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THE LEGACY OF DUYVENE DE WIT FOR CREATIONIST BIOLOGY PART II: THE FOLLY OF MAN AND THE WORKS OF THE LORD

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Abstract

This is part two of a three-part series of articles on the life and work of J. J. Duyvene De Wit, a Dutch biologist, who ascribed to the Creation viewpoint and actively worked against the falsity of evolutionary concepts.

The Unscientific Nature of Evolution

In the previous article I gave a brief glimpse of the life of Dr. J. J. Duyvene de Wit, a tireless fighter against the nearly overwhelming forces of evolution in the academic world.[1]

De Wit had a life-long goal for which he worked till the end. It was that all Christians who accept the creation record, regardless of their other theological differences, would join forces in the battle against evolution.

He felt that it would be much easier to convince undecided and misinformed Christians to do so if they could be shown that *evolution is not a scientific theory but an article of a non-Christian faith.*

We will now examine the contributions he left behind in the ongoing struggle we still must face. I hope to demonstrate that his legacy, which is not widely known among creationists, contains an arsenal of great value in our battle.

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Examining Evidences for Evolution

De Wit delivered a lecture entitled "The Paleontological Record and the Origin of Man" to the Scientific Society of the University of the Orange Free State in South Africa on August 28, 1963.

He began with a quote from a speech, given by Dr. Abraham Kuyper in 1899 entitled "Evolution."

> The doctrine of evolution is a newly invented system, a newly conceived doctrine, a newly formed dogma, a new rising belief, which places itself over against the Christian faith, and can only found its temple on the ruins of our Christian confession.[2]

The intervening 64 years have confirmed these prophetic words. De Wit stated that as Copernicus in his day was persecuted for his astrophysical discoveries by scholastic religious doctrinaires, so scientists who have discovered the systemic discontinuities in biology are persecuted and ridiculed by the modern evolutionary doctrinaires with their metaphysical doctrine of a universal continuity of life.

There are non-Christian as well as Christian biologists who recognize how the theory of evolution deviates from the available scientific data, but their minor-

ity view is not tolerated among the ruling scientists. The violent emotional reaction of the majority against the opinion of the dissenters, which often borders on fanaticism, testifies to the religious character of the transformist doctrine.

De Wit pointed out that the confession of man's descent from the apes is in direct conflict with Scripture and he warned that theologians and elders who have adopted this view are deceiving the people on religious grounds, and, he said, they are equally guilty of *scientific deceit.*

He pointed out the differences between the "Special" theory and the "General" theory of evolution. The former can be studied, because it deals with variation within a species, not with evolution. The general theory exists only as an extrapolation of the "special" theory. But since this special theory does not deal with evolution, this extrapolation is unfounded and hence *unscientific.*

Because the general theory is not based on observed data, it cannot be tested. For that reason *it is not a scientific theory* revealing the gravity of the betrayal of people, including theologians, *by the scientists.*

De Wit then proceeded to give evidence for his thesis that the transformist principle can no longer stand its scientific ground. He based his argument on findings in the fields of paleontology, genetics, embryology, and taxonomy.

De Wit concluded a lengthy discussion of the findings pertaining to fossils of human remains with the words "No fossil documentation whatsoever with respect to the assumed animal ancestors of man has been found. Hence paleontology cannot help us with hard facts."[3]

Mutations caused by physical influences such as radiation cause changes *within a species only.* No new species have been produced in our experiments. Most such influences produce defective organisms. The rare exception which shows some possibly beneficial change cannot balance the deleterious effects upon the whole population affected.

Recombination of *extant* genetic material is supposed to be the main source of adaptive adjustment to changing environmental factors. Thus, in a border situation of migrating specimens, natural selection will eliminate the less adaptable individuals and a small elite will remain, establishing a new race. Further isolation will prevent interbreeding and it is speculated that eventually beneficial mutations will produce a new species.

De Wit commented that a pioneering population only takes a portion of the genes of the original population along. This results in a *pauperization* of its gene pool. If this had happened, it would have produced disastrous consequences. As he noted "When the process of speciation repeats itself often, a final species arises whose gene pool is so much exhausted that very small environmental changes suffice to contrive their extinction."[4]

He noted that the extinction of some 99 percent of all species that ever lived shows that none of them could adapt to survive. It does not show why only *one percent* managed to survive, nor how they originated. That leaves the optimistic theory of progressive genetic improvement of species through recombination of extant genetic material dangling without support from the findings of extinction. If man had arisen from the amoeba, he must have lost an uncountable number of genes in the process! As De Wit said it would be more reasonable to expect the amoeba to invent the theory of relativity than poorly endowed man.

De Wit observed that since the pauperization of gene pools rules out evolution through genetic recombination, evolutionists have no alternative but to assume that small populations of basic genotypes, endowed with enormous recombinational potencies, *must have* arisen at different places and times. But he rightly added that no biologist is competent to interpret such postulated appearances. It would amount to "special acts of creation." That, he said, is really a matter of religious and philosophical character. De Wit concluded that the discoveries of genetics have not produced any evidence to support the transformist doctrine.

