

Christianity & Secular Education (Part 1)

Owing to certain material advantages that go with academic education and the prominence given to it throughout the world, many people seem to lose sight of the evils in it. But a true Christian must be able not only to distinguish between things of the world and those that pertain to the Spirit but must have preference at all times for spiritual things.

Within the past hundred years there has been a remarkable increase of knowledge in every faculty of learning. Almost in all parts of the world schools, colleges, and universities have been founded and many more are springing up. Facilities for learning continue to be improved and methods are revised from time to time to make for rapid progress.

The increase of knowledge in science and technology has resulted in many useful discoveries in this age. The means and methods of communication and transportation have been made easy and fast; there are labour and time-saving machines to facilitate the production of textiles, food and so on. In the realm of medicine, the twentieth century has also witnessed tremendous progress through scientific discoveries and inventions. And for leisure and entertainment wonderful facilities are now available.

But it is worthy of note that in the face of all these scientific achievements and despite the growth of academic knowledge, the present generation is sinking more and more in crimes and various acts of wickedness. Men are becoming more avaricious, most discontented and unhappy. Robbery, fraud, corruption, adultery, fornication, juvenile delinquency and broken homes have become common features of society. And never before had the world been so plagued with diseases as it is now! This is so because the majority of men have drifted far from God and His righteousness.

Diligent students of the Bible do note with gratification that the increase of knowledge in this Atomic Age is but a fulfillment of Bible prophecies. Concerning the time of the end of the world Daniel was inspired by God to prophesy: "Many shall run to and fro, and KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED". – Daniel 12:4.

The usefulness of any knowledge depends on its quality and the purpose it is meant to serve. What the world has been pleased to call "academic knowledge", we have always pointed out, has its advantages as well as disadvantages; and judging from a spiritual standard its disadvantages far outweigh its advantages.

The trend of modern education is more towards materialism and godlessness than spiritual values and divine worship. Thus the colleges and universities turn out every year a host of brilliant young men and women with scholastic distinction but most of whom have no place in their heads to retain the true knowledge of God or even the belief in His existence. It is certain diabolical aspects of secular education that have brought it in conflict with true Christianity. Atheism and agnosticism have been so subtly interwoven into the fabric of secular education at the instance of Satan the devil, no doubt, that blasphemy and denunciation of God is regarded by the godless as an index of "intellectual maturity".

The reasons why colleges and universities of the world breed more agnostics and atheists than devout worshippers of God are obvious; the subjects, especially in the sciences, are in the main unspiritual, and many of the masters, professors and lecturers are either confirmed atheists or die-hard agnostics. Apart from the fact that these godless tutors spare no vein in infusing their devilish ideas into the heads of the students, their own idiosyncrasies and vile influences do reflect upon them (the student). The upshot of this situation in most cases is a large-scale production of adopted sons and daughters of Charles Darwin or pet-babies of Thomas Paine

who died wretched, “unnoticed, unrewarded, unsung”!

Instances are comparatively few of the fittest among scholars who survive the crisis of faith often occasioned by scholar intellectuality. Considering the fact the education begins at an early age of a child and that it takes a process which may last the half or more of one’s life- time, it must be realized that without the saving grace of God no one among the intellectuals can escape from the trammels of agnosticism or the monstrous clutches of atheism to become an ardent Christian.

Advance of Science

“In the modern twentieth-century world science touches us at almost every point. In many respects it is the dominant philosophy of our Western civilization.” With these words Dr. Magnus Pyke opened the first chapter of his book – The Boundaries of Science. And so science is idolized and worshipped by certain scholars.

The God’s Kingdom Society is not opposed to science in its entirety and does not condemn it indiscriminately. The word science which comes from Latin scientia, means knowledge. However, in the institutions of higher learning, it is at present used with reference to “systematic knowledge” in those branches of study not included in literature, art or history.

