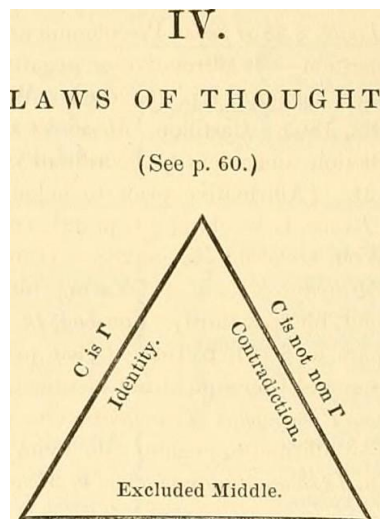


The Righteousness of God Revealed



Romans 1:16-22 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed 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, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"

- Well here we all are, this is the College Class
 - We bid you a warm welcome if you're new.
- Now, obviously, in a classroom like this we're dealing primarily with the mind.
 - One mind engaging with others (unless you're asleep!)
- We're using things like:
 - Logical reasoning, and
 - Persuasion from rational arguments
 - Gospel explanations and exhortations
- Taught from the Bible
 - which we assert is inerrant (without error), revelatory, knowledge from God
- But let's back up a bit
- What if you're flirting with Atheism
- You may assume you can know things without this teaching.
- After all, you're a person, and you have a mind, and it can use logical reasoning.
- It's common amongst people around your age to become rather proud of their mind.
 - By now, they've learned to use it.

- They may have natural aptitudes like a good memory.
 - They can remember things other people have said that sound clever
 - They can recognise some actions, some characteristics. and repeat them and impress others.
 - They can regurgitate facts that make people sound clever
 - They may like the way it feels if they 'win' an argument, or if people think they're smart.
 - And they've started to think about humanity in terms of - intelligent people and non-intelligent people.
- It's a bit like in our passage "[Professing themselves to be wise](#)"
 - But sometimes you can lose by winning (say, winning an argument).
 - Sometimes the 'wise' can be fools - "[they became fools](#)"
- It's more obvious that people do this in physical things.
 - For example, when people realise they can do something, they have a natural desire to be the best at it
 - That's what competitive sport is all about.
 - It's a form of self worship at the extreme..
 - I don't know why humans are so proud of themselves in this, the animals beat them in everything hands down!
 - When it comes to the Bible, this proud thinking - "[professing \[ourselves\] to be wise](#)"- can actually become a barrier to understanding it.
 - Because it says "[God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble](#)"
 - God knows that it is right for glory to be given to that which is worthy of it.
 - We aren't worthy of it, but He is.
 - Therefore He simply won't allow people to feel proud of themselves by thinking they can bring their 'mighty cleverness' to the Bible
 - You can meet the cleverest of all people in the world,
 - But ask them what certain spiritual things mean in the Bible (which most average of Christians can grasp), and they get it all completely wrong!
 - Why?
 - 1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us "[But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.](#)"
 - Because they don't understand the Bible, they write it off as simplistic nonsense.
 - They're proud and unteachable, so they can never know as long as they think like that.
 - Their mind is fixed in ignorant unbelief.- a terrible position.
 - You see the Bible is unique as a book in many ways
 - But one way is that most other books can be understood by intellectual study, by studious people.
 - But if you come proudly to the Bible like that, then its multiple depths will be a complete mystery to you.
 - You'll completely miss it.
 - You'll try to read it, and your **proud heart** will give rise to a **furrowed brow**.
 - You just won't be able to see what God is trying to say -
 - for example the parables of Christ, or the symbols of the prophets, will be beyond you.
 - Oh yes, you can understand the facts
 - You can answer Bible trivia questions and do well in a factual quiz, which might as well be about history or geography,
 - But you won't be able to put those facts together and make sense of the real meaning.
 - Why?

