

The Rejection of Rationality and Reason

Written by Calvin Fox

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The classic view that rationality is a major characteristic of the Image of God is properly derived from the Doctrine of Creation and what it reveals about God. Rationality, Logic, Principles of Mathematics are all derived from Theology- the nature of God Himself. However, today's culture values the non-rational, even as it de-values God

“In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were important movements in the arts, the sciences and the social sciences that, taken together, represent a significant revision of modern thought. What is known as Postmodernity arose out of a rejection of the Enlightenment's key point, the primacy of rationality.” - p.199

Material in this Article is adapted from HISTORY THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH by Ronald A Wells. “One of the deep currents in the twentieth century is non-rationalism, by which we do not mean irrationalism but a conscious rejection of the faculty of human reason as the highest state of human endeavor and the best avenue toward truth.” **Romanticism: the Irrelevance of the Intellect**

Many found the mechanized, mathematized, urban-industrial world stifling of the human spirit. The heart, love, emotions, faith, creativity, the arts were all being denied or repressed or crushed.

Darwin & Biology: The Irrelevance of Purpose

The natural world is in constant flux, subject to constant change. Life is a struggle for existence- a matter of constant and ever changing physical adaptation and a struggle for survival. Man's mind does not act independently and purposely on natural phenomena. Humankind is not in control or superior to the natural order, but subject to it.

Sociology & Psychology: The Irrelevance of Rationality

Human social behavior is to be studied by scientific, empirical methods. Freud tried to apply the same empirical methods to the study of personal behavior. The results of this study led Freud to conclude that humans are not rational beings. What really drives men is the non-rational “unconscious”

All of these developments, plus the crises of the 20th century, [World Wars, Depression, etc] has led to skepticism and rejection of the tenets of Modernism. The hallmark of Modernity is the primacy of reason. The Intellectual currents working in the late 19th and early 20th Century to undermine Modernity- “This is a revolt against intellect [and it] erodes the ground under the structures of modern thought and behavior.”- Wells, p.188

This “conscious rejection of the faculty of human reason & revolt against intellect” is increasingly prevalent in evangelical Circles. This is related to a concurrent rejection or de-valuing of objective, propositional Truth in those same circles.

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To repeat- God is a rational thinker. We image Him in our Minds- as we analyze, reason and solve abstract mental problems

(See my Article about Logic)