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THEISTIC EVOLUTION

HENRY M. MORRIS*

Evidence is amassed to demonstrate that theistic evolutionism is objectionable from the standpoints of biblical exegesis and systematic theology. In addition, the concept of "progressive creationism" is identified and discussed. It is asserted that progressive creationism is farther out of keeping with the nature of God than is theistic evolutionism.

Two Opinions

The ancient pagan idolatry and the modern transformist philosophy are fundamentally one. This very identity is currently being stressed by many so-called "ecologists," who are saying that man should return to nature-worship, and that the Christian doctrine of man's God-given dominion over the earth has resulted in pollution and destruction of his environment.

Such a charge is of course fraudulent. It is not this Biblical doctrine, but rather man's perversion and rejection of God's truth, and man's selfish and covert denial of his stewardship that have led to these problems. It is no coincidence that the most aggressive leaders of the environmentalists who supposedly are fighting pollution tend also to be in the vanguard of the new-pagans with their revival of astrology and nature-worship and their militant commitment to social evolution and communism. Fundamentally they are fighting God.

In such a situation as this, it is discouraging to see such a large segment of the professing Christian church unconcerned and ignorant of the true nature of this conflict. Far too often, such apathy has led to dangerous compromises. Unwillingness to face the consequences involved in a clear stand for God leads inevitably to retreat and eventually to capitulation to His enemies. The widespread tendency among even

conservative Christians to adopt some form of theistic evolution as their cosmology is highly dishonoring to God and eventually self-destructive.

A close parallel with this situation existed long ago among God's chosen people, when the pagan Canaanite religion, with its worship of the host of heaven and Baal, the sun-god, was being mixed in with the worship of Jehovah, the true God. This compromising situation came to its climax on Mount Carmel, when Elijah, standing alone against the assembled prophets of Baal, cried out to the people of Israel: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if Jehovah be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18-21)

It is no exaggeration or mere figure-of-speech to suggest that the evolutionary philosophy today is, in all essentials, a revival of Baal-worship. There is no way in which a real and lasting peace can be worked out between evolution and special creation, between Baal and Christ, between Satan and God. Theistic evolution, though a very popular concept, is really nothing but a contradiction in terms and a deadly compromise.

The Biblical Doctrine of Special Creation

According to Scripture all things were specially created by God in six days. Leaving until later the question as to the exact length or nature of these days of creation, is it possible that God's method of "creation" might really have been what the modern evolutionist means by "evolution"? A popular cliché among neo-evangelicals is to the

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effect that God has revealed to us the *fact* of creation, leaving to scientists to work out the *method* of creation. This, of course, is merely a devious way of saying we should accept the fact of evolution and then hope that the scientists will allow us to believe that God is the one controlling the process.

There are various forms of theistic evolution and different terms that have been used. These include "orthogenesis" (goal-directed evolution), "nomogenesis" (evolution according to fixed law), "emergent evolution," "creative evolution," and others. None of these concepts is accepted among the leaders of evolutionary thought and there is thus no need to discuss any of them here, especially since none of them accept the Bible or the God of the Bible, anyhow. The evolutionary scheme which is least objectionable is, of course, simply the idea that Jehovah used the method of evolution to accomplish His purpose in creation, as described in Genesis. This theory might be called Biblical evolution.

Any sound approach to Bible exegesis, however, precludes this interpretation. The Scriptures are very clear in their teaching that God created all things in the way He wanted them, each with its own structure and functions according to His own sovereign purpose for it. The account of creation in Genesis One, for example, indicates that at least 10 major categories of organic life were specially created "after his kind." These categories are, in the plant kingdom: (1) grass; (2) herbs; (3) fruit trees. In the animal kingdom the specific categories mentioned are: (1) sea-monsters; (2) other marine animals; (3) birds; (4) beasts of the earth; (5) cattle; (6) crawling animals. Finally the man "kind" was created as another separate category entirely. The phrase "after his kind" occurs ten times in this chapter.

Even though there may be uncertainty as to what is meant by "kind" (Hebrew *min*), it is obvious that the word does have a definite and fixed meaning. One "kind" could not transform itself into another "kind." There is certainly no thought here of an evolutionary continuity of all forms of life, but rather one of definite and distinct categories.

Furthermore, the sense of the passage is that a great host of different kinds were created in each of the nine major groups (excluding man) that are specifically listed. There is certainly room for variation within the kind, as is obvious from the fact that all the different races and nations of men, with all their wide variety of physical characteristics, are descended from the first man and are therefore all included within the human "kind." The same, must be true for the other kinds, so that many different varieties can emerge within the basic framework of each

kind, but at the same time such variation can never extend beyond that framework.

