

Chapter 6: Sola Scriptura

As we discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to understand that all groups have their own agendas and purposes to fulfil and as a result of this they may not be able to offer the truth that we seek. It is possible to attend church services and never learn about God because of their fixation to traditional practices. It is also possible to attend scientific studies that discuss theories in a manner, which implies that they are facts. I remember asking my science teacher at the Roman Catholic school, which I attended how he could believe in God whilst accepting scientific teaching as fact. He answered with the following statement “My religion is my religion and my science is separate”. As we have reasoned, this is not an absolute answer, there can only be one truth and many lies. How can two opposing theories such as Creation and Evolution both be correct?

When I was younger I was raised in the Church of England. This is an organisation steeped in traditional practices. Even as a young child I was curious to learn about God so I was invited to become a server (a person who assists in the undertaking of the religious services). I learned many traditions and rituals but was never instructed as to what these rituals meant. In Sunday School we would regularly cut out and colour drawings of Bible scenes but were never taught them fully if at all. I remember desiring to purchase a Bible and there was a bookshop at the back of the church. I picked up a leather bound Bible and asked my mother to purchase it for me. I was told that this Bible was for adults only and that the visiting clergyman wished to purchase it. Instead I was given a children’s bible, which did not resemble the real thing.

There was always an emphasis of learning ‘nice’ Bible stories but never understanding their true meaning. There was also a constant pressure to conform to ritualistic practice that aided the growth of ignorance. I remember at that time I was quite fond of animals and I would take my hamster to church with me (I know it sounds a little strange but I was eight years old at the time) until the minister objected. I found his objection absurd and my mother remembers my questioning him as to where it was written in the Bible that Gods creatures could not enter his church. I became angry at the church and refused to return.

Although my objections may sound absurd there is an element of truth to them as I was able to understand as an adult, which was perhaps missed at the time, as scripturally there is no evidence to support this. Because of this objection I began to drift away from believing in God completely. I absorbed the opinions of others, scientific teachings and explored eastern faiths for truth and meaning. In 1998 I began to declare myself an atheist. It is important to understand that the actions of one person’s objection can influence even our core beliefs. It was not by God’s authority that the objection was made, but I was not able to understand this until I was an adult, and my friend opened my eyes to the truth.

Nestor Lopez is a unique individual. Both himself and his family accepted me into their lives with friendship many years ago. It is because of this person’s lifestyle and beliefs that I was able to complete my quest for the truth by witnessing the example of his life. Nestor has always been the highlight of any party or social function. He can relate to any person and demonstrates incredible intelligence, a student of science, mathematics, and scripture. I remember having conversations with him and that he had revealed his belief in God and Jesus Christ. I found this strange, as here is a man who does not attend any church, was not judgemental towards me or any of my friends, and

was extremely knowledgeable in the area of science. Forgive me if I generalise but this is hardly the perceived behaviour of a 'typical Christian'. He had too much knowledge. I associated Christianity with the practice of rituals and the imposition of an archaic moral code as a means of control rather than anything that contained any truth. However this person had changed all of this. He had broken the mould. He was and even until the time of writing this book and beyond has guided me with correct advice and has demonstrated great wisdom when confronting life's difficulties, and using this wisdom prevented those who would have used and destroyed me over the years from accomplishing their goals. Perhaps nothing is as typical as we perceive it to be. Perhaps we allow our stereotypes to shield us from the truth of situations, groups, and even the lives of others. Perhaps we hide behind them because it is comfortable for us to reject a person, a teaching, even faith itself rather than to discover what it can offer us. Is it better to hide? If you encounter something that fails to conform to a stereotype can you accept it as truth?

I remember when I was struggling with a problem with another friend. When I left my hometown to go to University, one of my friends began to speak against me, and became critical of my actions. I found this very troubling and asked Nestor for advice. He proved this was an unacceptable action by sharing the following with me:

"How can you look at the splinter in your brothers eye when you have a plank in your own!"

He explained that this demonstrates that we should not criticise other people's faults because we cannot see clearly to help them because our own faults blind us. I was quite amazed by this wisdom and I was even more amazed when he revealed that this was based upon a teaching from the Bible. I marvelled that such wisdom and insight could have come from this source. It was apparent to me that people are capable of committing offensive and terrible acts against each other, even as friends, but I did not expect to find this addressed in the scriptures. This glimpse into the potential of the information contained within the Bible changed my perceptions and later allowed me to study it without prejudice.

Nestor is one present day example of a Christian who does not conform to societies negative stereotypes. If we delve into our history we discover many examples of scientists who believed in God wholeheartedly although those who present science as a counterargument to Christianity would withhold this information from us. Consider the following example:

Michael Faraday (1791 – 1867) who is recognised for his ground-breaking work in the field of electricity and magnetism strongly believed in the existence of God, although this is not completely recorded in the general biographies which exist and can be found on the internet. For example:

"Faraday's research into electricity and electrolysis was guided by the belief that electricity is only one of the many manifestations of the unified forces of nature, which included heat, light, magnetism, and chemical affinity. Although this idea was erroneous, it led him into the field of electromagnetism, which was still in its infancy."

