

Apologetics Session Three

ETC 5-7

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Dependence Restored Through Regeneration:

- Salvation brings about a reversal of the fall (in principle, not in entirety - **Gal. 5:17**). In salvation, we again recognize our dependence upon God's word (**1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 10:17; Rom. 3:4**).
- *"Despite appearances, despite the advice of others, and despite the temptations of satan...the believer affirms God's word is trustworthy and...confesses his total reliance on it."* ETC, 30.
- In regeneration we turn from self to Christ and we become by the power of the Holy Spirit a new creation (**2 Cor. 5:17**); this new creation is being renewed in the likeness of Christ (**Col. 3:10**) and requires effort on the part of the believer to bring their thinking in line with God's (**2 Cor. 10:5; Rom. 12:2**). **Illustration of "rain."** ETC, 40-41.
- Because the believer will not fully escape the remains of sin (including the noetic effect) until glorification *"He is inconsistent with his principles of total dependence upon God and thereby maintains falsehoods in his thoughts and actions."* ETC, 41-42.

The Dilemma of Unbelief:

- Non-Christian philosophy is not neutral - it is committed to the principle of human independence (**Col. 2:8**). In other words, *"nothing can be true unless it is shown to be so by independent human thought."* ETC, 45.
- This is religious commitment on the part of the unbeliever because they *"reject the claims of Christ in their determination to be independent."* ETC, 45.
- *"Even those who seek to be neutral deny Christ's claim as the unquestioned Lord of the universe. To say that Christianity may be true is to say it may not be true."* ETC, 45.
- the unbeliever's commitment to independence is so foundational to his worldview that he will always respond to a question challenging his independence with a reason built upon that independence - i.e. *"Christianity is not logical"* or *"I trust in experience"* or *"I believe in science"*
- By rejecting the Creator - creature distinction and asserting his independence from God the unbeliever is thrown into the dilemma of **absolute certainty** [*"God doesn't exist," "we can't know if God exists"*] and **total uncertainty** [no ground for knowledge outside of himself]. For example:
 - in order to claim **the Christian God** doesn't exist a person must make an absolutely certain statement about something of which he is totally uncertain, having never examined all possible evidence of God's existence.
 - Statements about **the world** being ordered or random are absolutely certain statements, contradicted by the uncertainty of not being able to examine all the evidence necessary to prove the statement.

- Statements regarding **man** [animal or god] are themselves falsified by the total uncertainty of the person's limited investigation of man.

The Lordship of Christ:

- The development of a Christian philosophy is rooted in the Lordship of Christ (**Col. 2:9-10**).
 - *"God alone knows the universe exhaustively; He alone can teach truth to man."* ETC, 52
 - Only as we commit ourselves to Christ in a faith union *"are we able to see God, the world, and ourselves correctly"* ETC, 52
- To trust any principle as more basic than total dependence on God [i.e. logic, experience, non-Christian religions] is to suppose that there is another authority over Christ.
- It is a mischaracterization of "total dependence" to assert that all a Christian need do is read the Bible and pray. We are to use God's gift of reason Biblically i.e. dependently (**Gen. 1:28**). Illustration from Noah's ark - ETC, 53
- The commitment to 'dependence' is not arrived at by "independent" thinking, but is a result of God's gracious work of regeneration. *"When asked why he is dependent on God, the Christian will respond that he is commanded to be so by the revelation of God, and that Scripture is authoritative for the Christian because it is God's word. He will claim that he knows that the Bible is God's word by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the redeeming work of Christ."* ETC, 54
- The solution to the dilemma of unbelief [total certainty & complete uncertainty] is resolved for the Christian under the Lordship of Christ. While the Christian does not know things exhaustively, he does know things truly - as they have been revealed to him from the One who does know them exhaustively. In other words, the Christian philosophy is not self-defeated by the finiteness of man, as long as the Christian depends upon God's revelation of Himself, the world and man he will know things truly. It can be said that the Christian has "dependent certainty" and "dependent uncertainty." ETC, 57. For example:
 - The Christian is dependently certain about the existence of God because he has received the true revelation of God in the Scriptures (**Jn. 7:17**). Even so, the Christian is also dependently uncertain because he does not know everything there is to know about God (**Deut. 29:29**).
 - When considering the world around him the Christian has dependent certainty because the Scriptures reveal that God has created an orderly world that is understandable. A world that exists to reveal God glory and in which He takes good pleasure. At the same time the Christian is dependently uncertain since he has not mastered the Scriptures and the presence of sin may well be blinding him to some aspect of that creation order.
 - In considering himself, the Christian is dependently certain that he was made in God's image and exists to bring God glory by fulfilling the Creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28, because God has revealed this information to him in the Scripture. Yet the Christian is also dependently uncertain in the sense that he is still working out the implications of that mandate, and must allow for the remaining noetic effects of sin which by the power of the Spirit he is working to overcome.

- One final point is the “**Myth of Neutrality.**” Even though Christians and non-Christians are more or less consistent with their worldview; it is a reality that there is no neutral ground between Christianity and all other faith commitments. All people are either committed thinking and living in either dependence or independence from God (**Matt. 12:30**). Thus, even when the unbeliever postulates a “*neutral honesty*” he is in reality asserting a disguised form of allegiance to independence.
- Accordingly placing “*facts*” before an unbeliever and asking him to consider them “*logically*” is to enable him to retain his illusion of independence - which is the very thing he must repent of and submit to the Lordship of Christ.
- THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “BRUTE FACTS;” ALL FACT ARE “INTERPRE-FACTS” - in other words all facts are interpreted in light of a person’s worldview.