SURRENDER TO EVOLUTION: INEVITABLE OR INEXCUSABLE?

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1. Is Evolution "Proved Fact" and Therefore Unchallengeable?

It is certain that the popular impression is fostered by constant repeated assertions in the press and in academic circles. Many who repeat such assertions do not have intelligently held convictions based upon consideration of evidence, but are merely uncritically repeating cliché. Where the statement that evolution is "proved fact" is made by informed scientists, it will too often be found upon investigation that their "proof" does not exist in verifiable scientific evidence, but rather in an a priori philosophic bias in favor of naturalism—they regard evolution as "proved" because no other natural explanation of the facts is available.

The question is complicated because of the prevalent failure to define terms with precision. "Evolution" is used with more than one meaning, and so are the terms "proof" and "proved." If by evolution is meant any kind or degree of progressive genetic change such as that of the common domestic fowl or chicken from the wild jungle fowl of southern Asia (Gallus Bankiva), weighing a pound or so, to modern breeds of chickens weighing in some cases up to ten or fourteen pounds, then certainly evolution, in that limited sense, may properly be called proved fact. An example in the plant kingdom would be maize or Indian corn, which has certainly increased in size and weight tremendously from its earliest known form. If we want to call this evolution, then in this limited sense we may say that evolution is proved fact. But if what is meant by saying that evolution is "proved fact" is that science has proved that all life has developed from simpler, more primitive forms and ultimately from primal cells, then evolution certainly is not "proved fact." Again, if by "proved" is meant demonstrated by experimentally verifiable observation, then some very limited genetic change which some people call "evolution" may be admitted to be "proved fact." But if the meaning intended is that something is proved to have occurred because any alternative explanation is philosophically unacceptable, then we will have to say that this is not really scientific proof at all, but only a corollary of philosophic faith or dogmatism.

There is further complication by reason of the inability of the scientific world to agree upon a satisfactory definition of the term species. Darwin's epoch making book was entitled The Origin of Species, and classic evolutionary thought has set forth the idea that new species of living things have been produced by the evolutionary process. But for this statement to be meaningful, it is necessary to have a firm definition of species. This, unfortunately, does not exist. The father of biological taxonomy was Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), a Swedish botanist. In his time the modern science of genetics was completely unknown. Linnaeus and his followers classified animals largely on the basis of morphology, especially the structure of the skeleton, and plants largely on the basis of the structure of the seed-producing organs of the plant. It is known today that neither of these criteria is truly adequate, and there are better criteria for biological taxonomy known today, especially inter-fertility and sterility. The compatibility of the germ plasma is a true test of relationship between.

