

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATION STUDY

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Why is the doctrine of creation important? Isn't it true that the only really important doctrine is redemption? Isn't it true that the Bible's orientation is primarily spiritual, not physical? Why make so much of something that seems to be more in the realm of the scientist than in the realm of the theologian. Isn't it quite possible for an evolutionist to believe in Christ and be saved?

I. THE TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE FORM A UNIT

To the last of these three questions we shall answer "Yes." But we shall also insist that the doctrine of creation is important because what Scripture teaches is an organic whole and cannot be fragmented. It is like a wheel with spokes radiating out from the central doctrine of justification. Thus creation, the fall, redemption, eternal life are all linked together. The doctrine of Creation teaches us that man was created perfect, sinless. We need to know this in order that we do not blame God for our wickedness. We need to know that we were created perfect in order to appreciate God's love which not only redeemed us but redeemed us from a state into which our first parents had fallen from that original perfection. We need to know the doctrine of Creation in order to understand the perfection which God is preparing for us after this life. The teachings of the Scripture form a unit. An attack on one is an attack on all. Once we have begun to deny one doctrine we are tempted to deny the others. If we reject the story of creation in a state of perfection and believe instead that we have developed from the anthropoid, then redemption is something that God owes us, since our being in the state of sin is the result of bringing us up from the anthropoid. Then sin is His fault and not ours. Indeed we deserve commendation because we have risen so far above the jungle and the barnyard.

II. CREATION IS MENTIONED REPEATEDLY IN SCRIPTURE

The doctrine of Creation is not an obscure doctrine, nor is it one which "is hard to understand which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction," II Peter 3:16. There are over 65 passages in the Old and New Testaments which refer to this doctrine. Many of these, it is true, speak of God as the Creator without referring in detail to the method of creation, and theistic evolutionists are want to say that they can be interpreted in the light of theistic evolution as well as in the light of special creation. Yet all of these are written against the background of Genesis 1 and 2 and presuppose it. They take for granted the details mentioned there. Our Savior refers to

the Genesis account: St. Paul builds New Testament doctrine on it. The repeated references to creation in the Scriptures show us how important the Holy Spirit thought it to be.

III. MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD DEPENDS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE CREATION

Repeatedly Scripture emphasizes the Creator-Creature relationship. We owe God honor and worship because He created us. More than that, we owe God obedience for that same reason. Christianity is an authoritarian religion. When God speaks, man is to obey. He isn't to argue with God, he isn't to question His wisdom, he isn't to suggest some alternative, but he is to obey. The Ten Commandments are binding on all men not because they are the socially acceptable way of living but because they are the commandments of the Creator. When God says, "Thou shalt not steal," I am to obey Him. I am not to question His authority or His motives. I am not to suggest that He is an ally of the propertied classes, permitting Himself to be used in promoting their ends. I am not to argue that in a purely socialistic society this sort of commandment will no longer be needed. God the Creator has spoken and I the creature must obey.

Similarly, when God says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," I must obey. I cannot argue that this commandment is given only to protect the home and society and that when these are not harmed it may be broken. I cannot argue that adultery is wrong only when there is danger of pregnancy and that the development of modern contraceptives has made premarital and postmarital faithfulness unnecessary. God, the Creator, has spoken and I must obey.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION IS INTIMATELY RELATED TO SUPER- NATURALISM

The Bible assumes the existence of the supernatural, and the doctrine of Creation is an important part of this assumption. The Bible is not materialistic and mechanistic in its orientation. It proclaims an all-powerful God who has created every material thing and who has established all the natural laws which govern the universe. This God is both immanent and transcendent. He is in the world, for in Him we live and move and have our being, Acts 17:28. But He is not a part of the world. He is a personal God, separate from these things which he has fashioned and made.

The scientist does not deal with the supernatural. It is outside the realm of those things with which he concerns himself. He has deliberately limited himself to those things which can be touched and

felt and handled. He seeks explanations which are in keeping with the natural laws which God has set up. While some scientists have denied the reality of those things which cannot be measured, science itself does not. The scientist has found this approach fruitful. By limiting himself to a study of the natural laws which God has set up, he has gained a considerable measure of control over the universe which God has created. But we should recognize that he does limit himself to a study of the laws which God has set up without attempting to study the God who set them up.

It is interesting to note that one of the earliest clashes between religion and science did not deal with the doctrine of Creation but rather with the doctrine of Preservation. The man who is responsible for much of the mechanism and materialism of science today was Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientific geniuses of all times. Living in the 17th century, one of the greatest scientific centuries of all times, he was a contemporary of Boyle, Hooke, Wren, and the founders of the Royal Society. All of these men were devout, pious, and deeply religious. Indeed many 20th century historians of science find it difficult to accept their religious orientation at face value and suggest it was a cover-up, that they did not really accept God and Christ but because of the nature of the times had to pay lip service to Christianity. Reading the writings of such men as Boyle and Newton leaves no doubt as to their sincerity. They were indeed deeply religious men.

