

CREATION AND EVOLUTION

I have been giving lectures here and there, sometimes to Rotarians, on the subject of CREATION. Sometime ago I gave a talk in England, and one noble Englishman said “but of course you can’t **know** anything about creation!!” I quickly responded “That’s not true!” Seeing his returned look, I then spent the next few minutes making mollifying remarks designed to offset the image of someone from the colonies speaking to an Englishman in such a manner.

Since that time I have altered my talks from showing Hubble pictures of the far reaches of the universe by attempting to convince the average listener that it IS possible to know something about creation, and in fact there is a great deal known even if we cannot put the facts together properly. I did emphasize that mysteries associated with creation continue to grow.

The aspect of creation that I want to remark upon at the moment is the difficulty of being a Christian, and simultaneously a believer in evolution.

There are many Christians who think that if one believes in evolution there is no way he can be a “true believer”. And of course “all” non-Christians know that evolution proves that Christians are wrong absolutely, and so we are beneath contempt intellectually, though contempt is of course acceptable! To be in the middle of this, scorned by most everybody, is tough. Well, maybe it’s only moderately so.

Arguments about the lack of proof of biological evolution I find to be quite boring. The multitude of evidences for evolution of many kinds can permit one to ascribe to the theory by faith. Once believed, one may never want to give away the awesome beauty, wondrous complexity nor exploding potential of an evolving universe for a universe that was created fixed in time. Now, why God would choose THAT way to accomplish His purpose I have not a clue other than the clues of beauty, complexity, and potential. But is there another way imaginable that God might have chosen that would surpass the majesty of what we observe? Perhaps, and it is fun to ponder, but I certainly have not heard about it as yet!

But why should anyone believe that God had anything to do with evolution, or

even creation?! Once again, my beliefs are derived from faith, based upon what I see as evidences for God's involvement. What are these evidences?

Firstly, if one considers the constants of nature, they make a package that requires a precise value of each one to assure that life exists. Change any one of them, and the values of the others will be changed; prospects for life with new values for the constants seem to vanish. What is more, as time passes and more is learned, the bounds on values allowing life to exist seem to grow tighter and tighter. Perhaps it is possible that as our understanding grows even I will be able to see that everything could happen by chance, but at our present state of knowledge, pure chance seems to have an ever smaller probability of being the explanation. EVERYTHING fits into an incredibly magnificent scheme--a design that shouts purpose and planning--that the expectation that Christianity supplies to creation's evolution seems to be an extraordinarily believable and vital ingredient. One doesn't want one without the other.

From a scientific point of view, a miracle is something that one will never be lucky enough to see. Indeed, I have used this "principle" to judge events associated with nuclear tests of US operational weapons tests. If you see an event occur, the probability of which is calculated to be about one in a thousand million or so, then it is clear that your understanding of the system under analysis is flawed. The true probability of the event was much higher; else you would never have seen it. This has been demonstrated to be so, time and again.

So it is with the existence of life on earth. First of all, I currently do not accept that there has been enough time since the creation of the earth, 4.5 billion years, for everything observed to have happened by chance. My arguments for this belief are scientific ones, can be found in the literature, and I will not repeat them here. But even if it should turn out that there has been enough time for "chance" to explain every mutation, etc., the way everything "fits" supplies beauty that chance alone can never supply. Consider: when the human body is attacked by an absolutely new viral threat, "every" defense is marshaled and new ones are also tried to fight off that threat. Indeed, if the patient lives long enough, the body will find a way to win the battle. It will also succeed in building antibodies to ward off the same kind of threats in the future. One can see, in real time, creation at work. Also, I frequently cite a baby as the greatest miracle anyone can ever see and have even ascribed to old people that special description. The perpetuation of life, despite all, surely is no accident.

Of course there is more.

I note that every star, every atom, every galaxy, every part of creation, wherever it may be, obeys the law. However they encounter each other by chance, they obey the law. But there arose in Creation something that does NOT have to obey the law; that is the mind of man! For this to have happened by chance is truly mind boggling. Life seems to have been given the power to choose!

In the atheist's view of evolution, the roles of good and evil, love and sin make their view pretty uninteresting. Tell me about biological evolution's order *increasing* with time, simultaneously with the increase of entropy. Explain man's ability to look to the heavens, and to contemplate his and his universe's origin. Surely there is grandeur here not yet appearing in any of the quantum mechanical equations of mass and energy, time and space.

Many persons have dwelt on these matters, and much more competently than I am able to do. But when I accept evolution and God on faith, and attempt to meld them, I come up with visions that I find so exciting and satisfying that I am simply not willing to give them up.

For instance, my first conclusion is that the Universe was created solely to contain the life within it. It follows then that wherever conditions are right for life to exist, there life will be. It does not mean that life is necessarily everywhere, e.g. the vast regions of space that are hostile to life. Life is still special, but as it evolves, it carries with it the potential of converting space previously hostile to life, i.e. space unlivable, to space livable. Life can expand to fill spaces available to it. Genetic engineering--coming fast, and indeed already here--carries the promise that man has the capability to decide for himself what he will become from an evolutionary point of view.

Here then is man, in the image of God, deciding the future of evolution, and becoming responsible for parts of creation. Pure chance becoming non-"chancical"? No way. This is man playing a role given him by God, a role governed by choice, not chance. Of course we will find incredibly elegant ways to botch our evolutionary choices, but this is an argument for Christian geneticists, not an argument against genetic engineering.

When one considers the history of man, it is easy to postulate chance at every turn, and randomness filling the whole. But there is another level from which it can be viewed. For instance, notice that man is forced by crises to do his best thinking, and to invent ways around and through obstacles and troubles. There is always a frontier, at least on the technological front, that requires man to rethink current behavior and cultures. He is constantly being forced to survive, and in doing so he is constantly, if not steadily, approaching the moment when he will be able to play a significant, knowledgeable, role in his own evolution. Further, the technological changes are coming faster and faster, leaving less and less time for us to adjust. Increasing pressure is observable everywhere! I do not accept this as accident, but rather as a manifestation of God's plan to drag us kicking and screaming in a direction that He wants. It is the direction of the role of life in the universe, and a significant role is ultimately to be expected.

I recognize that this view of things is complex, challenging, and hard to share with others, Christians or atheists, evolutionists, or whatever. But it is one which gives my life purpose, with hope inherent.

To help explain how I feel, I sometimes use the analogy of the role of a person's life and the role of a calcium atom. The calcium atom in a rock plays a role in creation--useful, not particularly exciting, not especially progressive, there being many such. But the role of a calcium atom in the bone of a man--now there's a mission!

Man could be regarded as just another calcium atom in the universe, not particularly exciting, not especially progressive, there being many such. But to choose to play a more vital role, a conscious choice the calcium atom does not have, i.e. the acceleration of God's plan for life on earth, and in the universe, there is a life worth living.