This clear teaching of the creation chapter is accepted and confirmed in other parts of the Bible. For example, consider I Corinthians 15:38-39: "God giveth—to every seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds."

Not only is this true in the organic realm of plants and animals, but also in the inorganic realm. "There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another." (I Corinthians 15:40) That is, the earth is quite different from the stars and planets (as has been abundantly confirmed in this age of space exploration), and thus must have been the object of a distinct creative act by God. It was, in fact, created by God, on the first day (Genesis 1:1-5), whereas the heavenly bodies were not made until the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19).

Furthermore even the stars (and this term in the Bible includes all celestial objects except the sun and moon), were all created with their own particular structures. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." (I Corinthians 15:41) The tremendous variety of heavenly bodies revealed by modern astronomy—planets, comets, meteors, white dwarfs, red giants, variable stars, star clusters, binary stars, dark nebulae, interstellar dust, radio stars, quasars, neutron stars, etc.—confirms this statement also.

No two stars, out of the innumerable host of heaven, are exactly alike. Each was created with its own structure and purpose (though these matters now are beyond our present knowledge, perhaps awaiting exploration and utilization in the eternal ages to come). Although there are various theories to explain how the various "species" of stars and galaxies may have evolved from one into another, there is obviously no observational evidence of such evolution.

Perhaps the most striking Biblical statement of the absolute uniqueness of each of the foregoing created entities is found in the next passage, I Corinthians 15:42-44, "So also is the resurrection of the dead—There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

That is, the radical difference in kind between man's natural body and his glorified resurrection body (and obviously the one does not by natural processes evolve into the other!) is taken as analagous to the unbridgeable gaps between the created kinds of things in the present universe.

There are numerous other passages in the Bible which clearly prove special creation, but those discussed above should be adequate to demon-

strate that so-called "Biblical evolution" is a semantic confusion, about like "inorganic metabolism" or "theistic atheism." The Bible simply does not permit evolution in its hermeneutical system.

The Contradiction of Theistic Evolution

There are many people, of course, who believe in God without any strong commitment to the Bible as His Word. Therefore, the fact that the plain sense of the Bible cannot be harmonized with evolution is of no particular concern to them since they only accept the inspiration of Scripture in a very loose and generalized way, if at all. They might consider the Bible to be a valuable book in terms of religious insights and ethical values, but not in matters of science and history.

However, even apart from Scripture, there are a number of serious contradictions in theistic evolution, assuming that the God who supposedly created things by this imagined process is really a personal, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, gracious, loving, purposive God. Most theistic evolutionists (we are not now considering pantheistic evolution, of course) would probably agree with such a concept of God, and of course this is also the type of God who is revealed in the Bible. But if God is like this, it seems completely incongruous that He would use evolution as His method of creation, for the following reasons:

1) Evolution is inconsistent with God's omnipotence; since He has all power, He is capable of creating the universe in an instant, rather than having to stretch it out over aeons of time.

2) Evolution is inconsistent with God's pre-existence from eternity. If slow evolutionary processes were to be the method, why didn't He stretch them out over eternal ages rather than starting them in operation only five billion years ago?

3) Evolution is inconsistent with God's personality. If man in His own image was the goal of the evolutionary process, surely He should not have waited until the very tag-end of geologic time before creating personalities. No personal fellowship was possible with the rocks and seas, or even with the dinosaurs and gliptodons.

4) Evolution is inconsistent with God's omniscience. The history of evolution, as interpreted by evolutionary geologists from the fossil record, is filled with extinctions, misfits, evolutionary cul-de-sacs, and other like evidences of very poor planning. The very essence of evolution, in fact, is random mutation, not scientific progress.

5) Evolution is inconsistent with God's nature of love. The supposed fact of evolution is best evidenced by the fossils, which eloquently speak

of a harsh world, filled with storm and upheaval, disease and famine, struggle for existence and violent death. The accepted mechanism for inducing evolution is overpopulation and a natural selection through extermination of the weak and unfit. A loving God would surely have been more considerate of his creatures than this.

6) Evolution is inconsistent with God's purposiveness. If God's purpose was the creation and redemption of man, as theistic evolutionists presumably believe, it seems incomprehensible that He would waste billions of years in aimless evolutionary meandering before getting to the point. What semblance of purpose could there have been in the hundred-million-year reign and eventual extinction of the dinosaurs, for example?

7) Evolution is inconsistent with the grace of God. Evolution with its theology of struggle for survival in the physical world, fits perfectly with the humanistic theory of works for salvation in the spiritual world. The Christian concept of the grace of God, providing life and salvation in response to faith alone, on the basis of the willing sacrifice of Himself for the unfit and unworthy, is diametrically opposite to the evolutionary concept.