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”

- Because you're missing something vital
 - It's a vital recognition or insight,
 - An enlightenment that you haven't experienced.
 - The Bible says it is something God gives, or withholds.
 - Like a pair of glasses that enable you to see things that you were previously blind to.
 - Without them, you can't really understand.
 - You may see some things, but it's all fuzzy.
 - This gift of God is called faith
- “the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith”, it says in our passage,
- from one person with faith telling it to another.
- But it's not the type of faith that is believing in things without evidence.
 - That's blind, wishful thinking
- But Biblical faith isn't that at all
- It is faith in the sense that it doesn't rely on things like logical reasoning or scientific experimentation (which is about the only thing some people accept)
- But this faith is actually foundational to science and reason.
- Reason and faith work together, but faith is foundational, and goes further.
- As Matthew Henry says , "Christianity is above reason, though not contrary thereto"
- It's a God given direct insight.
 - It relies on the evidence of knowledge given to us by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit.
 - A trustworthy word from a reliable source.
 - We would be foolish to deny it, when it's plainly obvious to us like this!
 - That's reasonable.
 - The law courts in the world rely on that type of evidence, that type of knowledge.
 - And God gives it to the humble.
 - But withholds it from the proud.
 - Faith is 3 things -Knowledge, Belief, and Trust.
- Rational logical deduction can only mathematically work if we have some facts to deduce from.
- And empirical science can only give us those facts if we can trust the reliability of our senses.
- But, **without God**, you have no basis to trust, mind, memory, or senses.
 - You can't even rely on the natural laws of nature to be reliable -
 - Why should they do tomorrow what they did today?
 - Why should a ball fall like it did in the past when I drop it in the future,
 - Why should the sun come up tomorrow, or the earth not spin backwards-
 - What's your basis for assuming that!?
 - Things change and break all the time.
- There are even examples in logic that don't give a certain outcome.
- They are neither true or false statements - we call them 'fuzzy logic'.
- Let's go back to what I said at the beginning
- We're people with minds
 - But if you're an atheist, how do you know you're a person
 - And why trust your mind?
 - You must give me an explanation in order to do that.

- I've given you one:- God made us like that.
 - He is a rational God.
 - To think rationally, is to think like God.
 - Who made us with largely reliable senses,
 - in order to use logical reasoning, with rules that He created.
- But the Atheist gives no explanation. .
 - He or She just assumes their reliability, arbitrarily.
- They assume they're a reliable person
 - But one can't even assume people are people without the God of the Bible.
 - How do you get the personal from the impersonal?
- Take '*Solipsism*' - the fact that you can't prove that anyone else exists like you do.
 - They look like they do,
 - but you're not in their experience, so you don't really know.
 - If you pinch them they seem to be in pain,
 - they laugh and speak like you,
 - but how do you know they're not just robots or illusions, without God telling you they're not?!
- "I think therefore I am" said one philosopher, but he was assuming personhood without a reason.
- Who is the 'I' in that sentence?
- All you can prove is that thinking exists
 - and what that is, and why to trust it;- who knows!?
- Why trust your mind if it's the result of chance processes.
 - You have no explanation for logic.
 - (where did the rules of logic and maths come from?)-
 - So, even though you can't explain it, you are using it arbitrarily,
 - and you're being inconsistent if you're an Atheist (this is intellectually untenable).
- The Atheist must explain how you can get **everything** from **nothing**, with purely material means.
- But they have a problem,

because they disallow any possibility of an intelligent Designer,

 - because they don't want there to be One -
 - even if things clearly point in that direction!
 - Our passage says of them - "[who hold \[or suppress\] the truth in unrighteousness.](#)"
- "Oh it's evolution" they say.
 - No, you need life first (quite apart from evolution's violation of the second law of thermodynamics- that things get less ordered over time - low to high entropy).
- "Oh, ok, it came from the first particles, elements, and atoms ..."
- No, you haven't got them, you have nothing.
- "Oh, it came from forces acting from a mathematical singularity..."
- No, haven't got forces, you haven't got maths
- "Oh, it was hot and dense.."
 - No, it wasn't anything
 - You must start with Nothing
- "Oh, it starts with a point..."
- But, no, you haven't got a point, you've got nothing. Nothing at all!
- "Oh..."
- No

