

The Glory of God – And Science

Pierson J Van Alten

Often when one begins to study science he is informed by many prejudiced individuals that one who believes what science teaches cannot believe what Scripture teaches. In order to support their arguments they will refer to the great astronomer Laplace who stated that “God is a hypothesis which cannot be proved”. Of course they never refer to equally as good a scientist as Robert Boyle who saw the work of God in every single chemical and physical law which he studied. It is clearly evident that the scientist who sees God in nature must first have seen Him in Scripture. There is no conflict between faith and science; the conflict is rather one between the question of whether the world is normal or whether it is abnormal. And the Calvinist considers the world as abnormal since it is under the influence of sin. The scientist, who is a Christian, is able to see God’s glory in ail natural phenomenon, and in all chemical and physical laws. The title of this paper is very broad and sublime, therefore we will only consider a few properties of the very common substance water.

We have often noticed that when water freezes, the ice which forms floats on the top. Also that whenever a solid of some other substance is placed in its liquid it sinks, or if the liquid solidifies it usually solidifies from the bottom up. The scientist investigates this fact and discovers that at four degrees Centigrade or 39.2 degrees Fahrenheit the maximum density of water is reached, and from this point to the freezing point the water becomes lighter. Because of this peculiar property water freezes from the top down.

One may ask why this is important. Water is a very poor conductor of heat. With this in mind we discover that the water underneath the ice seldom goes much below 39.2 degrees Fahrenheit, thus preserving aquatic life. Think what would happen if this were not true. There would be no aquatic life and in the summer at most there would be only a few feet of water above the ice on any lake. Is this exception to the laws of nature a mere chance occurrence, or does it reveal a great Divine Planner?

Water manifests a peculiar property in that it has the highest heat of fusion of any substance. When water changes to ice at zero degrees Centigrade or 32 degrees Fahrenheit, it liberates eighty calories of heat for every gram which change into ice. The scientist uses the calorie for measuring heat energy. The calorie may be defined as the amount of heat necessary to raise the temperature of one gram of water one degree Centigrade. An ounce is equal, to 28.35 grams. Water having the highest heat of fusion is especially important because of its effect upon climate. In the fall a large amount of heat is liberated as the water cools and much more yet when water freezes. The reverse is also true in the spring. One can now see what vast stores of heat the oceans are!

The last property we will consider is that water has the highest heat of vaporization. Maybe you have wondered why buildings are heated by steam, and probably dismissed the thought by considering that water was probably the cheapest substance. The reason for this is because of this peculiar property of water. It requires five hundred and forty calories of heat to change one gram of water into steam at one hundred degrees Centigrade, and when steam condenses it liberates this heat again. This also is important in regulating the temperature of the earth. Water has more properties than these and all are as fascinating in revealing God’s Glory through science.

The Calvinist holds to the position that the sole purpose of man is to glorify God. Now

there are many more ways in which science reveals the *Glory of God* than in merely a molecule of water composed of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. But it is only the scientist who has first seen God in Scripture who is able to see God's Glory in science. Therefore it is our duty as Christians to search for and make explicit these revelations of God's Glory. Recently the book *Beyond the Atom* by John De Vries, Ph. D., has been published which is devoted to the subject, the *Glory of God and Science*. Anyone interested in reading more on this subject should by all means read this book. In conclusion let me reiterate that to the scientist who is truly a Christian God is revealed in all His Glory from the largest even to the smallest detail of the Universe. *Truly there is Glory to God in Science!*

Originally Published in:
Vol 9 No 7 April 1949