

Some Thoughts: Evolution

I belong to an endangered species. Why? I don't believe in the theory of evolution. Scientists claim that from Darwin's day to the present nothing can shake the conclusions drawn by Darwin. Not a single fact contradicts the view that living beings have evolved from simple forms. Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the American Museum of Natural History and Research Professor of Zoology at Columbia University, said in reply to William Jennings Bryan's opposition to evolution, "No living naturalist, however, so far as I know, differs as to the immutable truth of evolution in the sense of the continuous fitness of plants and animals to their environment and the ascent of all the extinct and existing forms of life, including man, from an original and single cellular state." ¹ Julian Huxley wrote, "Evolutionary truth frees us from subservient fear of the unknown and supernatural."²

Even many theologians have accepted it as factual and not as a working hypothesis. The famed Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Professor at Union Theological Seminary and later minister at the Riverside Church in New York, wrote, "Today, the evolutionary hypothesis, after many years of pitiless attack and searching investigation, is, as a whole, the most adequate explanation of the facts with regard to the origin of species that we have yet attained, and it was never so solidly grounded as it is today." ³ Rev. James Maurice Wilson, Canon of Worcester, England, remarked: "I and my contemporaries became convinced that evolution was a fact." ⁴ He even suggested that evolution is perhaps a further revelation of "Truth given by God through man, when the time was ripe, as to the nature of His Being and Presence in the world, a fresh glimpse of reality, a fresh light on life." ⁵

Evolution is presented as scientific truth in elementary and secondary public schools without any reference to the difficulties and objections raised by some prominent scholars. Articles and essays on the origin of man in popular magazines such as *Reader's Digest* and *Time* magazine also illustrate this. The evolutionary theory has triumphed both in communist and in non-communist nations. But acceptance of this theory lies more in the desire to believe in the evolutionary process than in the weight of available evidence.

It must be strongly stated that materialistic evolution is a theory and not a fact. It has many unanswered questions and has come under heavy fire. Evolution is a theory and not a discovery of a truth. When you read evolutionary literature you conclude with a sigh -- there are as many theories as authors. Even Darwinism still has its adherents. Huxley wrote in his widely read book, *Evolution, The Modern Synthesis*, "The death of Darwinism has been proclaimed not only from the pulpit, but from the biological laboratory; but as in the case of Mark Twain, the reports seem to have been greatly exaggerated, since today Darwinism is very much alive." ⁶

The ingenuity to invent new theories to interpret what happened supposedly millions of years ago is fantastic. Vivid imagination plays a vital role. The Italian biologist, Dr. Luigi

Ammendola, is convinced that man does not come from the apes, but descends from bears. Bears, like people, hunt for food in groups, and when they want to have sexual relations to ensure reproduction, they send their children away. Apes don't have a sense of shame. ⁷ You may call this nonsense, but we cannot deny that this new hypothesis illustrates the problems which the theory of evolution has to confront.

What happened to the theory of evolution? It is no longer a working hypothesis. It has been elevated to the rank of a world and life view, a religion. It has become the key which unlocks the secrets of the origin and existence of all things. Its followers have returned to primitive natural religions which deified the powers of nature and worshipped them. Julian Huxley, in an article called "*Godless Religion*" says that man must face the world without God. Man has now become responsible for his own future evolution on this planet. We are exhorted to face our newly-found freedom of the supernatural, and with courage tempered with wisdom, "and hope tempered with knowledge" we must work for our future. Our increased knowledge should define man's "sense of right and wrong more clearly so as to provide better moral support and to focus the feeling of sacredness on fitter objects. Instead of worshipping supernatural rulers, it will sanctify the higher manifestations of human nature, in art and love in intellectual comprehension and aspiring adoration, and will emphasize the fuller realization of life's possibilities as a sacred trust. " ⁸

Dr. Georges Crespy, Professor of the Faculte libre de Theologie Protestante at the University of Montpellier, France, probably the leading Protestant interpreter of Teilhard de Chardin in France, calls the theory of evolution a matter of mentality, an attitude of the mind. ⁹ For Teilhard de Chardin, evolutionism was more than a theory. It is the foundation of all theories. Evolution has radically changed the very way we look at the world and our understanding of the world. ¹⁰

Is science neutral? We hear from various quarters that science must never start from preconceived ideas, but must impartially and strictly build its case upon naked facts. Are facts "naked?" No, all observed reality is immediately interpreted. A scientist looks at facts through his own world and life view. A man's presuppositions determine how he handles his scientific data. Dr. H. Bavinck observed, . . . science must never lose sight of the fact that it is dealing in it with an hypothesis and not, as Haeckel supposes, with a 'firmly established fact,' " ¹¹

Science is a human activity and cannot be carried out without faith. Science is not autonomous. Prof. Dr. H. van Riessen remarks that, "The idea of the autonomy of science is actually founded on a faith and therefore contradictory. When the great Kant says at the outset of his critical philosophy that he wants to take nothing but pure reason as his point of departure, he begins with a dogma that also is improbable on all counts." ¹²

Faith as a trust in that which cannot be proved is constantly present in all scientific research. The scientist must start with a basic, working hypothesis, otherwise he cannot do anything. When we speak of faith as the basis of scientific work, we must not

think of "saving faith" or "faith in God." Faith in our discussion is defined as "that formal function of the life of our soul which is fundamental to every fact in our human consciousness. " 13

Science cannot be a neutral endeavor. As a man believes, so he is and works. Dr. Abraham Kuyper rightly observed that, "Creation has made room for Evolution, and with surprising rapidity vast multitudes have made this transition from creation to evolution, because in fact, they never assimilated the world of thoughts which this word Creation embraced. " 14 Science can never be free from the influence of the subjective. This is just inconceivable. To be for or against evolution has become not a matter of accepting or rejecting observed data. It is a faith decision.

The origin of the world cannot be known through science. As soon as science deals with origins, it goes beyond its boundaries and enters the area of philosophy. History is the object of scientific research, but not what is pre-history. You either start with the assumption that God is the Creator and the author of history or else with the assumption that there is no God and that the origin and the course of the world have to be explained without Him. 15

As Christians we affirm that we do not know about creation except through the Scriptures. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." 16 A Christian scientist has his faith not in autonomous reason, but in the God of the Scriptures. He must start from the presupposition that the Bible is God's Word. When the Bible comes in contact with science, she sheds her light on it. The Bible lets her light shine over mankind, angels, animals, plants, over all that has been created. The Bible does not stop being God's Word as soon as a man is engaged in scientific research. When you believe God to be the Creator of heaven and earth and the Scriptures as His revelation, you cannot doubt the order of nature, and you will accept your work as a scientist as a God-given task. You carry out the cultural mandate, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." 17

As a Christian I believe in the God who made heaven and earth and I accept His revelation as true. Through this faith I interpret all reality. Science and faith have never contradicted each other. Faith is always involved in science. The question is: which faith? I have chosen to structure my world and life-view on the foundation of Scripture. As a consequence, I must refute evolution as a working hypothesis and an explanatory principle.

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