Christianity vs. Everybody

Topic: Secularism

March 13, 2019

ORIGIN OF SECULARISM

1. In the early 1400s, Gutenberg invented the **printing press**; which made the writings of the past more accessible to the public. This increased accessibility sparked two responses:

A) **a greater awareness to God's Word which led to the Reformation**
B) **a pursuit of humanistic themes which led to the Renaissance**
The word 'renaissance' (1400-1600) means **rebirth**; and what was reborn was humanity's sense of **independence** and **individualism**. Thus a schism between reason and faith had begun. There were now two irreconcilable sources of truth: **church** and **science**.

1. The successes achieved by science ushered in the **Age of Enlightenment** (1600-1800). During this time, people viewed science as the ultimate test of truth. Yet people, & even scientists, still believed in the existence of a rational & personal Creator; because there was no alternative theory to creation that could explain an orderly universe. However in 1859, that changed when **Charles Darwin** published a book called **On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection**. Darwin theorized that life forms resulted from natural **random processes** and not from the design of an **intelligent Creator**. As a result of Darwinism, the belief in God became an **unnecessary hypothesis**; and humanity can solve its own problems by looking to themselves and not God.

1. The total number of secularists is around **20%** of the world's population. This group includes **atheists** and **agnostics**. An atheist is one who says there is sufficient evidence to show that God does not exist. An agnostic is one who says there is insufficient evidence to know whether God exists or not.

BELIEFS/PRACTICES OF SECULARISM

1. The fundamental tenet of secularism is the **denial of the existence of the supernatural**. To secularists, **matter** is all that exists. They therefore deduce that **miracles** are not possible; for they are only the embellishment of authors who promote their religious agenda.

1. Secularism begins & ends with humanity. Thus it sees religion as **restrictive** and **escapist**. Religion is an attempt to subdue the fears of ignorant people. Nevertheless humanity must solve its own problems through **reason** and **science**. The scientific method of inquiry is the only reliable means of discovering truth and knowledge. Consequently, reason & faith and science & religion are irreconcilable and mutually exclusive.

1. Since secularism begins & ends with humanity, humanity then does not need an absolute moral standard beyond itself in order to have a grounds for moral behavior. Humanity is naturally good. All we need is to realize that innate goodness is **education**, not religious transformation.

1. At death, the individual ceases to exist in any cohesive or conscious form.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SECULARISM

1. The evidence for the existence of God is affirmed corporately through nature, philosophy and the Bible; which all eventually can lead to personal testimony of God's activity in our lives.

A) *Philosophy*
*Cause:
*Intelligent Cause:
*Moral Being:

B) *Bible*
*records of God's creation, interaction, revelation, manifestation and salvation with humanity in real-time history

C) *Nature*
*the product of preferred environments for the life and maintenance of all creation; which is beyond the creatures' abilities to manufacture for themselves. In this science (whether intentionally or not) affirms and confirms the handiwork of an intelligent Designer, not denies it.

1. Secularism claims that religion is restrictive and escapist. We must first define religion. Once we ascertain the true meaning of religion, we'll discover that secularists are as religious (if not more religious) than some Christians. [Romans 1:18-25]

A) "set of beliefs regarding the cause, nature, & purpose of the universe...something one believes in or follows devotedly" -*Random House Dictionary/1980*

B) "a religion is a set of beliefs that answer the ultimate questions" -*Compact Guide to World Religions, D. Halverson*

1. Secularism says that humanity is naturally good. If this holds true, it can only do so by denying the basic truth that humanity is undeniably dualistic: we are body & spirit. Thus we are good by our design *(physical body)* but not always by our decisions *(emotion, mentality, spirituality)*. It can not be denied that our decisions drive our design; and hence our decisions need to be influenced by that which is always beyond us and always in our best interest, ie God. **Christianity is realistic about our duality and seeks the best for both areas under the influence of the One Who made us**. [Prov 12:5/Mt 12:34-35, 15:18-20/ Rom 8:4-10/26-27

1. Since humanity is naturally good yet we do evil, our evil is always used to deny God's existence. If the presence and prevalence of evil is used to deny God's existence, then it presupposes that one yet believes in God's ability to put a stop to evil. That argument does not altogether cancel one's sensitivity or conviction about God's existence; it just shifts the blame for evil off of humanity. So God 'takes a hit' for the evil, but gets no credit for influencing the good. Simply put, the good is our fault, but the evil is His fault. Let's confront the problem of evil with the following considerations:

A) **it presumes that God has not dealt with it in a way and speed that is known & satisfactory to humanity**.
B) **the problem & presence of evil actually assumes the existence of an absolute moral standard; for we can not call it evil were it not for the existence of good**.
C) **From the beginning, evil was our choice and not God's consequence. Evil results when people choose wrongly not God's inability to be. We are creatures of choice in that we are made in His image and likeness; and if there were no consequences (or rewards) to our choices, would we ever know we'd made the correct choice or not? Evil exists as a means for our moral separation and our corrective action, not God's inability to be**.