It is generally admitted by biologists today that there is need for a thorough revision of classic taxonomy on the basis of modern knowledge of genetics. But this has not yet been done, and the dispute about the proper connotations of the term species continues. Biologists who are inclined to regard many somewhat differing forms of life as merely varieties of the same species are called "splitters." But both are, more or less subjective in their judgment, because there is no truly objective criterion of what constitutes a species. Is species a term designating an objective reality in nature, like the terms mineral, vegetable, animal, or is it merely a subjective convenience of the scientist, like the terms inches, feet, miles? This is something like the controversy about Realism and Nominalism among the medieval schoolmen. Two types of definition of species are given. One type is purely formal, as for example, "A species is a unit in biological classification, below a genus and above a sub-species." This is like saying "A quart is a unit of liquid measure smaller than a
galls and greater than a pint.” If species is to be defined like this, the question of whether evolution has produced new species is a purely academic and indeed an unreal one. Abraham Lincoln once asked some men who came to him with a specious argument, “If you call a dog’s tail a leg, how many legs does the dog have?” “Five,” they replied, but Lincoln said, “No, only four. Calling a tail a leg does not make it one.” Calling something a species means nothing unless there is a positive content in the term species. The other type of definition attempts to be substantive, but here they immediately run into difficulties. Some say, in substance, that a species is a group of individuals resembling each other to a degree regarded as specific. Other definitions attempt to be more objective but there is no general agreement. Dr. John Kiiza in his book Genesis, Genesis and Evolution devotes some 40 pages to a discussion of the problem of the defining of the term species. He says that there are probably as many definitions of the term species as there are competent systematists. It is the production, in nature or under human manipulation, of what are called new species that has led many people to concede that evolution is “proved fact.” But in view of the lack of unanimity as to what constitutes a species, this is really a question-begging situation. The African Violet is one of America’s most popular house plants. It was discovered about 75 years ago in what was then German East Africa—now Tanzania. About twenty wild forms of this plant have been discovered in that part of the world. These differ somewhat in size, growth habit, color of leaves, size and shape of seed pod, and some other characteristics. On the other hand, there is an unmistakable resemblance between them all which is obviously more basic than the differences. Botanists have classified the African Violet as a genus, called Sinningia, and the twenty to so wild forms as all classified as species. There have been produced in 75 years over 3000 cultivars or cultivated varieties from the wild species. The wild species are freely inter-fertile. It is so easy to cross one wild species of Sinningia with another that it is done all the time by amateur hybridizers who have a few plants on a window shelf in their home. Now, as evolutionary would claim that the existence of twenty distinct species of African Violets is evidence of evolution. A hypothetical wild original type has developed into twenty distinct species. But is this really evolution? Or is it merely segregating out the various genetic possibilities which were latent in the original wild form? The differences between the species of African Violets are inherited as dominant or recessive, according to Mendel’s laws. I see no necessary reason to hold that God created twenty different varieties of African Violets; it seems to me perfectly legitimate to suppose that these are all descended from a single wild form. If this is to be called “evolution,” then I am an evolutionist and evolution in this strictly limited sense may properly be spoken of as “proved fact.” The confusion about terminology and what constitutes proof is the fault of the scientists and especially of popular writers on science. If Christians have sometimes gone too far in opposing solemnly everything that can possibly be called “evolution” by anyone, the blame for this lies with the scientist and the popularizers of science—men like Haldane, Julian Huxley and H. G. Wells—to whom evolu- tion was virtually a religion, a faith to be promoted, a magic word to explain everything, a key to a comprehen- sive philosophy of life, man and the universe. This is the popular “image” of evolution, and it is scientists and their publicizers that are responsible for it. If religious believers have sometimes attacked evolution somewhat indiscriminately and even ignorantly, they should not be too hastily censured for this, for after all evolution has been publicized and promoted as the master principle which unlocks the mysteries of everything. Since evolution has been regarded as a gospel by many of its most vocal advocates, it is no wonder that believers in the true Gospel of Jesus Christ have opposed it as a manifestation of anti-Christian unbelief. When they are asked to give a home to what is said to be a harmless kitten, they very naturally react in fear that the animal may turn out after all to be a poten- 

tially dangerous tiger cub.

The kind of genetic change for which real scientific proof exists is not damaging to the Christian faith, nor really contrary to sound exegesis of the Scriptures. It is not, however, this very strictly limited kind of genetic change that is commonly meant when scientists, educators and the general public speak of evolution as “proved fact.” What they mean is evolution in the broad sense, what Kelpius calls a “general theory of evolution” which is held to be a comprehensive principle explaining the origin and development of all living things, from Viruses and Bacteria to sequoia trees and mankind. All are held to have develop- ed naturally from a single source, which itself came by spontaneous generation from inorganic matter. For this grandiose scheme, as Kelpius points out, there is not suffi- cient evidence to regard it as anything more than a work- ing hypothesis (Implications of Evolution, N. Y., 1960, p. 157).
upon the validity of the assumptions. Since they cannot be tested by experiment, they are not fact. As a result, the theory of evolution rests on unproved assumptions. The seven basic assumptions on which the general theory of evolution rests are listed by Kerkut on page 6 of his book "Implications of Evolution." These assumptions are:

1. The first assumption is that nothing new was created in the material world, i.e., spontaneous generation occurred.
2. The second assumption is that spontaneous generation occurred only once.
3. The third assumption is that men, bacteria, plants and animals are all related.
4. The fourth assumption is that the Protozoa gave rise to the Metazoa.
5. The fifth assumption is that the various invertebrate phyla are interrelated.
6. The sixth assumption is that the invertebrates gave rise to the vertebrates.
7. The seventh assumption is that within the vertebrates the fish gave rise to the amphibians, the amphibians to the reptiles, and the reptiles to the birds and mammals. It is understood in other words, i.e., that the modern amphibian and reptile had a common ancestral stock, and so on.

