

WHAT IS ART? Part 3

Written by Calvin Fox
Thursday, 30 January 2014 19:14 -

ART AS REVELATION OF GOD

Inasmuch as all which God created reveals truths about Him, His Mind and His character, the primary function of Art is Representation which becomes Revelation. (This is how a Sacrament may be described: a visible or material sign or symbol of something spiritual and which communicates or makes that spiritual reality real for those who receive the sign.) True Art does this. Art is image making. It is iconic.

It points beyond itself. Whatever the kind of Art (painting, sculpture, drama, literature, music), it is a means through which the attributes of God can be seen or known. God's Art was not representational of anything. Nothing existed for Him to represent. We know what God is from the Scripture. Scripture is written revelation, a work of Art made by God. He is revealed through the words and language, the literature and many literary styles and genres of writing (poetry, historical narrative, Law, prophecy, apocalyptic, parables) found in the Book. In all of that we find mythological descriptions, metaphorical and poetical language and symbols, as well as fabrics, colors, made objects, and even buildings with their furnishings- all works of art and craftsmanship. In themselves, all these things can ideally (when created Biblically) reveal or communicate something about God.

God is especially "seen" in the person of Jesus, the ultimate work of God's Art in Scripture (the best Art to be found within the Art). Jesus is The Image of God, The Icon, the Representation above all of what God is like. He is the ultimate Sacrament. Ideally, the artist today will strive to faithfully represent something about God in [his] work. The observer of that representational art will find it to be revelatory, a glass through which God is made known. Looking at an artist's work, the observer should be able to see God through it (beyond the words on the page or the icon on the wall or the stained glass picture in the window.) If that is not possible, the Art is not good.

To achieve this highest function of Art, the artist must know God. Art is not a search for God. It comes out of knowing Him. This is why the greatest true artists are Biblically grounded Christians. Their work will be motivated by devotion toward God, inspired and formed by the Spirit of God and conformed to the Truth about God.