance. [see my series on dating] My attempt here emphasizes bringing certain principles to light and on looking at their role as essential to the Christian framework as they once were. My hope is that **discussing these absolutes will serve to strengthen** the fact that Christianity is true and that there is no other explanation for mankind and the universe - none. I recommend that young people be helped **to focus their Christianity through ministry and mission** [see essay, The Mission].

I have written essays on these topics, taught a couple classes entitled **Introduction to the Intellectual Basis of Christianity**, and I have discussed them with several people. My sense is that very few people share this opinion with me, and in fact some people tend to argue against this approach. The objectives are: **1** - to gain a clear explanation for and description of this reality we are part of guided by the Bible and supported by observation and reason; **2** - to show the inadequacy of every other explanation for our reality, ie the materialist's naturalistic world view. So as far as **making sense of life and the nature of the universe**, it is the revelation of Scripture or nothing. There is no viable alternative. Therefore those who leave or neglect Christian teachings move into a very dark place indeed - a world without hope of finding meaning, purpose, or significance because they do not exist in a non-Christian (naturalistic or materialistic) framework. Remember the difference between humans and animals! Humans require the universe to make sense. We need it to be rational on an intellectual level. **The only alternative is magic**, which is what a naturalistic view boils down to.

Josh McDowell reaches a similar conclusion in The Disconnected Generation. The following excerpts are from the last chapter of that book. *Believing Is Not Enough*. He speaks of a survey he conducted. *The students answered the doctrinal part of the questions with confidence and authority, but **they couldn't answer why**. These were not little kids or new Christians. They were all young people from a strong evangelical denomination who had been involved in Sunday school, worship, youth activities, and Bible study. Many of them had been raised in Christian families, and were regarded as among the finest kids their generation has to offer.* He concluded that as a group they had accepted a subjective notion of Christian doctrine in place of an objective notion of Christianity as reality. *Our kids (and each of us) must be convinced of the truth within our hearts and minds.* Josh writes that he has traveled two separate ministry tracks during the years: **one** on evidences for the Christian faith [aka **evidentialism**] and **the other** on the importance of relationships. *In the last couple of years, he says, it has become clear that God has led my ministry team and me to a message that merges these two tracks.*

I have often encouraged people to **consciously choose someone to mentor them**, not merely in their practice of Christianity, but in the very necessary understanding of the faith. Few have taken that

advise. I chose [Francis Schaeffer](#)^b and have used his writings and life from time to time [to recalibrate my own thinking](#) about both. Schaeffer was known for his presuppositional approach [[considering beliefs that affect how one thinks and reasons](#)] to apologetics [[the branch of theology having to do with the defense and proofs of Christianity](#)] whereas [McDowell](#) became an advocate for evidential apologetics [[what can be easily inferred or understood about God from his work and creation](#)]. They both ministered personally and relationally to hundreds of people.^c More recently I have adopted [D.A. Carson](#) as mentor as well.

Specifically

God is most notably praised in the Bible for 2 great works: creation (**Gen.2:1-3; Ex.20.8-11**); and redemption (**Dt.5:12-15**). In redemption we see the absolute commitment of God to set forth his son as savior and lord over all creation and to give him a people cleansed and fit for his kingdom. Most of us believe that God created all things but [we know little of the implications](#) of the biblical assertions or of the particulars or intricacies of that creation. In fact we really cannot appreciate the tremendous wisdom and understanding creation involves unless we have a grasp of the details. Scriptures speak of the wonders of God's workmanship, but [ignorance of the details prevents us from really seeing the enormous complexity in the variety and genius of his designs](#). Here I hope to help you grasp some-thing of that in contrast to the silly notions circulating in academia.

Our appreciation of God hinges upon our knowledge of him and his works.⁹ It grows as we learn how wise his judgments are and how deep his understanding is. The more detailed our understanding of his remarkable creation the more awed we are of God the engineer who designed and integrated all the details of every system in both living beings and the material universe. Beyond what we think of as the glory of God being displayed en masse in the heavens, is the overwhelming genius and shear wonder we find as we look ever closer at the perfectly integrated details. **My 8-part DVD Intelligent Design series** is important here because it goes into the details,^a specific examples of the astonishing wisdom of God in creation.^d [It differentiates between science and philosophy](#). What is touted as science by unbelieving teachers is often naturalistic philosophy masquerading as science. The series exposes what evolutionists are really saying and reveals that this emperor has no clothes. When we look at the specifics, their explanations and arguments turn out to be nonsense. Sometimes they outright admit their puzzlement at the phenomenon, but more often they dig in against reason and contrary to the very principles they accept as governing the processes. **We need this and so do our children.** The Christian church in general and our church in particular are hemorrhaging young people. We need to give them a stronger foundation in the reality of the universe as the creation of God.