In the nature of the case these assumptions are not experimentally verifiable. Therefore the general theory of evolution is not fact but faith, and how reasonable a faith depends upon the validity of the assumptions. Since they cannot be tested by experiment, their validity can only be decided in terms of an a priori philosophic position. The scientist who holds the general theory of evolution accepts these seven assumptions because of his a priori commitment to the philosophy of naturalism, which involves maintaining that the origin of nature can be discovered by studying the functioning of nature. The Christian believer who studies science will reject these assumptions because of his a priori commitment to the Biblical worldview of supernaturalism.

Thus it appears that evolutionism, as commonly understood, is a philosophic faith which arises, ultimately, from a bias in favor of naturalism and against supernaturalism. In the language of the apostle Paul, "And even as they did not like to retain the truth of God in their knowledge, God gave them even a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

At least one of these seven assumptions is held by evolutionists, not only in the chance of experimental verification, but actually in the face of experimental verification of the opposite. This is the assumption of spontaneous generation.

The beginning of the evolutionary process raises a question which is of great importance in science itself. What was the origin of life on this planet? Small facts remain that there was a plenty of raw material in the universe of "spontaneous generation." It was supposed that body forms of life developed spontaneously here, for example, by the process of natural selection. The first assumption, namely that spontaneous generation occurred only once, is the assumption of spontaneous generation. But since it is a conclusion that there is no such act as spontaneous generation, it is a conclusion that science has had very little difficulty of acceptance. It came with a lot of repute to the present mental climate, understandable experimental implications, and it is opposed to the scientific climate by continuity. It introduces an uncontrollable break in the scientific continuity, and therefore cannot be admitted as part of science unless it is quite impossible to reject it. For the simple reason that nature does not permit that life forms, in some way not yet understood, from inorganic matter, in accordance with the laws of physics and chemistry" (J. W. N. Sullivan, "Evolution of Science," N. Y. repub., 1928, p. 64).

A scientist with a Ph.D. degree in biology told me that the odds against this happening by chance are comparable to the odds involved if a dynamite bomb were to explode in a modern newspaper plant, scattering printer's type all over the city, and it would be found that by sheer chance the type had just happened to form the exact order of all the letters in all the pages of the 24-volume Encyclopedia Britannica. This is the length some people will go to in order to avoid believing in direct creation by God.
It is often stated that science will soon create life in the laboratory from non-living matter. This has not been done, and until it is done, it is not science — it is a scientist’s dream, not scientific fact. Even if done in a laboratory, this still would not prove that life originated in this way. The cases are not parallel — life originating on earth in some primordial pond or ooze, spontaneously, is one thing, and life originating in a multi-million dollar laboratory as a result of the thinking and manipulation of a scientist is something else again. In the one case chance would be at work, in the other case mind would be at work. We may recall here the wise statement of Ahab king of Israel to Benhadad king of Syria: “Let not him that putteth it off call himself as he that putteth it on” (I Kings 20:13).

III. The General Theory of Evolution Proceeds from a False Philosophy of Science

Science has accomplished so much and its achievements are so truly impressive that some people have become drunk on the wine of science. When we think of the discovery of penicillin and the vaccines to prevent polio, the development of space travel and the moonlanding, the tapping of oil fields in some primeval pond or ooze, spontaneously, in opposition to science, but belongs to some other sphere — philosophy, theology, or perhaps even imagination and fantasy. Only one side of the moon is observable from this earth. Science can deal with this side of the moon, and properly. Until recently, however, the other side of the moon was unknown. Consequently, there were no really valid scientific statements about the other side of the moon. What might be said about the other side of the moon was specula-tion, having perhaps some degree of possibility, but being inherently incapable of scientific proof. More recently, the Russians claim to have photographed the other side of the moon. To the extent that this has been effectively accomplished, the other side of the moon has been brought into the sphere of phenomena where the scientific method is truly applicable.

