

Origin of Man in Relation to the Theory of Evolution

by John Murray

The sermon explores the relationship between the biblical account of creation and the theory of evolution, emphasizing the distinct roles of divine intervention and natural processes in the origin of man.

Duration: 47:17

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 33:6, Psalm 90:2, Psalm 91:3, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 11:3

Topics: "Evolution"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses three fundamental principles of Christian faith. The first principle is the belief in the word of God as the foundation of understanding. The preacher emphasizes that the visible world was created by the unseen word of God. The second principle is the recognition of the supernatural and miraculous intervention of God in our lives. While this intervention may not be continuous, it is a continuous exercise of God's will and power in maintaining reality. The third principle is the acknowledgement that natural processes and laws exist, but they do not limit or explain away the supernatural. The preacher concludes by highlighting the ultimate example of the supernatural in history, which is the incarnation of the Son of God.

Transcript

God, glory, honor, praise belongs, belong to thy great name, for the privilege that belongs to us. I'm permitted to go here to thy... O Lord our God, glory, honor, praise belongs, belong to thy great name, for the privilege that belongs to us. And that we are permitted to go here to thy throne of grace.

That we are permitted to have those directions by which we may come to the throne of grace with confidence. And that we also have the provision of access by that new and living way which has been consecrated through the blood of Christ. And that we also have the great high priest who is passed into the heavens.

Jesus, the son of God, as the mediator and intercessor of thy right hand. Glory be to thy name. And may we have increasing understanding of the marvel of thy provision in Christ Jesus.

And may we appropriate more and more the riches of thy grace and the promises for his sake. Biblically, let's have some hands on it in the theory of evolution. And how I don't think I'll wait to give you a

bibliography.

There's some extensive bibliography on the physics of evolution. But I don't think I'll wait to give you that this year. If you want one, I'll give it to you privately.

Well, in dealing with this, first of all, we have to define the concepts with which we are mainly concerned. Namely creation and evolution. The concepts.

And first of all, creation. In the script and in theological usage, creation means the absolutely originitive activity of God. The absolutely originitive activity of God.

By which he produces something which has no antecedent cause other than his will and triumph. No antecedent cause other than his will and triumph. Now this, of course, this concept is the correlate of the sole eternity of God.

Without a truly creative act answering to the foregoing definition. We have to posit the eternity of something other than God. Clearly on such passages as Genesis 1.1, Psalm 91 through 3, Psalm 33.6, John 1.1 through 3, Colossians 1.15 through 17, Hebrews 11.3. If I may pause for a minute, remind you, when you are dealing with basic doctrines, pivotal passages, covering the wide range.

Let me remind you, for example, of Psalm 90. Before the mountains were brought forth. For ever Thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Take Hebrews 11.3. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, that things which are seen were not made. The import of that is very simply by saying that phenomena do not hold that quality to phenomena. The things which are seen were not made.

There is something that is not a phenomena. Explains the origin of phenomena. Now, there is a more modified concept of creation, which may sometimes appear even in the teaching of scripture.

And in the history of theology has been called mediate creation. Lutheran and Reformed theology. And this concept of mediate creation means that creation denotes, that term denotes, not only creatio ex nihilo, but also the activity of God by which He produces something out of the unformed matter beyond the powers of nature.

That is, of course, something we have to take into account. But I'm not going to develop that concept of mediate creation. If you are interested in discovering what it really is, in the teaching of Protestant theology, you can find an article in the Westminster Theological Journal.

WPJ, Westminster Theological Journal, Volume 17, Number 1, called Calvin's Doctrine of Creation. And the whole concept is set forth there and also evaluated. But I am for the present being called in Reformed theology primary creation, as distinguished from secondary creation.

Or immediate creation, as distinguished from mediate creation. I'm not at all calling in question of propriety. But I am limiting my definition for the time being to that which has been called immediate or primary creation, is produced that has no antecedent called other than the will and pride of God.

And every biblical exegete has to take account of it. Now evolution, what is, well, minimal, minimal definition of evolution is the unfolding or development of something that already exists. The unfolding or development of something that already exists.

That is to say the development of powers resident in an existing entity or complex when provided with the favorable conditions for their development. Development of powers resident in an existing entity or complex when provided with the favorable conditions for their development. It is not necessary that this progressive change, this progressive development, may uniformly occur.

Earlier evolutionists, or not all early evolutionists, but earlier evolutionists often conceived of this development as taking place by minute infinitesimal changes over long periods of time. Infinitesimal changes over long periods of time. But that construction is not necessary to the evolutionary concept as such because many evolutionists take account of discontinuity, discontinuity of abrupt variation, of sudden mutation, so that such mutation is regarded as the very material of evolutionary process.

We have, of course, to take a very broad and inclusive view of the sum total of factors and conditions which are positive. We have to take a very broad view of the sum total of factors and conditions which are positive as the explanation of evolutionary process. The evolutionary concept very often makes large demands on time, and it can also make very large demands on space.

The main point borne in mind is that evolution, evolution itself, cannot allow for any ab-extra intrusion, that is intrusion from without, ab-extra, any ab-extra intrusion, ab-extra intrusion which is, which does not belong, an intrusion which does not belong to the sum total of factors, potentialities, and conditions positive as the cosmos of evolutionary process. Ab-extra intrusion. Well, or you want me to repeat it? Evolution as such does not allow for an ab-extra intrusion which does not belong to the sum total of factors, potentialities, and conditions positive as the cosmos, and so evolution as such could not allow for the inter-intervention of God's supernatural or super-cosmic power.

