

The Order in Life

by Ernest O'Neill

The creator knows us exactly, lets us do what we want, but also makes us do what he wants, and has endured the consequences of our actions to achieve his plans.

Scripture: Psalm 139:1, Proverbs 16:9, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:17

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Free Will"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the concept of God's infinite wisdom and power as the Creator of the universe, emphasizing how He knows us inside out and foresees our actions while still granting us free will. Through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, God has adjusted and modified the consequences of our actions to align with His plans for our lives, showcasing His ability to bring good out of bad situations. Despite the presence of evil in the world, God's force for good counteracts it, allowing us to freely choose our actions while He works to fulfill His original plans for us through Christ.

Transcript

Have you ever thought what it would be like to be the creator of the universe ? Obviously you and I have great difficulty imagining that because the creator must be infinitely wise and powerful to make a sun that can contain a million earths and other constellations that are millions of times the size of ours. Nevertheless, even we can tell how our trainees are likely to act when they meet certain situations we've analysed for them. Yes, they have free wills and we don't know all about their characters, but we do know some things that they've learned from us and therefore we have some idea what they'll probably do.

But how much could we foretell their behavior if we had made them ? Even if we gave them freedom to do what they wanted, we would know the possible choices and the probable decisions they would make. Now our creator must know us exactly _ since he has originated all our abilities . So if he doesn't know what we'll do, who does ? If you say `no one', then you cannot be talking about the creator who made the fine tolerances that govern our bodily health and the orbits of the planets. Such a mind doesn't (as Einstein says) make his creations by the throw of a dice !!

So if our maker is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful, he must be able to foresee how we will turn out _ the important question is whether he will still let us do what we want or whether he will make us do what he wants. If he made us inside his Son before time began and if he allowed the Roman soldiers and the mob to do what they wanted to his Son in Jerusalem, then he obviously is ready to suffer what we choose to do inside his Son. If you've followed the argument in the past 98 parts of this series, you'll remember

that Paul wrote in Ephesians 2, verse 10 that 'we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which he has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'. So not only has our maker foreseen what we will do but he lets us.

The Great Adjuster

However, the more astounding fact is that he has endured the consequences of our actions and has ameliorated and modified them so that they do not permanently destroy his plans for our lives. This eternal, cosmic death and resurrection is what was expressed in time on the hill of Calvary at the crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem in 29 a.d.. We experience this in thousands of ways here on earth and will experience it fully in the new world that will follow this one. Thus we often find bad circumstances turning out better than we had expected. Repeatedly we see good results coming out of bad situations. We ourselves have used the expression 'things turned out well after all' or 'who'd have thought it could come out like this?'

If there's a force for evil at work in the world, we certainly feel there's a force for good that is working to counter it. Although we have no doubt that evil and war are bad for our lives, we are surprised by the good things that often result. So, many Britishers would say there has never been the sense of unity and care for each other that was experienced during the Second World War. This is not because evil is good or because our maker plans evil, but because he has given us free will to destroy even his own Son, and yet is able to preserve our free will and 'work all things according to the purpose of his will'. His infinite mind is thus able to foresee what we'll do without making us do it, yet is able to counteract the consequences without making us robots. This incomprehensible theodicy which allows God to work our free wills together with his own results in our present lives.

Providence

Our lives always consist then of actions and words that are freely chosen by ourselves but are foreseen by our Maker. Moreover, he is always working to bring us around to the life that he originally planned for himself in us. He did not send us into the world to fend for ourselves as best we can; he designed us so that his Son, Christ, could fulfil certain things that he himself had planned to add to the creation. These are always fuller expressions of his own nature and personality even though they may result in bridges and roads being built, banks and shops being opened, hospitals and schools being financed. Always they express more of the wonder and beauty of his own nature and depend more on your attitudes and mine than they do on what we outwardly achieve. Again they are all dependent on his own guidance and life-power. So, inventors and geniuses like Einstein and Buckminster Fuller are more conscious than the rest of us that 'all ideas come from God' -- from somewhere beyond ourselves. Although we teach each other that civilisation is due to man, the leaders among us know that we are simply as Bismarck said 'listening for the footsteps of God'.

Similarly, the working out of our cash-flows, our relationships, our threading through busy traffic at lunch-time, and the thousand movements and calculations that we all engage in work together because of our maker's constant supervision and adjustments. What we attribute to our skill or luck is due to his hand being constantly on the tiller -- guiding and maintaining the stability of neutrons and the consistency of natural laws.

The mind that holds all of this together is Christ's. As the Son of the Creator, he holds all things together and makes everything work. He really is the great human being (the 'first-born of all creation'), and he

lives individual lives in each of us through whom he moves the whole creation forward. Our contact with him is through the innermost part of our personalities -- our spirits -- there is the spring of all our actions and the origin of our prosperous actions. The constant challenge of our lives is to live by these inner spirits rather than the flotsam and jetsam of outward circumstances and events. This is what determines whether we are part of the solution or part of the problem.

This real world behind the material world around us is one that some of us have begun to experience. We've found it and "live in it" in the practical world of work and business. Although we have to use concepts that have become cheapened and trivialized by both religious and secular organizations, yet these English words contain realities that govern our lives.

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