Fear & Shame

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. (Rom.1:16) [There is no need to be intellectually ashamed of or disappointed in the Gospel](#) [[or in the concept of creation](#)]. Paul was not speaking to a backward or primitive people. He was surrounded by the Greek and Roman world with all its intellectual sophistication, yet he was not overwhelmed by it. Jesus warned us not to be ashamed of the intellectual content of his teaching (**Lk.9:26**). As if in response to Jesus, Paul says, /

am not ashamed of the Gospel. [God's revelation to mankind is in 2 parts, that which deals with creation (see 6 below) & that which deals with redemption - discussed in other essays.] *He was not ashamed [or fearful] as he stood on Mars Hill (Acts 17) or when confronting the religious leaders of his day, or to preach while imprisoned in Rome. So also we, surrounded by our naturalistic intellectual world, need not shy away from the truth that the creation cries out and the corresponding message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

It is a very serious thing to be ashamed of Jesus and his teaching (Lk.9:26). In his last letter to Timothy, Paul reminds us that this includes not being ashamed of those who truly stand for Jesus and his word: *So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him (2 Tim.1:8).* We should proudly identify with all who identify themselves with Christ like *Onesiphorus and all his family because he often visited and encouraged me. He was never ashamed of me because I was in chains (2 Tim. 1:16).* We should be unashamed of Christ for as long as we live (2 Tim.4:1) or until he returns, not just when things are going well, but even when the Gospel is in ill repute. We should not then be ashamed of the practice of Christianity, of living by faith based upon the finished work of Christ, but also **not ashamed of the teaching of it in its intellectual concepts** including the creation.

CAUSE & EFFECT [see Cause & Effect in a Rational Universe]

Every effect [E] must have a cause [C] since an effect is some-thing or phenomenon that is effected [brought about] by something else. We instinctively think this way because having effects without causes is irrational and foreign to common sense. **Causal reasoning** is the fundamental principle upon which a rational universe functions and is understood. In our thinking we generally proceed by identifying (and categorizing) effects. We say, What caused this and why? Each effect of interest suggests a sufficient and probable cause that preceded and instigated it. There are 2 sets of questions that must be answered. **1-**Is it possible for it to have happened the way you think it did? **2-**if so, did it actually happen that way? Few people give this a second thought, but all of us reason this way. **The Bible is replete with examples of causal thinking.** Therefore a basic element of education is to sensitize students to the universal nature of causal thinking.

In the beginning [of the material universe] God [the design engineer who has always existed] created [C₁] the heavens and the earth [He conceived, designed, and built the physical universe, not merely it's form, but all the mechanisms of it, all the processes and principles of its operation] and all that they contain [E₁]. [God gave] each type of living creature (both plants and animals) [the physiology to] reproduce thereafter according to its kind [C₂ & E₂]. (Gen.1:1-28) Then God said, Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came [E₂]. In other words God is directly responsible [C₁] for the first of each kind [E₁]. These first in turn become directly responsible [C₂] for the continuation of their kind [E₂] resulting in **a cause & effect chain** where each effect becomes a cause for the next generation. ²¹ *God created [C₁] great sea creatures [E₁] and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water [E₁], and every sort of bird [E₁], each producing offspring of the same kind [C₂ & E₂] ...*

²²Then God **blessed them**, saying, *Be fruitful and multiply.* [This is a benediction (blessing) upon reproducing and spreading out upon the earth, not a command to do it. The old covenant or reformed theologies describing the next part (*Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground*) as a cultural mandate were wrong. It is all part of the same benediction. Notice the matter-of-fact statement *He also made the stars, (v.16)*. The implication is that after the 4th day no more stars were formed (or could come into existence by some natural process, see **Jn.1** below) for God had completed that portion of creation, **Gen.1:14-19**. Notice the finality with which he closes the passage. ¹⁸ ... And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.]