All true Christians do know that God Almighty is the source of knowledge or wisdom. And in relation to man the history of knowledge cannot be traced farther back than the days of Adam in the Garden of Eden. He ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil contrary to God’s commandment, and knowledge became inherent in his offspring – the knowledge both of good and of evil. Needless going into further details of Scripture this direction.

Science has proved to be valuable only when men used it in a beneficial way. But the devil has also employed it as a device to mislead many people from the Christian Faith of the true worship of God. The dangers underlying its present advancement which has resulted in the inventions of lethal weapons show the extent to which Satan has insinuated himself into the sciences. The world at large has been placed in a state of fear and horror. King Solomon did say: “God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). And by these inventions many, like the ungodly Jews of old, have turned to Satan. And the Psalmist said of the Jews: “Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions” – Psalm, 106:39-43.

It is ridiculous that the knowledge world so much acclaims should seek to relegate God to the background and discredit His word. One would have thought that scholars who had the opportunity of studying natural phenomena and other aspects of the universe which bespeak the greatness of the Creator, should have cause to believe in God more than anyone else. However, right-thinking men who have eyes to see, and do see, believe that true science is not opposed to God. J.S. Hoyland wrote in his A Brief History of Civilization that “science teaches us, more than was ever possible before, to marvel at God’s wisdom and skill”. This really would have been the case if evil influence and atheistic ideas had not crept into science as being taught in institutions of higher learning. It is in this respect that science – ungodly science – stands condemned. All responsible opinions agree that as people grow in knowledge, they ought to honour or reverence God the more.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more, But more of reverence in us dwell; That mind and soul according well, May make one music as before."

Tenyson: In Memoriam, has been mostly the case with academic scholars. The knowledge they acquire does not make them know God. St. Paul truly said: "Make no mistake about this: if there is anyone among you who fancies himself wise – wise, I mean, by the standards of this passing age – he must become a fool to gain true wisdom. As God in His wisdom ordained, the world failed to find Him by its wisdom, and He chose to save those who have faith by the folly of the Gospel."- 1st Corinthians 3:18; 1:21. New English Bible.

Intellectual Difficulty

No one can gainsay the fact, therefore, that there is much in academic education that conflicts with Christian principles and beliefs. In view of this, is it any wonder that quite a number of scholars, in the course of their academic pursuits, gave up their religious belief? However, there are some who do not throw away their faith. The experience of Dr. Ishaya Audu, now the Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, is a case in point. In his pamphlet, MY ROAD TO FAITH, he wrote: "When I started my medical training I was met by some colleagues, who called themselves Free Thinkers, to read some little popular books which attempted to disprove the inspiration and authenticity of the Bible as the Word of God. That, together with the little knowledge of science acquired in that institution of higher learning, combined to shatter my belief in the Christian Gospel. I came to disbelieve some fundamental Christian doctrines like the incarnation and the divinity of our Lord." Dr. Audu reflected upon the life of a doctor who was then working as a Christian missionary at Wusasa in Northern Nigeria. He continued: "I became most unhappy in my mind, knowing that despite my own unbelief, the saintly doctor in Wusasa was not a fool; there must be something in Christianity to make him stake on it his own life and that of his family."

Dr. Audu stated that it was in such a confused state of mind he went to England in 1951. There the weight of Christian witness that faced him with his intellectual difficulty made him feel hopelessly out of place. He made friends with a government doctor from Tanganyika (now Tanzania) who was most kind and helpful to him. Dr. Audu states: "During the course of the conversation he convinced me how science has failed to account or give explanation for much that I had thought science had already provided an answer to. I realized that Darwin's theory of evolution is only an unproved theory and that as a matter of fact, many eminent scientists are now coming to disprove it. Sir James Jeans' theory of the world as springing from the sun is by no means accepted by even a handful of astronomers! Science is not, after all, the last word. The one account and explanation of all these which had not been disproved is the Bible account, which is gaining considerable support from modern science. Before we parted, my doctor friend introduced me to the ministry of Dr. Lloyd Jones. His witness was invaluable, he being a most learned medical doctor whose standard I could never achieve. I BEGAN TO SEE THAT MY INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES MIGHT BE ONLY A MANIFESTATION OF MY IGNORANCE." (Emphasis ours)

