

Evolution vs. Creation

Lesson Four

Darwinism: Speculation with a Flair

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- Definition of key terms
 - natural selection: survival of the fittest
 - micro-evolution: variation within kinds
 - natural selection and micro-evolution can be tested and observed in the present
 - macro-evolution – the great leap of faith – Darwin extrapolated from the present back to the distant past in order to explain how small changes can bring about the origin of all species of plants and animals
- Darwin was committed to the philosophy of naturalism and sought a theory to justify it scientifically

- Some problems with Darwinian evolution
 - Organisms stay true to type
 - where is the “plasticity” of species that we might expect if macro-evolution were true? why are we so limited in the amount of variation we can induce by selective breeding?
 - the rate of variation between generations is not constant because breeding selects from among *existing* genes – no new information is created in the process of selective breeding, and genes limit the amount of variation that is possible
 - the natural tendency is for organisms to stay the same; in the absence of selective pressure they revert back to the average
 - Luther Burbank (plant breeder) – his law of the Reversion to the Average “keeps all living things within more or less fixed limitations”
 - we’ve been breeding fruit flies for 100 years and they’re still fruit flies – no matter how many mutations we introduce
 - Since selection of existing genes brings limited change, gene mutation is now seen as the pathway for the creation of new genetic information
 - problem is, genetic errors tend to make things worse rather than better (e.g., cancer)
 - mutated creatures tend to be *less* fit for survival
 - mutated creatures may not be able to pass a favorable mutation to the next generation
 - think of trying to write a new book by randomly changing the letters in an existing book – what would all the transitional books look like? (starts with a few errors and becomes progressively more nonsensical) how many “generations” would there be in the transition?

- minor changes do not accumulate to produce major changes which lead to the new structures required for evolution
 - Organisms as systems – can't change piecemeal
 - “transitional” structures would tend to be non-functional because of irreducible complexity – there is no way to create a liver by making small changes to a new mass of tissue
 - evolution and the ecosystem – organisms are part of a complex interrelated community
 - which came first – the flower or the bee? the squirrel or the tree?
 - Darwin: “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down”
 - Darwin recognized his theory as an inference based on an analogy – that it wasn't scientifically proved
 - Richard Lewontin: “we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations”
- Chuck Colson describes creation as “the first element of the Christian worldview, the foundation on which everything else is built”
- Evolutionists understand that we cannot mix God and evolution
 - William Provine:
 - if God did not create the world, the entire body of Christian belief collapses
 - consistent Darwinism means “no life after death; no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning for life; no free will”
 - Darwin rejected theistic evolution – he knew that a belief in evolution required rejecting the idea of God

Key Scriptures:

- Gen 1:11-12 – creation of all kinds of plants (day three)
- Gen 1:20-21 – creation of sea creatures and birds (day five)
- Gen 1:24-25 – creation of land animals (day six)
- Gen 1:26 – creation of man (day six)
- Ps 104 – God as the Creator and sustainer of the universe