¹ Jesus ... saw a man who had been blind from birth [E]. ² his disciples asked a natural question prompted by a rational universe, **why** was this man born blind? [C₂, which appeared to them to be punishment for wrongdoing.] Was it because of his own particular sins or those of his parents. ³ Neither ... This happened so the power of God could be seen [C, manifestation of Jesus' power in his miraculous healing]. (**Jn.9:**) [See my 1st of 3 essays on the Sovereignty of God.] One of the difficulties that stands out when going over passages like this is that neither children nor their parents have learned to identify the fundamental implications the passages rest upon. Notice that brackets in the **Gen.1** quotes above **add necessary clarification** to the discussion as referring to a 2-part reality. There is a spiritual (or unseen) portion and a material (or seen) portion [see point 3 below]. God does not exist in a physical form as a part of the material creation and the only other conscious actors in Scripture are Satan, angels, demons, and humans. Remember that man as an intellectual being is different from all else in the physical creation. FIRST CAUSE: the principle of cause and effect requires an uncaused cause as a first cause. That means the first cause cannot be anything that is part of the material universe, but something perpetually existing outside of it. The Bible presents to us a God who always was and always will be. He is not lacking the power or wisdom to accomplish what he desires. He alone is eternal, sovereign, omniscient, and up to the task.

*In the beginning [already, sense of the Gk. tense] was [emphasis on status] the Word [metaphor for Jesus] and the Word was [already] God. He was [already existed] in the beginning with God. All things came into being [Gk, became] through him [C₁] and without him nothing came into being [became, emphasis on transition] that has come into being [become] [E₁]. (**Jn.1:1-3**) [Notice the emphasis of the passage is strengthened when the implications of the original language are revealed.]*

These few statements provide us with an incontrovertible and satisfying **philosophical understanding** of the whole world. The universe bears the distinct impressions of intelligence - intent and design for a purpose residing in a living being who is personal and can be known. There is nothing else in the knowledge of men that can hold a candle to it. The only other solution to the question of origins comes from the unbelieving world in which the machinery of the material world itself generates itself, which is nonsense. In other words, the Christian view is that of an **open system**. Picture an aquarium that contains everything in the material universe and it has no top. God lives outside the

aquarium and can rearrange or effect changes on things inside. The non-Christian view is that of a **closed system** where the top is glued on to isolate the material universe. The sides are opaque and afford no access to the outside - no one is there anyway to make adjustments to the contents. God is a living being who is there, not merely a force or a power, but someone we can relate to ... someone in whose image we are made. *By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from [result from, or was not a consequence of] anything that can be seen [belonging to the physical universe] . (Heb.11:3)*

consequences

Consequences are **circumstances that we bring upon ourselves by our own actions and that God uses to correct us** after we have taken the wrong course. They are meant to drive home our responsibility by bringing about some unpleasant results caused by our actions. They are tools God employs to accomplish correction and repentance. Just look at **Jonah** (see below) as he time and again tries to avoid the specific mission God had planned for him.

The following is in reference to a worse case scenario that I am familiar with involving drugs, lying, self - deception, and ruination of a family.^e Very often the **parents work against God by trying to deliver or shield their children from the adverse consequences of their actions** as they abdicate Christianity. In other words they're compassion leads them to continually step in and take the sting out of the consequences. They end up supporting and enabling their kid's lifestyle at no cost to them over and over and over again. The consequences are averted every time. I find this lack of understanding and wisdom extraordinary because the parents are not listening to God either. We dare not coddle people as they run from God. I've talked to people who are being torn apart by the mess some of their children are making out of their lives. The parents are confused and in anguish as to what to do. There is no reason for this.^f The way to deal with it is clear. Get on the side of God's consequences and work with God to turn them around. Explain to them that God is there and how he is fully involved in His world to accomplish his purposes. *[This should be secondary to us. It is literally all over the Bible! You should have discussed this long ago and trained your children to it, telling them the experiences in your own life and what God used to recover you.]*