At the same time we ought to recognize that Newton's system whereby the universe became a machine and his denials of the role of God as preserver laid the foundation for much of the mechanism and materialism which characterizes modern science. Newton believed that the age of miracles was past. He accepted the Old and New Testament accounts of miracles, but he believed they no longer occurred. He believed that God now worked through the natural laws which He had established. Newton's God was a watchmaker God, a God who had fitted all the wheels together and had started it running but who had now withdrawn completely. In other words, God had now abdicated in His role as Preserver. God was transcendent, but no longer immanent.

It was an extension of Newton's ideas that led to causal determinism and led to ideas such as those of LaPlace who believed that if there were a supernatural being capable of knowing all cause and effect relationships and capable of analyzing all of them, he could with confidence reconstruct every event even of the remote past and predict every event of the future. LaPlace talked about a Supernatural Being. However, it was not long until others came along and applied Occam's razor to the system. Since God was not needed in the system — it functioned by the natural laws He had estab-

lished, He could be eliminated. This was the strict causal determinism which prevailed until the beginning of the 20th century.

At the turn of the century, causal determinism received a death blow from which it never recovered. This was the principle of indeterminism introduced by Heisenberg. Heisenberg's principle applies only on the subatomic level. He learned that it is impossible to predict both the position and the velocity of an electron. This meant that strict causal determinism would not work on the subatomic level. It was Heisenberg's position that the universe is indeterministic and his position was shared by Eddington. Others, such as Einstein, insisted that the universe is deterministic but we simply cannot demonstrate it.

While it is true that indeterminism can be demonstrated only on the subatomic level, certainly it is fair to suggest that from a philosophical standpoint it may apply on other levels as well. This, once more, leaves room for God. If things are not so exactly predetermined by cause and effect relationships, perhaps there is a role for God after all. Thus supernaturalism may not be so outmoded after all. It is interesting to note that while strict causal determinism has been abandoned in physics, a sort of determinism and a dependence on strict cause and effect relationships is still the basis of much of the reasoning in biology. Indeed it is this mechanistic determinism that is the basis for evolution. Living things develop through natural laws, by cause and effect relationships. Theistic evolutionists claim that God is behind the process. but to most of them He is the watchmaker God of Newton who is transcendent but no longer immanent.

Cause and effect is also widespread in the social sciences. Man is both the product of and the victim of his environment. He is the helpless pawn of forces outside himself. This does away with human responsibility in the moral realm. Man cannot be responsible if his actions are the consequences of environmental stimuli.

Strict causal determinism in any area is a gloomy philosophy. Man is helpless. He cannot alter his environment and he cannot control his actions. He is a complete automaton.

V. THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION POSTULATES AN ABSOLUTE GOD

One of the most significant developments of 20th century physics is the theory of relativity developed by Einstein. While indeterminism has probably been favorable philosophically to organized religion, relativity has not. Einstein believed that the only constant or absolute is the speed of light. Everything else is relative. Time is relative. As the speed of an object increases and approaches the speed of light, time slows down for that object. Its length decreases and its mass increases. Thus

his theory is considered to have destroyed the concept of absolutes. Actually, you and I are committed to the idea of absolutes. The God whom we worship is the Absolute. He is not relatively holy, He is absolutely holy. He is not relatively wise, He is omniscient. He is not relatively powerful: He is omnipotent. It is of His omnipotence that the doctrine of Creation speaks. Why shouldn't God cause the earth to appear as the Genesis account reports? He is all powerful. He doesn't need time to accomplish something. He doesn't need a process of development. He doesn't need to make things in steps. Our God is an absolute God. He speaks and it is done. It is because He is the absolute God that we owe Him respect and homage.

VI. THE NEW TESTAMENT ACCEPTS THE GENESIS ACCOUNT LITERALLY AND BUILDS ON IT

Our Savior quotes Genesis and quotes it in such a way that He obviously accepts it literally. You will recall our Savior's clash with the Pharisees regarding divorce as it is recorded in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. The Pharisees thought that they could trap Him by asking Him about divorce. Their divorce practices were very loose: they took advantage of Moses' regulations regarding a bill of divorcement which at the Savior's time was available on the slightest pretext. They knew that the Savior did not approve of their divorce practices. By asking Him about divorce they thought they would trap Him into approving something of which He did not approve or criticizing a regulation of Moses. Instead the Savior in support of His position quoted Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. He takes these as literal, not as allegorical. He accepts this account in Genesis 1 and 2 as historical and not as myth or saga.

Even more significant is St. Paul's use of the creation account. He accepts the historicity of Adam and Eve, something which few theistic or atheistic evolutionists accept. To the evolutionist, Adam and Eve cannot be individuals: they must represent an evolutionary population. It is unthinkable that only one male and one female developed to the status of *Homo sapiens*. Rather a group, perhaps a hundred or five hundred, achieved this biological status, and it must be these that are referred to as Adam and Eve.