When scientists make positive statements about matters outside the sphere of phenomena, they are speaking either as laymen, or as philosophers — they are not speaking as scientists. Because of the tremendous prestige enjoyed by scientists in our day, they have often come to have a public “image” of quasi-omniscience, which has led the uncritical public to accept as “proved scientific fact” some things which after all are only opinions or speculations. We must insist on this point — the scientist who makes statements where the scientific method of observation, hypothesis and experimental verification is not applicable, is not making scientific statements and has no right to demand acceptance of his statements as “scientific fact.”

The whole problem area of origins is outside the field of phenomena. This includes the origin of the physical universe, the origin of life and the origin of mankind. None of these are phenomena that have been observed, and in the nature of the case some of them can be observed or tested by experiment. Therefore the scientist or the popular writer on science who issues pronouncements in these fields is out of bounds. These were not scientists trained to observe and record what happened when the physical universe came into being, nor when life originated, nor when mankind first appeared on this planet. The question which the Lord, speaking from the whirlwind, addressed to Job is still relevant today: “Where wast the foundations of the earth?” (Job 38:4).

In the whole area of origins, statements can only be based on faith. This may be the Biblical faith of the Chris-tian, or it may be the philosophic faith of a scientific rational-ist like Julian Huxley, but faith it is. We have as much right to our a priori faith as they have to theirs — indeed, we have much more right, but at any rate, we have as much right as they to base our belief about origins on an unprovable assumption held by faith. Too long have Chris-tian people been afraid to challenge the confident claim of scientists to know “fact” about origins. We should get over our inferiority complex and come out boldly and insist that things be called by their right names — that philosophic faith be distinguished from scientific proof.
Not only is the whole area of origin known only by faith—the same is true of many parts of the alleged evolutionary tree. There are glaring gaps in the evidence. The important thing about all missing links is that always has been that they are missing. As long as they are missing they do not prove anything except that the evidence for a theory is weak and nonexistent. The supposed evolution at will of course reply that these missing evidences either will appear in time or the fossils were existed but have been destroyed before our time. Here again he is making statements based on an a priori faith, not on facts or observed phenomena.


According to Scripture teaching, man or his origin existed in the image of God (Gen. 1:27, Col. 3:10). The image of God is what makes man human—however we may define it as to detailed significance, at any rate the image of God is something that marks mankind off as unique in God's creation, as in some true sense similar to God and different from the animals. This image of God characterized man is the very beginning; it is not a goal to be reached by achievement, but the starting point from which human history began. This image of God certainly involved a mind, personality, character, moral uprightness. The Christian teaching is that it obtained in a rational nature, a moral nature and a spiritual nature with a capacity for religious communion with God. The first people, according to Scripture, were truly human, in mind and soul as well as in body. They were civilized and in moral uprightness, though completely antecedently.

Adam was a gentleman. Eve was a lady, and their first house was a garden, not a jungle. This whole idea of the original condition of humanity is explicitly or implicitly denied by the common form of evolutionary teaching, which holds that at his origin and for ages thereafter man was little better than a savage brute. The common type of evolutionary teaching thus contradicts the Scriptural idea that man as his origin was a being existing in the image of God. Scripture thus clearly teaches that man fell from his original moral uprightness into sin and rebellion (Rom. 5:12). Scripture represents this as a definite historical event which happened once for all at a particular time. Some Christian scholars hold that the story of the Fall of man as told in Genesis is given in symbolic terms. This is possible, but at the same time it must be remembered that Scripture represents the Fall as a definite event which really happened. It is perhaps permissible to say that the Fall was a real event which is described in symbolic language; it is not permissible to say, as many do today, that the Fall was not a real event. But this idea of manly upright man at a definite time falling into sin and evil is just the opposite of the evolutionary scheme. Evolution is the idea of age-long constant progress toward higher and better things, as Tennyson suggested in his poem In Memoriam.

"Move Upward, working out the best; And let the age and tiger dies."