Jonah's disobedience

Now, Jonah was running from God – attempting to escape the task God had given him, *⁴ the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Jonah had already told them he was running away from the LORD ... What should we do to you to stop this storm? [Now these men were collaterally caught up in the situation and they didn't have a clear path out without committing murder.] ¹² Throw me into the sea and it will become calm again [Now he could have jumped into the water at any point, but he did not. Perhaps he did not have the courage to do it believing it would be suicide]. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault. ¹³ Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land [The sailors refused the clear path to a solution because they would rather do anything but cause Jonah's death.] But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn't make it. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD ... they pleaded, don't make us die for this man's sin. [They saw no way out and the ship was about to*

break up and most likely they would all drown. God had driven them to this point with a heavy hand.] Don't hold us responsible for his death. O LORD, **you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons.** ¹⁵ Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! [They held off doing this as long as they possibly could, and then reluctantly did what they had to. That's where the family I mentioned above had come to. So there comes a point for all of us where our disobedient kids are concerned when we must stop trying to rescue them ourselves and release them to God's judgment and mercy. It's up to us who have been collaterally caught up in the struggle to try to preserve what's left and rebuild our lives as we commit our wayward children into God's care.] **Jon.1:**

This is all over the Bible. Just listen to **Hosea: Return O Israel to the Lord your God (14:1)** The prophet is not calling for some new and hazardous spiritual journey, but for a turning away from their rebellion, a turning back to the Lord they have long known or at least known of. They must come to terms with the heart of the problem: *Your sins have been your downfall!* There is never any way back without coming to grips with this fundamental reality. The prophet will not settle for a mere return to a formal adherence to a code of law. He wants them to confess, *take words* with them when they return (**v.2**). This is not a sullen return to prescribed ritual and church attendance, but repentance that bubbles up in a cry from a stricken heart. And what words should they be? They must seek forgiveness of sins; that God would receive them; they must renounce their political allegiances, implicitly acknowledging that such ties distracted them from trusting God; they must put aside their idolatry and hope in the living God. Then God *will heal their waywardness and love them freely (v.4)*. Then in a series of images God prescribes the blessings he will be to Israel. And so he reinforces the point of the chapter: *I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me (14:8)*.

Jonah's repentance 1:17-2:6

Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish [sea creature] to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead [he regards himself to be as good as dead], and LORD, you heard me! You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves [his death was imminent]. Then I said, 'O LORD, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple. I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. [Just look at this. All is lost and in the misery of his situation Jonah repents and recognizes the "fish" as the mercy of God for his salvation, and he returns as if resurrected.]

*But you, O LORD my God, snatched me from the jaws of death! ⁷ As my life was slipping away, I remembered the LORD. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. ⁸ **Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies.** ⁹ But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the LORD alone. ¹⁰ Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.*

There can be no real benefit unless the consequences are allowed to have their intended effect which is ultimately to press upon the consciences of the wayward children. Parents who delay and resist God's efforts to bring the reproofs of consequences to bear upon their children are failing to love them. God's love is tough and tenacious. It will not give in to painful circumstances or give up to personal assault by those we love. Love stands its ground on the truth.

*But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness [or who, by their wickedness, prevent the truth from being known] . **They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.** For since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. **Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities**—his eternal power and divine nature. **So they have no excuse [lit. apologetic] for not knowing God.** Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God [a deliberate choice] or even give him thanks [or credit]. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused [their understanding of basic reality was corrupted; they became irrational] . Claiming to be wise [how they saw themselves], they instead became [transitioned to the opposite] utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles [which is ridiculous].*

*So [consequently] **God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired.** As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded [or exchanged] the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires [ie, to the consequence of pursuing their sinful desires].*

*Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking [his patience is not infinite] and **let them do things that should never be done.** Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. (**Rom.1:18-30**)*

I've already mentioned that there are 2 parts to reality. It is not one dimensional because the operation of cause and effect requires a first cause outside of the material portion to bring about the material portion. Only the living and personal God is adequate to the task of conceiving and building an integrated physical universe with its exhibition in all aspects of being designed for a purpose as ours is. The physical universe is composed of substances, energies, and forces [non-substantive influences - (gravity), magnetism]. These are the **absolutes** of our physical reality. Each inanimate particular behaves consistently according to its own nature, according to what it is. Under given conditions it will act the same way every time [predictably, automatically] as prescribed by the laws of physics and chemistry. In other words, all such materials and energies exhibit specific built-in programmed characteristics and behave mechanically, like a clockwork machine.