The case of Dr. Ishaya Audu is by no means a singular one, for such experience among academic scholars is common. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Nigerian statesman whose high intelligence is not in dispute, also had his experience. In his autobiography, AWO, the Chief indicated graphically how through literature after having read certain books by sophisticated and

godless authors, he found himself under the sway of agnosticism which made him back-slide from Christian Faith to the point of no return. He wrote: "In the course of my incursion into the wide realm of literature, I came across a big tome of a book which was a collection of the essays and lectures of Robert G. Ingersoll. I started to read it, and I found that the more I read it the more fascinated I became. It was said of him that Ingersoll was a smashing orator and a forceful personality. From his essays and lectures which I read most avidly, I saw him as well as a literary giant with a style which was at once lucid and in the best classical traditions. His language was so choice, his sentence so balanced and pithy, and his arguments so cogent, incisive, irresistible, and so replete with scientific and classical illustrations, that I found myself racing breathlessly along with this amazing man, as he delivered deft, precise, and shattering blows at all that is taught in the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation."

Evil communication

Chief Awolowo went on: At the end of my literary and mental excursion with Ingersoll, I had become a hearty admirer of agnosticism. I made further progress in this new field. I read other books including T.H. Huxley's *Evolution of the Species*, Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, and another book whose author I don't now remember, entitled *Bible On Hell*. I became a regular reader of the *Rationalist Review*. From the time of my mental acquaintances and communion with Ingersoll, I attended church only occasionally, when there was a wedding ceremony, memorial service, when my wife successfully insisted on my keeping her company. I found it hard to disbelieve in or to doubt the existence of God

"during my stay in the United Kingdom from 1944 to 1946, I did not cross the portals of a church except for sightseeing to Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Instead, I attended some of the Sunday meetings of the South Place Ethical Society at Conway Hall. Each meeting followed the pattern of a church service, with some minor variation. There were no prayers, but we sang songs to the accompaniment of a piano, using popular church tunes. Our hymns were chosen from a hymn book entitled *Hymns of Modern Thought*. As in the church, the lesson for the day was read. This was usually chosen from the writings of great scientists, or of agnostics and atheists of undisputed erudition. Darwin, Huxley and Wells were among the favourites. Then there was an address in place of a sermon. For some Sundays running, Professor Keeton of London University did a series on "The Laws of Moses and of Hammurabi". Each time I attended the meeting, I always came away with the question in my mind: 'Why this imperfect and irrational imitation of the Christian mode of worship?' Eventually I returned to the Holy Bible and to the Christian fold. Throughout the period of my oscillation between agnosticism and Christianity, my wife stood immovably for the latter. Her constant admonition and steadfastness did more than anything else to restrain me from going beyond the point of no return." (Emphasis ours) Yes, a good wife Mrs. Awolowo proved to be; and this generation needs such women and this generation needs such women who will always advise against godlessness and help and help their husbands and children from going astray. Their reward from God shall be great.

The Bible, being God's word, is always true. St. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, whom even H.G. Wells in his book – *A Short History of the World*; described as "a man of great intellectual vigour", wrote under the inspiration of God: "Be not deceived; evil communication corrupt good manners." (1st Corinthians 15:33). It does not need much comment for one to know, judging from the experience of the two academic gentlemen whom godless friends and authors almost corrupted, that secular education is embedded with evils such as are capable of drifting one away from the Christian Faith – the way to eternal life in God's Kingdom.

What is more, the warning of St. Paul against godless science, with which he ended his first epistle to Timothy, serves as a good guide to diligent Christians. Said the apostle: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen." – 1st Timothy 6:20-21.