Evolution has no room for the idea of progress in reverse gear so that man, from a morally perfect origin, becomes evil and anti-social. There is no room for a Fall of man as a consistent scheme of evolution than there is room for a malignant tumor in a healthy human body.

It is not without reason that Christians who accept a consistent or general theory of evolution almost invariably reject the historical character of the early chapters of Genesis, and reject the Biblical account of human origins by regarding it as mythical. The inherent incompatibility between a consistent scheme of evolution and acceptance of the Genesis account of origins as historical drives these persons relentlessly to acceptance of the mythical view.

So there appears the Barthian notion that every man is Adam and every woman is Eve, that the Fall was not a real historical event as the dawn of history, but an event regarded entirely whenever a moral decision is made and evil yielded to. So Adam comes to be regarded, not as the first man and opponent of humanity, who represents us all in the Covenant of Works, but as a symbol of man as faced with moral alternatives and prone to yield to evil.

According to Scripture teaching, a historical Adam parallels the historical Christ (Romans 5:12-21). The Bible treats both Adam and Christ as real historical individual persons; the apostle Paul in Romans 5:12-21 sets up a direct parallel and contrast between Adam and Christ. From the one came sin, from the other came redemption. This argument of Paul in Romans 5 depends absolutely for its validity on the fact that as Jesus was a historical person as Adam was a historical person. There cannot be a proper parallel between a mythical Adam and a historical Christ. Adam is as essential to the Christian system of theology as Jesus Christ is. Christ is, indeed, called in Scripture "the second Adam" or "the last Adam." Any theory which tends, as the common form of evolution holds, to set up an identity of Christ and the historical man, to deny the historical integrity of the Fall, is necessarily to deny the Scriptural integrity of the Fall of man.
to eliminate Adam as a real historical person, is destructive of Christianity. Yet this very thing is done by the common form of evolutionary theory. It has no more room for a real Adam than it has for a real fall of mankind into sin.

And if Christ is the second Adam who came to undo the harm done by the first Adam, then we must needs continue to believe in the reality of the first Adam.

V. Thietic Evolution is Unsustainable from the Standpoint of Biblical Christianity

Consistent evolution as it is commonly held by materialistic scientists is atheistic and is based on faith in change rather than in faith in God. It is held that living things originated and developed by inherent forces, without divine planning or control. There is, however, a form of evolutionary theory known as theistic evolution which includes belief in God. This form of evolutionary theory holds that evolution was God's method of creating living things. Theistic evolution is held by some scientists and by a great many religious scholars who are embarrassed by the confident claims of unbelieving scientists. If one is going to be an evolutionist, we doubt it is better to be a atheistic one than an atheistic one. But it is unimportant whether theistic evolution can be regarded as a consistent form of the evolutionary hypothesis, and whether it can really be reconciled with the divine truth of the first three chapters of Genesis.

One form of theistic evolution that seems plausible to many Christian believers holds that man's bodily organism was produced gradually by an evolutionary process of development through ages of time until something physically similar to man had appeared. All this was a natural process and the organisms were non-human or sub-human. Then at a certain point God intervened by His supernatural creative power and implanted a mind or soul in some of these evolving organisms, with the result that they came to be persons, after which they were properly regarded as humans, or human beings, men in the image of God. This way of putting the matter, it is thought, on the one hand recognizes the facts of science and on the other hand safeguards the truth of the Bible.

The difficulty with this construction is that it has to abandon evolution at the crucial point and bring in direct, supernatural creation by God to account for the existence of the human race. For it is presently-personality—the possession of a mind or soul—that makes man human and sets him apart from the lower creation. If we have to bring in supernatural creation to account for the one thing which above all else makes man human, then we have really admitted that evolution cannot explain the origin of the human race. Needless to say, man's bodily organism resembles that of the higher animals, but in the matter of personality he differs radically from them. Thus the person who holds the view we have been examining may be an evolutionist, but he is not a consistent evolutionist, for he has to believe in supernatural intervention at the most important point. Truly consistent evolution holds that man as a whole (both body and mind) was produced entirely by natural forces operating from within. It cannot admit external intervention at any point and still be thoroughly consistent in allowing evolution. The very word evolution means unfolding of what is already within something.