Absolutes imply antithetical thinking

If anything is true, the opposite is false. If anything is right, the opposite is wrong. Just as things are what they were meant to be, mankind was made to reason and communicate antithetically. For example, **Newton's first law of motion** - aka the **law of inertia**, is stated as *An object at rest or in motion stays at rest or in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force*. In other words, without a sufficient cause, there will be no measurable change [no reaction or effect] in velocity or direction. The same applies to living organisms, though there is some variation from one to another of the same type due to biological and conditioning differences. This is the basis for all our understanding of the physical world - it under-girds all planning, design, manufacturing, and construction.

Having made this very reasonable conclusion, however, the Bible has something in addition to say. We often find that the Bible holds information that we could not otherwise know. God has given us a way to understand the phenomena of the natural world by giving us minds to figure out and formulate such principles or laws that describe them through language or mathematics, physics, and chemistry. Until now our overall formulation has been *if God didn't exist, nothing could exist*. Now, given this new information, that has been extended. *God is the one necessary being without whom nothing could come into existence and nothing can continue its existence on its own*. The power of being or self-existence rests in God alone. What seems to us to be automatic and self-sustaining is really God maintaining the balance of his universe so it is stable and consistent ... or rational.

All things came into being through him and without him nothing came into being that has come into being. (Jn.1:1-3)

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see — such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together . (Col.1:15-17)

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. (Heb.1:1-3)

The Bible emphasizes many times that **the creation is a testimony to God**. Even those who do not have the Bible should be able to conclude from creation that there is a God. *The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word, (Ps.19:1-3)* Notice it is **knowledge** that creation reveals. Creation is speaking to the rational creature who became a rebel. Paul quotes from this Psalm in **Rom.10:18** extending that witness to God when speaking at Lystra: *but he never left them without evidence of himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts. (Acts 14:17)* Here Paul moves on from creation as a past event to the current good providence of God. Paul is challenging nonbelievers on

the basis of a creation that continues to witness as it bathes them with sun and their fields with rain and dew. We are surrounded with the good things of God. He fills our every human need and this should be ample testimony to his existence.

God was pleased with his creative work. After the creative cycle of each day he evaluated or critiqued his work *God saw that it was good*. When he had finished, he summed up the whole project, *Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!* God is proud of his work which displays his glory. Further, the more people know of and understand the intricate details of that work, from the careful design to the molecular, the atomic, and even to the quantum levels, the more in awe will we be of it and of him. It is completely irrational to think that such a marvelous creation could happen by itself and every book or article materialists author shouts its ignorance by the absence of any credible naturalistic explanations that might account for such phenomena.

Scientists and mathematicians have identified many universal fundamental principles and laws descriptive of the natural universe. How did they end up so well balanced and integrated with each other and so well adapted for life as we know it. They may be found in an internet search under titles such as Basic Physics; Fundamental Laws and Theories; etc. ^d

endnotes

^a Revised and updated, this fifteenth anniversary edition of *A Return to Modesty* reignites Wendy Shalit's controversial claim that **we have lost our respect for an essential virtue: modesty**. When the book was first published in 1999, its argument launched a worldwide discussion about the possibility of innocence and romantic idealism. Wendy Shalit was the first to systematically critique the "hook-up" scene and outline the harms of making sexuality so public.

Today, with social media increasingly blurring the line between public and private life, and with child exploitation on the rise, the concept of modesty is more relevant than ever. Updated with a new preface that addresses the unique problems facing society now, *A Return to Modesty* shows why "the lost virtue" of modesty is not a hang-up that we should set out to cure, but rather **a wonderful instinct** to be celebrated.

A Return to Modesty is a deeply personal account as well as a fascinating intellectual exploration into everything from seventeenth-century manners to the 1948 tune "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Beholden neither to social conservatives nor to feminists, Shalit reminds us that modesty is not prudery, but a natural instinct—and one that may be able to save us from ourselves.