Could not allow for the intrusion of God's supernatural or super-cosmic power in order to bring to pass those genes which are evolutionary, which are evolutionary. Now, evolution however, need not, the evolutionary concept as I defined it, it need not deny the intrusion of new forces in order that these may coalesce and cooperate with the resident forces. It doesn't per se exclude the intrusion of new forces which may coalesce and cooperate with resident forces and therefore with the evolutionary process on the basis of these forces.

And so an evolutionary concept as such need not exclude the supernatural intervention of God or even the truly creative intervention of God, the truly creative act of God, so that there may be a result which the evolutionary process itself could not effect. You may have, you could have, that is conceptually at least, conceptually, a coalescence, a coordination of evolutionary process and creative, truly creative intervention. And that is just saying a truly creative act may supervene upon an existing evolutionary process.

In reference however to definition, this is what I am doing now, in reference to definition, it is necessary however to appreciate the sharp line of distinction which there is between creative action and evolutionary development. What is creation is not evolution, and what is evolution is not creation. Yes, it is utterly confused to speak of creation by evolution.

That formula, creation by evolution, is theological, not scientific, confusion. And no scientist, jealous of evolution, would tolerate the creation by evolution, for no theologian would tolerate it. The confusion which that formula involves.

Now, in fact, in production it is clearly defined, now I come to deal with evolution as such, and I am going to deal with it first of all as it is concerned with cosmogony and cosmology as a whole. I am simply relating cosmology and cosmogony with the nature of character. I have stated a few propositions that are indispensable to a Christian holistic cosmogony and cosmology, absolutely indispensable to a Christian cosmogony and cosmology.

Well, we must maintain creation in the strictest sense at the very beginning, namely the absolute origination of dependent reality by the fiat of God. Dependent by the fiat of God. We deny that, we deny what is indispensable to a Christian philosophy.

Well, surely that's apparent. Then, secondly, we suppose is the continuous activity of God in the whole of dependent reality. Continuous activity of God in the whole of dependent reality.

This is God in the whole of dependent reality, in the whole of dependent reality. This is, and I like to quote Calvin's words in this connection, quotation, a constant power is exerted on every distinct and particular movement of God. A constant power is exerted on every distinct and particular movement of God.

But then, when he said, in him we live and move and have our being, in that teaching of scripture, in all of dependent reality, that all dependent reality has its being because of the constant pervasive, I mean, continues to have its being because of the constant pervasive. As it all continues its existence, its being, and so the whole of existence is subject to his ordination, control, and direction. I say, and now a third principle, the third basic principle is supernatural nature, supernatural, and miraculous intervention in the course of history.

Miraculous intervention of God in the course of history. Now, I'm not saying that this is continuous. Continuous, uninterrupted, until you have a continuous, uninterrupted exercise of God's will and power in the maintenance of dependent reality.

Here, I want to quote occasional instances. Now, the supernatural means that something occurs, the potentiality of which does not reside in any powers or forces resident in, inherent in, dependent reality. Something occurs, the potentiality of which does not reside in any powers or forces inherent in dependent reality.

That, I think, is a necessary thing. Now, when we talk of the intervention of such supernatural or miraculous agency, we presuppose the operation of the forces of law which God has already established in created reality. We don't deny the law.

The creatures which God has made are endowed with powers which are exercised within the providential control and agency of God. We must deny the agency of these created entities by reason of the potentiality to them. But, culture is death.

A Christian cannot allow that all events of history are explainable in terms of the operation and development. All forces, all agents belong to created reality. The example of this intervention of all of history is the incarnation of the Son of God.

Eliminate the threat to deny the central tenet of all Christian faiths. Now, if we keep in mind that no more than these three basic principles, if we bear in mind no more than these three basic principles, it is surely apparent that evolution cannot construct in itself compatible with those Christian faiths. It cannot construct a cosmogony or a cosmology that is compatible.

It is not to say an evolutionary process is thereby excluded from God's order of providence. But at all, it doesn't mean that it's excluded. Whether there is a thing of a response to evolutionary development can be determined on the basis of the pertinent evidence.

Surely, surely, it must not be excluded as a distinct possibility. The only point is the concept of possibility, a philosophy that is compatible with the current. Now, in relation with man.

Now, just by way of, before I, and you don't need to take notes on this, but just by way of introduction, in order to eliminate possible misunderstandings, you have these natural requirements in class, all have a genus applied to them. The primum would be versed, and class would be man, and order would be carnivorous. Family, for example, would be cat-like animals.

The genus would be cat, and the species would be domesticated cat. So that's classification, which is pretty normal, more or less, obviously. To a certain extent, there are a bit of contradictions, which is useful.

I think that's what we saw. So, when we are dealing with you, which you have in kind, meaning kind, that man, of course, was not created after the image of me, but after the image of God. You know, you have that word repeated five times, you remember, in genesis 1, 24, and 25, liminal, liminal.

It's a very important speech. It may not be proper to identify it even with genus. We don't know how restrictive or how inclusive that term is intended to be.

That is, we don't know how restrictive or how inclusive that term is intended to be. In terms of certainty in anything, it must refer to some well-defined classification, but not necessarily to classification. So that's just by way of... Now I come more specifically to the question with which we are concerned, and I want to make several points.

First, according to the Church, there is no reason why we should exclude natural process out of factors in the formation of the Church. To say that there may have been a development under God's providential control and agent of the potentiality resident in what is called dust from the ground. Dust from the ground.

That is to say that natural process... I must stop this very moment. The buzzer doesn't ring, but this is the limit of my time. I may be interfering with other...

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