Theistic evolution is further shown to be unbiblical by the fact that it breaks down and destroys the distinction between creation and providence. God's work of creation is His work of originating new things—new as to form, new as to matter, or new as to both form and matter. This is spoken of in the Bible by the Hebrew word bara, a word with a very specific meaning, which occurs only 38 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, and almost always means create in the strict sense of the direct origination of something new. On the other hand, the ordinary word for make in the Old Testament is asah, which occurs over 3000 times and is translated in various ways, corresponding to the English verb to make work. The term asah can be used to describe God's providential working which operates through second causes and forces of nature, and produces changes without producing anything truly new.

Theistic evolution, however, cannot account for the unique use of the verb bara in describing God's work of creation as distinguished from His work of providence. For according to theistic evolution, a long natural process operating through second causes was God's method of creation. Because this was a natural process it would have to be identified as a part of God's work of providence—that is what providence is—a work of God which takes the form of a natural process indirectly controlled by God. Thus theistic evolution holds that God's work of creation operated by means of, and formed a part of, His work of providence. This is an unbiblical idea. If theistic evolution were true, there would be no reason for the use of the special term bara in Genesis 1 and 2. Adam would fit all the way through.

Moreover, the Bible in Genesis 1 and 2 itself marks off creation as separated from providential processes by a very
VI. Some Suggestions for a Practical Program to Resist Creeping Evolutionism

1. Get over our mental residuety. Are we so afraid of being thought ignorant, as called "Fundamentalist", or accused of being unscientific or old-fashioned, that we remain silent when we should issue a trumpet call to the Lord's people to resist this destructive evolutionary philosophy? Our opponents have no magic armor that is impervious to the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. If we must be called fools, so be it. Are we not to be willing to be called fools for Christ's sake?

2. Read and Critically Study Evolution Literature. Most "Fundamentalist" books on evolution are comparatively worthless because they betray ignorance of current scientific thought, make overstating and slanders, and beg the question at issue. We cannot restate present-day evolutionary theory by repeating the clichés of a generation ago. Slogans about "monkey business" will not get us anywhere. We cannot guard our youth by copy jokes and wisecracks. The remedy for ignorance and science-faddism so-called is not resort to anti-intellectualism, but rather to seek more and better knowledge.

3. Criticize Evolutionary Theory where it is not godly. Attack the basic assumptions on which the whole structure rests. It may not always be wise for us as religious scholars to cross swords with biologists and anthropologists about the details of the alleged evidences for evolution. There is always the likelihood that what we have to say will be bracketed with the comment that we are laymen and cannot dispute with the experts. This may not always be a fair charge, but it is not an easy one to rebut. And after all, it is more effective to blast out the philosophical foundations on which the whole imposing structure has been erected, than it is to take pot-shots at details of the architecture in the superstructure.

Where we are strongest and cannot be called amateurs is in our criticism of the philosophical assumptions of evolution and in the field of Biblical exegesis. Therefore we can insist with confidence on the following four points, and I suggest that we ought to do it with force, emphasis and continual repetition:

(a) That a general theory of evolution rests upon erroneous assumptions which have not been proved by evidence and which in the nature of the case cannot be proved. It is therefore a dogmatic faith held on philosophical grounds, and is not to be considered "proved fact."

(b) That the whole problem of origin—-the origin of the universe, of life and of man—lies outside the scope of phenomenal and is therefore not accessible to the scientific method. We can insist, therefore, that pronouncements about origins by scientists are not "scientific facts" but opinions of probability concerning matters which the scientific method cannot really reach.

Thus, again, statements about origins are the expression, in every case, of a faith, and in no case are they statements of proved scientific fact.

(c) That the concept of theistic evolution, as held by many religious teachers of our day, does violence to the terminology and usage of Genesis 1 and 2, and therefore theistic evolution, as commonly held, is a false theory which is contrary to Scripture.

(d) That the integrity of the system of Christian truth requires absolutely that we retain belief in the deity of Adam as an individual person, created in the image of God, and in the reality of the Fall of mankind as a definite event which happened once for all at the dawn of human history.

Bibliography


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