One of the cornerstones of the transformist doctrine is the thesis that the transition "from amoeba to man" has been accomplished *in the cell nucleus only* through genetic changes. De Wit challenged this concept in his lecture. There are other areas of a cell besides the nuclear genes that play an important role in the transmission of hereditary characteristics. Here are the arguments he presented in his speech.

All the cells in our body possess the same chromosomes with their genes. Yet, there are thousands of different types of cells, all with the same "genetic code" in their DNA molecules. Some individuals have a male chromosome pattern and a female appearance (Turner's syndrome). Others have a male appearance with a female chromosome pattern (Klinefelter's syndrome).

Some animal and vegetable species are so similiar that taxonomically they belong to the same species. Yet, their genetic karyogram is different and they do not interbreed. They are called cryptic species or phenocopies. Experiments have demonstrated that many body characteristics are transmitted through the cytoplasm and the cell cortex, not the nucleus.

He quoted embryologists who have discovered these features, which point to the possibility that the genes in the nucleus play a role mainly in the transmission of the *intra*-species characteristics while the rest of the cell, the cytoplasm and the cortex, determine the overall body build, i.e. the *inter*-specific characteristics.

An e nucleated egg of the sea-urchin *Echinus* can be fertilized by the sperm cell of the feather-star *Antedon,* which belongs to a different biological order. The cell, without a nucleus, begins to multiply and forms a maternal type of embryo, typical for *Echinus,* as far as it goes. This seems to indicate that the major body features are formed without a contribution from nuclear genetic material.

Experiments with larval hybridization have confirmed this. The major features of an organism are transmitted through the informational code residing in the cortex and cytoplasm. The nuclear hereditary material only controls the minor variations between individuals within a species (wrongly called as evidence for "special" evolution). In other words, the whole cell is needed for propagation.

All this, concluded De Wit, renders the concept of evolution as based on nuclear mutations *only,* obsolete.

If it is true that it is mainly the cytoplasm (minus the nucleus with its genes in DNA) which transmits the characteristics of the species, a change in DNA alone cannot give rise to a new species. Such a change, a mutation, can only cause individual variations (usually deleterious ones) *within* the species. Hence evolution has lost mutation through alteration of its DNA as its "mechanism of operation."

Transformist taxonomists assume that all groups belonging to one major taxonomic group such as a phylum, arose from one root: they are "monophyletic." But now this is being questioned. De Wit quoted authors who claim that the evidence points to a polyphyletic origin of taxonomically similar groups.

There is evidence, he said, that the evolution of the horse might be even as chaotic as that proposed by Osborn for the evolution of the Proboscidae. The squid family is admitted to be polyphyletic as well as many groups of the viruses, bacteria, protozoa, arthropoda, amphibia, reptilia and mammalia. Among the mammals even some orders appear to be polyphyletic.

All this made Kerkut conclude: ". . . much of the evolution of the major groups of animals has to be taken on trust. It seems at times as if our modern writers on evolution have had their views by some sort of revelation . . ."[5]

A similar predicament has befallen the theories on the origin of man. Some of the more differentiated and "human" looking fossils were more widespread and their possessors lived much earlier than those of some of the less human looking remains.

According to De Wit a much better explanation is that because of the enormous genetic variability of the human race some groups degenerated (as a result of sinful behavior such as cannibalism?) and succumbed while other groups continued to inhabit the earth.

De Wit proclaimed the transformist doctrine to be highly unscientific on all counts and therefore unacceptable. As a result, he stated, we must reorient our thinking towards our real Origin: the word of God, our Creator. And he concluded his lecture with these words:

> To those who see, it will be obvious that, on account of accumulated evidence, a Copernican turn of biological thought announces itself. It presents a radical challenge to present-day biological scholars, which is primarily of a religious nature. For this reason this compels us to renewed religious self-examination and subsequent inner reformation of our biological outlook.[6]

Articles on the Philosophy of Biology

In 1964 De Wit published two articles, the first of which was entitled: "Teilhard de Chardin, the Founder of a new Pseudo-Christian Evolutionary Mysticism."[7] De Wit demonstrated that the famous Jesuit priest (anthropologist-paleontogist) had made yet another futile attempt to marry pagan thinking to the Christian religion. And modern-day theistic evolutionary thinking as held by "reformed" Christians is just as inspired by pagan thinking as that of De Chardin.

De Wit's second article in *Philosophia Reformata*[8] was of more interest to a biologist. It contained much of what he stated in the public address which I have just reviewed, but a few additional points are important to mention. He began by saying that the biologist has always been confronted with the problem of observing verifiable evidence, and his subjective interpretation of it.

His interpretation was always guided either consciously or unconsciously by his philosophical view of the totality of the world. And this in turn was dominated by his religious position.

Modern scientists maintain that their first task is to keep science "rational and neutral." But this attempt must be "dearly paid for" in biology, said De Wit:

> The intended attitude of neutrality which aims at the preservation of religious peace of mind, at least in scientific matters, becomes sorely disturbed by the *dualistic split* between *scientific knowledge* (pertaining to discontinuity) and supra-scientific *faith* (in continuity).[9]

Torn between these two poles, the biologist must choose between *scientific evidence* which points to morphological discontinuity and his *faith* in evolution, which makes him look for morphological proof of the phylogenetic continuity in the rise of all living species.