The source of this text is unknown but it can be found at the following address: <http://www.phy.hr/~dpaar/fizicari/xfaraday.html>. This site is ranked second in the top ten of a Google search as of 13th February 2006. Therefore the average researcher would have no inclination of Faradays beliefs. You may wonder why his beliefs are important to this discussion. Please consider

the following extract from a book entitled Five Equations that Changed the World that was written by Dr Michael Guillen who teaches physics and mathematics in the Core Curriculum Program at Harvard University.

“One day, while stitching together the newest edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Faraday’s life changed forever. In reading its 127 page entry on electricity, Faraday learned that, through natural philosophers had known about this invisible phenomenon for centuries, they still had not figured it out.

Something within him stirred, reminding him of a biblical verse he had heard a thousand times before; it was from Romans 1:20: ‘Since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.’

So long as electricity remained invisible and enigmatic-which was to say not clearly seen and not understood-it would be impossible for anyone to have a proper understanding of God’s eternal power and divine nature. This was intolerable, the young Sanderanian decided, so then and there he resolved to help remedy the situation.

Because he had been brought up to believe in the fundamental simplicity of man’s relationship to God, Faraday doubted that electricity could be as complicated as all that.”

Guillen (1995)

Even though current biographies do not recognise Faraday’s beliefs you can see that they were the driving force behind his discovery. It is evident that there was no conflict between science and believing in a Creator God within the mind of Faraday as the two complemented each other. God as Creator and Father, and science as a tool to discover the true glory of God’s creation. However we now live in a time where those who are opposed to believing in God use science as a tool to remove faith despite the previously discussed irony that to completely follow the teachings of modern science requires faith in the theories of the scientists. Some modern and well-respected scientific television personalities ridicule Christian beliefs, but it is obvious that they do not understand that many of the founding fathers of science believed in God and Jesus Christ wholeheartedly. This they would rather forget and purge from our history books.

We can’t trust any opinion or superficial education if we want to know the truth we must learn it for ourselves and the only method we have available to us is our ability to study the scriptures. Religious institutions have been corrupted by money and power. Scientists choose to deny God’s existence by teaching theory’s as facts despite the overwhelming evidence of intelligent creation. Not attacking Christianity directly but muting it and discouraging future generations to discover its truth. Their aim is clear; to let the current believers die, and have no future generation to replace them. Unfortunately the consequences are grave if we ignore the challenge of the information contained within the Bible. If we allow it to be removed from us or to be distracted and discouraged by religious trappings how can we ever learn the truth?

We accept so many different scientific facts. We can see the effect of radiation but not the radiation itself but we accept it. We can see the effect of the wind but we cannot perceive where it has come from, but we are unwilling to see the work of the Creator God intelligently designing, and creating the universe, and leaving us many clues. The ecosystem in its perfect balance, the complexities of our own bodies and mind, the perfect placement of our planet to allow life to flourish yet it is considered

to be unacceptable to consider that all of these were created, yet we are expected to believe that life occurred via a mechanism of chance and Evolution. Logically it is more credible to claim that an intelligent higher being created the universe than to believe that it is a chance occurrence, when the Creator's design is evident in all life and all things. The education system would prefer to deny the right to teach the theory of intelligent design alongside the Theory of Evolution because "Evolution" is claimed or assumed to be true. If we allow ourselves to continue in this mindset we become blinded. We do not look at the complexities of the design of the universe and instead believe that there is no intelligent force behind its creation, yet as William Paley's work demonstrated, chance has never created anything as complex as an eye and certainly not a human being.

In the face of all of the scientific arguments which force-feed atheism to us, even the established church has stopped promoting the Christian Faith as truth. Instead they concentrate on the promotion of politically correct morals, and fulfilment of rituals to cater for their audiences, their customers, those who value the institution of church over the teachings of the Bible. Unfortunately in some churches the biblical teachings have been largely disregarded in order to appeal to the uninformed and unchallenging opinions of the masses. If the Bible states that there is everlasting punishment for disobeying God why do they keep silent? If the Bible states that there is everlasting life and forgiveness for those who seek it, why do they withhold it from others? Is it simply because they do not wish to offend people? Therefore if the church does not teach the knowledge and wisdom contained within the Bible we must seek it for ourselves. Only by studying the scriptures we can come to the knowledge of the truth because no one else can give us the answers we seek. If we strip away the ceremonies, the hymns, candles and other religious practices we are left with the Bible itself to learn and study without interference.

If we refuse to read the scriptures then how can we comment upon its contents? If we have only ever been provided with a biased and one-sided scientific argument during our education how could we have fully considered the plausibility of creation? Therefore we can no longer cling to second hand opinions and uninformed stereotypes. If we do not discover for ourselves what the Bible contains we cannot speak the truth because we cannot verify our opinions to be facts. It is time to let go of our opinions and pre-formed assumptions and discover what the Bible really does contain. To discover what education, mass media, and even some of our friends have tried to prevent us from learning. Once we decide to stop accepting half-truths, and learn the truth for ourselves we can no longer be deceived. We can begin our spiritual journey and seek our own proof by examining the source of information freely without prejudice.