

STUDENT WORKSHEET FOR JOHN TINER'S BOOK, *ROBERT BOYLE: TRAILBLAZER OF SCIENCE*

A history or biography on some subject also will reveal the philosophy of the author as well. And the philosophy of an author will have significant influence on how he presents the biography and history, and what we learn from him on the subject covered. We must evaluate all books we read in the light of God's word, the Bible. And we must be well studied on a topic from a variety of sources, and just not rely on one man's presentation, so as to ascertain the real facts in the matter. Based upon your reading of this biography of Tiner, what seems to be his religious philosophy? What are the clues regarding his philosophy as reflected in this biography?

In light of scripture, how should we evaluate Tiner's religious philosophy?

How do you think Tiner's religious philosophy has affected his presentation of the biography of Robert Boyle, and in some cases made it an erroneous presentation?

Robert Boyle learned a lesson early in life from his experience with his stammer. What was the lesson?

What lesson did Robert Boyle's father impress upon Robert Boyle from his experience of almost being killed in the river on the way to their family reunion?

How was Robert Boyle's father different from some of the other English landowners in Ireland?

During the time of Robert Boyle and up to the twentieth century it was the unanimous view of Christianity that contraception was wrong. What are the evidences in this biography about Robert Boyle that contraception was not used?

How had Robert Boyle's father made his fortune?

According to Tiner, Robert Boyle regarded the English Civil War as "stupid and barbaric." (p. 89) While we should not delight in war, should Christians really avoid participating in *all* wars. Would it have been right for an Israelite to avoid participating in Joshua's conquest of Israel or

Israel's defensive war against the Philistines? When is war justified, and were the Puritan Parliamentarians and Presbyterian Scots justified in waging war against King Charles I, in his implementation of the Divine Right of Kings?

Tiner presents religious pluralism and tolerationism positively. Are religious pluralism and tolerationism consistent with scripture? Why or why not? Is it really possible for a civil government to be religiously neutral?

Tiner presents Boyle as believing that Scripture and science equally inform man of the universe about him. But Scripture teaches that it alone is the foundation of all knowledge. We must place pre-suppositional faith in God's word, the Bible, in order to understand God's world. Can you think of any Bible passages which that the Bible alone is the foundation of all knowledge?

The scientific method is a useful tool of learning about the world God has created, but there are limitations to its usefulness. For example, it rests upon a uniformitarian assumption. This assumption means the natural laws remain constant throughout time and space. According to scripture, have the natural laws ****always**** remained constant? When have they changed?

The Protestant Reformation broke the superstition upon which Romanism had become engrossed, and in so doing opened the way for the scientific method rightly employed. Romanism promoted superstition and thwarted knowledge by discouraging study of scripture and by doctrines such as regarding the Mass. According to its doctrine of the Mass, Romanism teaches that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper actually becomes Christ's body and blood. How is this superstitious?

Romanism also discouraged science by taking an official position in favor of the Ptolemaic theory of the solar system and by treating the writings of many pagan Greek philosophers as if they were necessarily true. Protestantism broke the grip of such thinking, and so opened the way for the use of the scientific method. Did Robert Boyle believe science contradicted scripture?

Biblical Christianity makes science and the scientific method possible and useful by positing a universe which God ****normally**** governs His universe according to certain laws and principles which He has ordained. If there were no God who ordained such normally applicable laws, but instead all events happened according to chance, why would science be impossible?

Robert Boyle was a pioneer in the use of the scientific method by experimentation which led to the discovery of many laws by which God normally governs His universe. This ushered in a scientific revolution, with England at the fore-front. What were some of the laws which Boyle discovered?

History and science employ different methods to attain knowledge about God's universe. How are they different? What are the limitations of history? What are the limitations of science?

How did Boyle show light and sound are fundamentally different by an experiment?

Robert Boyle did not have a formal college education yet was a great scientist. He believed formal college education at his time would actually harm his pursuit of science because science education at the time relied upon assuming the ancient pagan Greek philosophers were correct. While there are many fields of formal college education today which are helpful and necessary to the field (accounting, engineering, math, etc.), there are other fields of formal college education in which virtually all the colleges are harming true knowledge because they are premised in false humanistic assumptions. Which fields are examples of this? Why?

What is ‘Boyle’s Law’?

Robert Boyle was instrumental in the founding of the Royal Society. Its motto was ‘Nullis in Verba’, which means “nothing by mere authority.” This motto was reflective of the premise of the Enlightenment which suggested man by reason and experimentation could ascertain truth. But this theory of knowledge denies the pre-suppositions necessary to any framework of thought. It also fails to take account of man’s depraved nature since the Fall, which distorts human understanding. Man must believe God and his Word as the foundation of true knowledge. Scientists like Robert Boyle were only successful in attaining some knowledge because they assumed certain truths taught in scripture, like that there even are laws of nature. If reality were nothing but chance reactions of particles, then there would be no reasonable basis for believing in such laws of nature. But once we place faith in God’s word, then scientific experimentation can be useful to attaining knowledge, so long as we remember its limitations. What would have been a more appropriate motto for the Royal Society? Why?

As a Christian believer Robert Boyle was instrumental in the spread of the Protestant Christian faith. What are some actions he took which aided in the propagation of the gospel?

What did Robert Boyle propose in place of the ancient four-element theory?

Like all Christians, Robert Boyle manifested certain spiritual strengths and certain spiritual weaknesses, what do you believe was his greatest strength and his greatest weakness?