We must recognize that Adam is sometimes used in the Old Testament as a generalized term for man. This is in keeping with the Hebrew practice of economizing on vowels, of making one word do the work of several. Yet it is very clear that Moses is talking about one man and one woman. St. Paul understands Moses in this way. In Chapter 5 of His epistle to the Romans, he repeatedly compares the one Adam with the one Christ. He says, for instance in v. 12 "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." He tells us, v. 15, that by

the offence of one man, many died and that by the grace of God which is by one man many are made alive. He goes on to say, v. 18, "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" and then he continues in v. 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." St. Paul uses a similar parallel in I Corinthians 15. There he says, v. 22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

These parallels of St. Paul make no sense unless one accepts the historicity of Adam. If Adam is not an individual but rather represents an evolutionary population, what of Christ? Is He an individual or does He perhaps represent a suffering population? St. Paul's reference to Adam and Eve in I Timothy is also interesting. In Chapter 2, he tells us that women are not to teach nor to usurp authority over the man and he gives as his reason, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." This reference makes sense only if Adam and Eve are individuals. To suggest that they represent evolutionary populations, involves biological nonsense. It suggests that first there was a race of males only and that after some time a race of females developed.

Even more interesting is St. Paul's reference to our first parents in I Corinthians 11. Here again he is dealing with the relationship of men and women and he gives as his reason in v. 8 "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man." The Greek preposition used here means "out of," and is a clear reference to the creation of woman as it is recorded in Genesis 2:21.

There are some theistic evolutionists who recognize this New Testament problem and suggest that only one male and one female were picked out of the evolutionary population to be the parents of the human race. Thus a group of beings had evolved to the biological status of *Homo sapiens*. God interfered directly and picked out one male, Adam, and one female, Eve. To these He gave a soul and they became the ancestors of the human race. If this is the case, we might well ask, "What became of the other anthropoids whom God did not choose to become our parents? Are there people who are biologically *Homo sapiens* but who do not have a soul and are therefore not truly human? Is it possible that some of our radical racists are correct in insisting that not all the races of man are truly human?"

VII. THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION RUNS COUNTER TO CHRISTIANITY

Modern evolution is Darwinian: the generally accepted theory today is said to be neo-Darwinian. By this modern evolutionists mean Darwinism modified by modern genetics. Accordingly there is

still the struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest, nature red in tooth and claw. True, these concepts are no longer used in the same sense in which early evolutionists used them. The struggle for existence is no longer regarded as a struggle for food, only rarely does death result from battle and with bloodshed, fitness does not necessarily imply the long survival of the individual. The emphasis is on the race or population rather than on the individual. Yet there is still definitely a struggle and a survival of those best fit to survive. There is no place for the weakling and therefore no place for Christian love. Indeed there are many who believe that man is making a serious mistake by keeping alive the physically weak and the helpless and in that way keeping their defective genes in the gene pool of the species. Mortimer Adler believes that if evolution is correct then the Nazi point of view with its racism and its murder of the unfit is also correct.

The Christian ethic depends on love — love to God and love to the fellowman. It is the ethic of the Good Samaritan who at the risk of his own life attempted to save the life of the man, who because he was a Jew did not deserve to live. There is no such Christian love in any scheme of the survival of the fittest. Evolution is a dog eat dog struggle. If evolution is correct, this attitude is not only permissible but even proper.

There is no question but that Hitler through Nietzsche was greatly influenced by Darwin. The Nazi system was definitely Darwinian in its orientation. This cannot be said of Communism. Communism is influenced instead by the outmoded concepts of Lamarck. Its whole philosophy is that of inheritance of acquired characteristics rather than a survival of the fittest.

There is something else that ought to be noted.

Christianity emphasizes the importance of the individual. You and I count in the eyes of the God of the Bible. He knows each one of us. His Son died for us and He has written our names on the palms of His hands. To the modern evolutionist the individual is unimportant. His survival does not count. Instead the important thing is the proportion of his genes in the gene pool of future generations. Whether his life is a long one or a short one isn't important, whether he is happy or oppressed doesn't really count. The important thing is the number of his offspring and therefore the frequency of his genes in the gene pool of the next generation. Thus a disorder such as cancer may actually be favorable from an evolutionary point of view. It is essentially a disorder of older people. It removes the individual from the scene after he has made his contribution to the gene pool of the next generation. He has served his evolutionary function and- if he lives beyond this point he will only be draining the resources which might better be used by those who still have their evolutionary contribution to make.

Evolution necessarily implies that society is more important than the individuals which make it up. The welfare of the group is more important than that of the individual. If the rights of the individual interfere with the rights of society, his rights must yield. Christianity emphasizes the rights of both, and so does our American democracy. The individual does count. He is important: he is more than a small cog in a vast machine.

Thus we see that evolution does have implications for our faith. There are deep and basic philosophical differences and differences in approach. Evolution is important. It is more than just a scientific theory. It has implications not only for the material and physical realm but also for the spiritual realm.