

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2020: *Education*
Lesson 10 “*Education in Arts and Sciences*”

Read for this week’s study

Romans 1:18–21; Psalm 19:1–6; 96:9; Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 6; Proverbs 1; Job 38.

Memory Text

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Lord Alone
- III. The Beauty of Holiness
- IV. Experts in Error
- V. Foolishness and Wisdom
- VI. The Lord Answered Job
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

- 1. “This week we will look at some principles involved in how we can teach the arts and sciences from the Christian perspective and worldview.” (Sabbath afternoon)
- 2. “Christian education in the arts and sciences must always work from the assumption that God is the Creator and sustainer of all that exists. In the end, any ideologies and presuppositions that deny or exclude God can lead only to error.” (Sunday’s lesson)
- 3. “Study of arts and sciences can and should, draw us closer to the character and heart of God. Because we are a part of God’s own artwork and scientific phenomena, we can also learn more about our own identity in Christ. [...] Learn to be careful because not all that is beautiful is necessarily good or holy.” (Monday’s lesson) What makes art, or anything else, good and holy? Which criteria do we use?
- 4. “The Bible draws a steady comparison between foolishness and wisdom. [...] We can be capable of artistic brilliance and scientific breakthroughs because of knowledge and ability.” (Wednesday’s lesson)

5. **Why is education crucial for the survival of the human race?** It is easy to miss how our world has changed in the last 300 years. If a peasant who died in the year 1000 could wake up in the 16th century in the time of the Reformation, he would easily interact with that world. But if someone who died in the 17th century could wake up today, such a person would feel completely out of place, struggle to relate, overwhelmed by a world which they do not understand.
6. Throughout most of history people taught their offspring how to: farm in order to produce food, make tools to get the work done, take care of the next generation, and heal the sick. The purpose of it all, and the most important, was that the **skills and knowledge** that humanity acquired would be preserved and passed on to the next generation (in a world where the life expectancy was about 40 years).
7. People operated from a presupposition that everything that was important to know about the world was already known. The role of education was to preserve existing capabilities rather than acquire new ones. An *individual* might be ignorant of something important. In order to obtain knowledge, one only needed to ask someone who had more wisdom. There was no need to discover something that nobody knew. Everything important was either handed down from their elders, or contained in the holy books (and one only needed to ask the local priest).
8. Whatever the wise people or the holy books did not tell us, was *unimportant*. If a peasant wanted to know how spiders weave their webs, for example, it was pointless to ask the priest, because the Scriptures did not contain the answer.
9. **Why is science and scientific education important?** Science starts from the perspective of *collective* ignorance. It assumes that there is truth out there that waits to be discovered. The answers are provided from observations and experiments. Based on evidence, theories (models of explanation) are developed, tested and either proved to be true or discarded by new discoveries. Thus, education today teaches people to go beyond what was true 1000, 500 or 100 years ago.
10. **How is art different from science?** Art reminds us that in addition to knowledge, there is also beauty. The definition of beauty changes throughout time and cultures, and is highly individual. However, some things are hardwired into each human being (golden ratio, symmetry, fractal patterns). Scientific studies have found that surroundings that are aesthetically pleasing to us can improve our well-being, our behavior, cognitive function, and mood. Beauty has such a strong impact on our well-being that making useful things beautiful actually makes them better. Researchers found that patients who stayed in the new, renovated wards, needed less pain medication and were released on average, two days earlier than patients recovering in an old ugly ward.
11. Science and art teach us that knowledge is power. The ultimate test of knowledge is whether it empowers us. Our knowledge is always limited this side of eternity (1 Corinthians 13:11-12). Whatever enables us to do new things, empowers us to be better people, constitutes knowledge. "We have many things to learn, many, many

to unlearn.” If all people are created in God’s image, we can learn from every person and be the type of community that God wants us to be!

Further Study with Ellen White

The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God’s power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotations. The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. {6BC 1062.5}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. It lights up the far-distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God’s word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers. {PP 596.2}

He has linked us to Himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. “God is love,” is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles and the thorns are hidden by roses. All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display His authority, but in all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain. {PP 599.4}

God's handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature. The things of nature are an expression of God's character; by them we may understand His love, His power, and His glory; but we are not to regard nature as God. The artistic skill of human beings produces very beautiful workmanship, things that delight the eye, and these things give us something of the idea of the designer; but the thing made is not the man. It is not the work, but the workman, that is counted worthy of honor. So, while nature is an expression of God's thought, it is not nature but the God of nature that is to be exalted.—8T 263. {MM 11.1}

Whenever He comes to us, His reward is with Him. He does not leave it in heaven, but gives it to us every day. Daily He gives us confidence and light and blessing. Daily our hearts beat in unison with His great heart of infinite love (MS 116, 1902). {4BC 1145.2}

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that he loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {TDG 241.3}

But the power of God is still exercised in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism once set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath. Every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the care of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. From the smallest insect to man, every living creature is daily dependent upon His providence. {Ed 130.5}

By communion with God in nature, the mind is uplifted, and the heart finds rest. {DA 291.1}

While there is an individuality and variety in nature, there is a oneness in their diversity; for all things receive their usefulness and beauty from the same source. The great Master Artist writes His name on all His created works, from the loftiest cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall. They all declare His handiwork, from the lofty mountain and the grand ocean to the tiniest shell upon the seashore. {FLB 24.4}

The minds of all who make the Word of God their study will enlarge. Far more than any other study its influence is calculated to increase the powers of comprehension and endow every faculty with a new power. It brings the mind in contact with broad, ennobling principles of truth. It brings all heaven into close connection with human minds, imparting wisdom and knowledge and understanding. {OHC 35.4}

Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing

Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [John 14:6.] "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." [Psalm 72:12.] {GW 263.1}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. {MH 482.1}

He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand. {MH 482.2}

The subtlety of Satan will not decrease, but the wisdom given to men through a living connection with the Source of all light and divine knowledge will be proportionate to his arts and wiles. {5T 504.1}

The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God's power is constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil; He is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation. {PP 694.1}

The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works. {Ed 128.1}