- How do you start?
 - You haven't even got time!
 - You haven't even got the concept of creativity.
 - You haven't got matter or space.
 - You haven't got the laws of nature or logic.
 - You literally have nothing
- "Well, we simply don't know" they say.
 - You don't know... but you claim to know it wasn't God.
 - And tell everybody so.
 - How do you know that?!
 - You might be a naturalist or a materialist and argue for that position
 - But you're using something non material to do so
 - You're using rational laws of logic which aren't made of matter!
 - They're abstract and conceptual - you can't touch these rules of correct reasoning!
- People have attempted all sorts of ways to resist this idea of a Creator making everything in the beginning.
 - One popular one was the eternal universe.
 - No beginning
 - But the more we discovered in cosmology, the more that idea had to be thrown out.
 - Einstein said his belief in a static 'steady state' universe, with no beginning (and his maths to maintain this - an aspect of his 'Field equations'), was his biggest blunder!
 - He said this after Hubble's discovery of the expansion of the universe
 - Einstein looked at the evidence of his eyes through a telescope!
- But the Bible has always said "In the beginning **God**".
- He's the uncreated Creator
 - All things come from Him,
 - including the concept of creating.
 - That's why the question - 'who created God?' is such a foolish question.
 - All questions like that, try to put something above God.
 - Like the concept of creating things,
 - or logical reasoning,
 - But where did they come from?
 - God necessarily comes before them!
- Without God, you can't have those things if you can't explain where they came from!
- Do you know that the Bible tells us that we're not just neutral beings, fairly weighing up the arguments about these things.
- No, we're moral beings, made in God's image, that have rebelled.
 - And now we have a natural propensity to run and hide from our Creator God.
 - To resist His call to you to come back to Him in faith.
 - Because our conscience makes us feel a sense of shame and guilt.
 - Even if we don't want to admit it.
- We have been given our minds,
 - but we try to use them for our own glory,
 - and to deny the very God who gave them to us!
- A person may think "I'll prove Christianity wrong"
 - But you've not established why you're a credible person to do that!
 - And you've just proved it right by your very desire to do that!
 - Because the Bible says we naturally pull away from God.

- All this means that a righteous God must be righteously angry at us.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed 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, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened"

- Darkness is used in the Bible as a metaphor for ignorance
- But in John 1 it says about John the Baptist who pointed to Jesus Christ
6-14 "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

'that all men through him might believe..
as many as received him,'

- Will that be you?
 - God doesn't bypass the mind,
 - He expects you to use it.
 - But reject him, and you have nothing to start with.
 - Your mind will run in ever decreasing circles, into a black hole of darkness, that you can't get out of.
 - If there's an ultimate question in life, it's a 'fill in the blank' type of question!
 - Anything other than the Bible can't fill it, and leaves it empty.
- We have been saved from that emptiness,
 - And we are witnesses that it wasn't our clever reasoning that did it.
 - But it was a humble acceptance of the truth.
 - A truth grasped because God opened our eyes to it.
- Why trust in yourself if it's possible that your mind is intellectually, and morally, warped, and blinded, by sin?
 - Do you just assume it can be trusted?
 - Why?
- If a builder picks up a tool out of a random pile of tools, he may assume it's a good one.
 - But he wouldn't be a good builder if he did that without proving it first.
- Don't build your life on wrong assumptions
- Build it on something tried and tested by billions of witnesses to its truth.
- Build it on the Bible.
- Build it on Christ.
- I said we have a moral problem
 - It's not only us but God! (Of course He has no problems, but it's as if He does)
 - It's a problem of Justice
- How does He justify us?

- How can the 'Perfect' accept the 'Imperfect'?
- All false religions just brush it under the carpet
- But only Christianity deals with it head on.
- Its uniqueness, in this respect, points to its truthfulness.

- In Proverbs 17.15 God says

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD."

- So, the question is, how can God justify us!
- There's only one answer
 - And that answer is a Person
 - A Substitute
 - Him in place of the unjust to make them just.
 - Condemned for those who possess faith in Him
 - This was Jesus Christ's penal, substitutionary, atonement at 'the place of the skull' - Calvary.
 - A penalty paid in order to reconcile.
- Then God may be righteous in justifying His people.
- The scales are balanced
- And souls are saved
- May you be one of them.
- You know,
your position in relation to other things is vitally important.
It affects everything in life.
 - Take our position, and angle, in relation to the Sun at the moment.
 - That's why it's bright and hot at the moment!
- You may not care about cosmology - but it affects you nonetheless.
- Your position in relation to God is the same.
- You may not care about God but your position relative to Him affects your life nonetheless.
 - If you're not accepted by Him,
 - and He hides Himself from you - refusing to speak - (like Christ to Pilate, or Herod, when they questioned Him, and demanded answers) -
 - then you'll know darkness and coldness of soul.
- There are consequences to your position in relation to God.
- You need that position to change
- How?
- Try to pray.
 - It may feel strange at first,
 - But persevere,
 - Be sincere.
- In all the noise of this planet- do you know what God is listening for?
 - Simple, quiet prayers, like that, asking for salvation through Christ.

He gives grace to the humble.

Let's pray