The Christian starts from the other side. Divine revelation teaches that man is of Divine origin just as is the entire cosmos. For that reason there can be no conflict between "God's salvatory revelation in Christ Jesus and God's revelation in His creation or 'nature' because both have their root in the Divine Word itself."[10] The remarkable thing is then that his scientific findings and their interpretation never conflict with his faith. It is not evolution which produces man and his theories. God produces man and man produces his theories. Clearly the evolutionist turns reality upside-down and reverses the existing order of man and his theory-making.

De Wit proceeded to give ample quotations from leading evolutionists which prove that discontinuity is admitted by many from the scientific evidence. But still, they cling to their transformist thesis, especially concerning the evolution of man from the primates. How can this be? He quoted from noted evolutionists and then asserted that the evolutionist reasons as follows.

It is generally acknowledged that nothing is known about the origin of man. A supernatural origin of man is ruled out. In the absence of an alternative it is still *believed* that man evolved from the animal kingdom. Because of the general acceptance of this *belief*, it is held up as a scientific truth.

To make matters worse, wrote De Wit, many Christians are transformists and decry the denial of this "scientific truth" by creationists. These "theistic evolutionists" fail to recognize that *the evolutionary theory is based on faith instead of science.* And so they have the unchristian gall to accuse creationists of doing a disservice to Christianity because of their "obscurantism" or other regrettable defects in their character.

De Wit pointed to another irrational twist in modern theoretical biology. An organism dies from senile decay and now it is assumed that *phyletic units also expire from senility.* Thus evolutionists confer upon the *abstract concept* of a phylum the attributes of a living organism. They "personalize and animate" the abstract concept phylum like the Greeks "personalized

and animated" the abstract concept of beauty, called it Venus, and assigned to it the qualities of a living organism.

This type of reasoning of course represents an old form of idolatry known as *animism.*[11] It is a faith that is in direct conflict with the professed rationalistic nature of the science of modern man. Hence transformism is not only profoundly unscientific, it is self-contradictory and thus *irrational* as a philosophy, and it is borne by an apostate faith.

The question "What is man? Who is he?" cannot be answered by man himself, concluded De Wit. For a Christian biologist the answer given by the revelation from God's Word and the limits set by Him to our actual observations form the indispensible point of departure for a veritable science of man.

In a final article I hope to demonstrate how a thoroughly Christian approach to creation can lead us to a Scriptural philosophy of nature and a reformation of the sciences.

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THE CREATION OF PLANETARY MAGNETIC FIELDS

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Abstract

God could have started magnetic fields in the solar system in a very simple way: by creating the original atoms of the planets with many of their nuclear spins pointing in the same direction. The small magnetic fields of so many atomic nuclei add up to fields large enough to account for the magnetism of the planets. Within seconds after creation, ordinary physical events would convert the alignment of nuclei into a large electric current circulating within each planet, maintaining the magnetic field. The currents and fields would decay steadily over thousands of years, as Barnes has pointed out. The present magnetic field strengths of the Earth, Sun, Moon, and planets agree very well with the values produced by this theory and a 6000-year age for the solar system. The theory is consistent with all the known data and explains many facts which have puzzled evolutionists.

Introduction

The Earth's magnetic field is what makes compass needles point north. In an earlier paper[1] I showed that God could have started the Earth's field in a very simple way, by using the magnetic fields of spinning atomic nuclei (Figure 1). He could have created many of the Earth's original atomic nuclei with their spins pointing in a particular direction. The small magnetic fields of so many nuclei would add up to a field large enough to account for the Earth's magnetism.

Immediately after their creation, the atoms would begin to collide due to normal thermal motions. Within seconds these collisions would knock the nuclei out of their original alignment into a more random order. But the ordinary laws of electricity and magnetism would maintain the magnetic field by starting up a large electric current — billions of amperes — in the Earth's conductive interior. The process is shown in Figure 2.

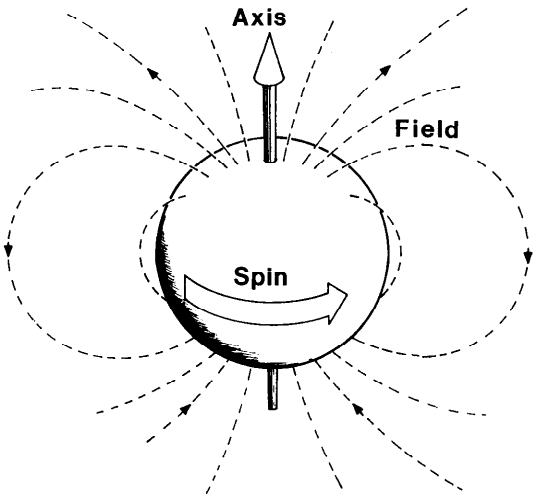

Figure 1. Magnetic field of an atomic nucleus. Atoms of many elements, such as hydrogen, have spinning nuclei. Such a nucleus has a small magnetic field, like that of a small bar magnet lined up with the spin axis.

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