Progressive Creation

A large group of evangelicals, sensitive to the traditional opposition to evolution in their own constituencies, have tried to circumvent this opposition while at the same time embracing the essential framework of the evolutionary system through what they have called "progressive creation." A similar concept is so-called "threshold evolution." Other labels have been suggested for the same general concept, but all of them are nothing but semantic variants of the fundamental system of theistic evolution.

The idea in the progressive creation approach is to suppose that, while life was generally developing over the vast span of geologic time in essentially the way evolutionists have imagined it, there were various occasions at which God intervened to create something new, which the evolutionary process could not accomplish unaided.

For example, God presumably stepped in, early in the Tertiary period, to create *Eohippus*, the small three-toed "dawn horse." He then withdrew to let subsequent horse evolution continue through the stages of *Mesohippus*, *Parahippus*, etc., until finally they developed into the modern *Equus*. Similarly, a long succession of humanoid forms developed from their unknown ape-like ancestor until, at the right moment, God intervened and placed an eternal soul in one of them by special creative power.

Details vary considerably in the exposition of the progressive creation concept by various writers, with greater or lesser numbers of creative acts interspersed in the evolutionary process according to the taste of the writer. However, all accept the basic framework of the evolutionary geologic ages and thus must visualize progressive creation as taking place over five billion years instead of six days.

It is difficult to see any Biblical or theological advantage the progressive creation idea has over a straightforward system of theistic evolution. Exactly the same seven problems as outlined in the preceding section still apply, whether the process is called theistic evolution or progressive creation.

In fact, theistic evolution is more reasonable and God-honoring than progressive creation, if one were forced to choose between the two. It involves one consistent process, always the same,

established by God at the beginning and maintained continually thereafter.

Progressive creation, on the other hand, implies that God's creative forethought was not adequate for the entire evolutionary process at the beginning, and therefore it was necessary that He frequently interfere in the process, setting it back in the right direction and providing enough creative energy to keep it going a while longer until He could get back later for another "shot-in-the-evolutionary-arm."

Theistic evolution is creation by continuous evolutionary processes initiated by God. Progressive creation is creation by discontinuous evolutionary processes initiated by God, but having to be shored up by sporadic injections of non-evolutionary processes. Of the two, theistic evolution is less inconsistent with God's character. However, progressive creation may seem less offensive to college boards of trustees, contributing alumni, and supporting churches.

COMMENTS ON SCIENTIFIC NEWS AND VIEWS

HAROLD ARMSTRONG*

Meteoritic Hydrocarbons

Some scientists claim that identification of organic compounds in certain meteorites lately is evidence of life elsewhere than on the Earth. It is hard to see the reasoning in this; we have believed for a long time that such organic compounds as methane and ammonia were present on the giant planets, and nobody supposed that those compounds were either the remains of life or on their way to becoming alive.

The aromatic hydrocarbons from a meteorite have been analysed, by gas chromatography and mass spectrometry. The results show that the compounds found in the meteorite are "... similar to the pyrolysis of methane ... the aromatic compounds in this meteorite may be the product of an essentially thermal, high-temperature synthesis."¹

It is plain to see, then, that the hydrocarbons likely have nothing to do with life. Maybe they were produced by pyrolysis of methane. Suppose, for instance, that a meteorite happened to pass through some of the atmosphere of Jupiter, and escaped. What better opportunity for pyrolysis of methane could there be than on a meteorite, heated to incandescence as it passed through an atmosphere rich in methane? If such encounters have happened, the meteorites might

tell us something about them; and that is certainly more than they will tell us about the origin of life.

Incidentally, it has been suggested that frozen ammonia, as well as iron and stone, may go to make up many meteorites. If that is so, might the pyrolysis have happened when the meteorite entered the Earth's atmosphere?

Hybrid Inviability

There still appear, in the newspapers and elsewhere from time to time, reports of unlikely crosses between different kinds of animal. Of course, such reports, when investigated, turn out to be either hoaxes or mistakes.

Sheep and goats, for instance, are not such different animals, but they can not cross. Some studies at the Field Station of the Royal Veterinary College, Potters Bar, North London, England, shows that a male goat cannot fertilize a sheep at all.² A ram can fertilize a female goat; but after six weeks of (apparently) normal development the fetus dies, "showing the classical signs of rejection."

Thus there are two kinds of defense, so to speak, against mixing the kinds of animal: they may simply not be fertile, or the fetus, if one starts, may be rejected. It is easy to see that crossing cannot have played any part in the origin of the different kinds.

Is there not another point here? Apparently the theory of macro-mutation, that "a reptile laid

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