^b Many quotes are from *The Finished Works of Christ: the Truth of Rom.1-8*. 1998 by Francis Schaeffer

^c **Willing Ignorance: Be careful to whom you listen**. It is now clear that I failed to make a case for another kind of mentor, one who really understands the world politically. I have encouraged people to listen to the great **Rush Limbaugh** and other conservative radio hosts through the years. (A friend who works in the local public library retorted, *I wouldn't believe anything RL said*. She said this with great aplomb but had no facts or details to support what she had been led to believe.) Again, very

few people took my advice then, and now there is a terrific conservative, **Bob Cordaro**, occupying Rush's radio time slot on the same station in our area. Who do you get the news of the day from? Do you think you are getting investigative reporting or actual unbiased facts. All the major print sources (N.Y. Times), TV network sources (CNN), and internet search engines have been taken over by what has become a radical liberal [read Democrat] political agenda. That party has been radicalized - turned into an evil anti-christian, anti-American, subversive political opposition force in league with the media. All pretense of actually reporting the news has been dropped as the machinery has been turned toward discrediting and destroying the conservative viewpoint which has come to mean in our day **Donald Trump** and anyone associated with him primarily because he is an outsider [not a Washington insider].

Everything is politicized [read weaponized] and openly used against our president **by people in both parties** and people embedded within his own administration and every level of government. These people are twisted and filled with animosity toward Donald Trump. That means that the story is never what is being headlined like the Corona virus. It is always put to use as another **tool for denigrating president Trump**. Have you seen the Corona virus compared with other typical flue viruses in the number of people infected and dead as a direct cause of it, etc. No, you won't as long as it serves as a better weapon against Trump by being decontextualized [stripped of any elements that might give it a context]. In other words the crisis of the day is never put in perspective. It is used as a bludgeon [per the doctrine *never let a crisis go to waste* from Rules for Radicals] against a man who has already done more for this country than any other president ... ever! A church member and friend actually said to me, *If Trump is elected for 4 more years, we are done for* [meaning the country won't recover from it]. Where do you think he gets that? Is that your impression? [see my essay, **Adamant Certainty and Healthy Distrust**] **Be careful of your sources**. Your knowledge, your understanding of the details makes all the difference of how you will be perceived once the facts become generally known. Remember professor **Steven Pinker** from the Intelligent Design series!

^d **THE ID SERIES:** My 8-part video series entitled **Intelligent Design vs 'Scientific' Naturalism** uses 9 commercially produced videos to show what is wrong with what is taught and touted by specialists in various scientific fields. What they proclaim as "scientific" truth is merely the philosophic jargon of a naturalistic philosophy couched in "scientific" terms. What we actually find when we look closely at various phenomena and think about them supports the biblical record of design for a purpose. The material is appropriate for high school age kids (15 years) through adult.

1. The Privileged Planet

2. Incredible Creatures that Defy Evolution (1)

3. Mystery of the Megaflood

4. Unlocking the Mystery of life

5. Darwin's Dilemma: The Mystery of the Cambrian Explosion

6a. Flood Geology. 6b. Rock Strata, Fossils, and the Flood

7. Moment of Impact (2)

8. What You Aren't Being Told About Astronomy (2): Our Created Stars and Galaxies

9.10 Fascinating Symbiotic Relationships Between Animals, recently included

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k7d9UTc6sM>

MATERIAL INCLUDED WITH THE ID SERIES: related articles, excerpts from books, and internet sites.

^e **Truth with Love:** The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer, 2006 by Bryan Follis. Note: I want very much to quote large portions of this short book and talk about them, but I will refrain. This explains why I choose Schaeffer to be my mentor. Beginning with chap 2, it is for everyone serious about Christian ministry ... *the number of people visiting L'Abri with purely intellectual problems comprised only a small percentage. The vast majority ... were young Christians who were just doing badly in their walk with God ... (p.56).*

^f Drug addiction counselors are familiar with everything I'm saying here. GR

^g D.A. Carson contrasts Ps.136's thought provoking specificity with contemporary praise choruses that endlessly exhort us to praise the Lord without telling us why or perhaps only giving us a reason or two. Our appreciation, praise, and worship of God is grounded not only on what he has done and is doing, but on our knowledge of it. The more details we discover, the greater our amazement. Today through the use of sophisticated equipment and techniques, scientists have uncovered vast amounts of this incredible knowledge all-the-while remaining blind to its implications.