

Faith Pulpit

Implications of Evolutionism

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

Beyond all doubt, Darwin left a great deal of influence. It seems little wonder that *Origin of Species* raised a storm when it appeared. To then, even the atheists were living in the Western heritage of a created universe. Even if the eighteenth century rationalists didn't like the idea of a Creator, they still seemed to see an underlying intelligence in the world that they perceived by their senses. Then in 1859 Darwin published, and despite the early opposition to his ideas, especially from churchmen, those ideas caught on widely in only about half a century.

Numbers of writers have remarked on the profound change in Western thought that coincided with World War I. To then, people generally accepted the concept of a universe with a rational and moral basis. The Declaration of Independence, largely from Jefferson's pen, begins by presupposing both of those concepts. Just before the war, thinking men, eagerly or reluctantly, began accepting the notion of a Darwinian universe.

The implication of evolutionism were indeed profound. If all happened by blind chance, and if forms evolved through the survival of the fittest so much for a rational and moral basis for existence. But people did grasp those implications, and many of them embraced them.

1. Irrational Universe

To the creationist, everything that is seen bears the fingerprints of the hidden Creator. God hides Himself (Isa. 45:15), but His marks appear all over His creation. How can one explain the marvelous order in the periodic chart of atomic structure? How explain the beginning of life? How explain the astonishing complexity of even simple life forms? How explain the total lack of transitional forms, when the earth should be full of them?

To modern man, however, who has already ruled out the very idea of a Creator-intelligence, the world has become a place of deep disorder. No underlying intelligence explains the miracles one must ignore, the evidence one must select. All one can see must be chaos, ruled by blind chance, and therefore a disorderly, irrational universe.

2. Amoral Universe

To the creationist, the order that is seen, even under the curse, warns that the creative Intelligence just might be dangerous. Romans 1 holds that even the natural man is accountable for the inferences he should draw about the eternal power and Deity of God. The Biblical creationist, however, sees the Creator not only as Judge, but as Redeemer, thereby offering safety in a dangerous, moral universe.

To modern man, however, evolution offers only a deeper level of despair. He lost his creator, thereby gaining liberty from restraint and conscience, but leaving him in a world where no one else is bound by such restraints. If the creationist lives in a dangerous universe, created by an absolute holiness, the modern man lives in a dangerous world in which professors and muggers live by similar presuppositions. If survival of the fittest is to be taken as a good principle—it supposedly got us here—what argument do we have against the Assyrians, Genghis Khan, and the Syndicate—all models of cruelty?

What's more, if modern man got here by blind chance and irrational processes, he has no hope of life after death. Even the one who dies with the most toys loses. Beneath all his thoughts is a lurking despair. Darwin did us no favor.

3. Implications in the Arts

Even a cursory look at the trends in art in the last three centuries will reflect what has happened in popular thought. The optimism of the eighteenth century shows itself in the music and painting of the times. Newton had taught a mechanical, predictable universe, which furthered the notion that the human mind could discover all truth and solve all problems. At the end of that bright century came the French revolution and the guillotine, throwing doubt on the glad music and art of the Baroque period and the Enlightenment.

Romanticism is the word for the nineteenth century movement that followed. The universe was still a created one, but there was something mysterious about it that baffled human wisdom. Painting took on darker colors; music suggested that experience and emotion lead to the truth that sheer intellect cannot find.

Late in the nineteenth century came Impressionism, the work of keen painters to cope with reality. Their message was that reality is whatever strikes the eye. Their works are beautiful if you don't stand too close. Critics were appalled, and we may wonder if it was from irritation at the technique of bright

blobs and strokes, or from the implication that light was all there is. The later impressionists briefly tried cubism, attempting to get back to a reality more solid than sheer in appearance. That did not last.

About a decade into this century, Darwin's ideas were becoming doctrine in the universities. About the same time the advance guard of the artists came into the current century with Abstraction. Shapes tended to be either mechanical (reflecting Newton) or in disorder, as in so much of Picasso, Matisse, and almost every celebrated painter but Norman Rockwell. Random brush strokes revealed a random universe, with no rational or moral basis of existence. The world of evolutionism has found expression in current art. A sensitive reading of recent literature will reveal the same trend.

4. Implications in Music

Those trends come across also in music. Among serious composers, the created, orderly universe lasted until about the end of the First World War. Among what are termed serious composers, music then began to convey a disorderly universe. Debussy irritated his professor at the conservatory by leaving his chords unresolved. Others began using a twelve-note scale and deliberate discords. The Christian often is irritated at much recent music, mainly because it reflects a view of reality so different from one's own.

The same observation holds in much popular music. Early jazz got opposition from the preachers, and not only because of what is associated with it. They realized that the whole literature of jazz conveyed "a glorious feeling of release from all restraint." The Christian—who believed that the spiritual have crucified the flesh—found it hard to approve of jazz, however innocent some of it may seem now by comparison.

Then in 1954 came rock and roll, a great leap beyond jazz, a new form that conveyed a driving mandate to obey the flesh and its impulses. It was exciting music, but difficult to reconcile with Scripture. Today it seems that while its performers understand the eroticism of it, professing Christians are justifying it on the argument that music is ethically neutral, that it means whatever you make it to mean. (But who plays Gershwin at a funeral or Sousa at a wedding?) By the early 1970s, rock was being accepted into the First Church of Laodicea and called the Contemporary Christian Sound.

Now whole ministries are trying to persuade the faithful of the evil of using rock. Of the considerations rarely addressed, however, is the ancestry of the musical form, that it reflects on the popular level the artists' attempt in this century to convey the Darwinian concepts of an irrational, disorderly universe. The secular lyrics are clear enough; the staff cannot be reconciled with the Bible. But many Christians need to examine the similar music with which they load their minds and their churches. Apart from whatever the words may say, (often trivially), the musical idiom is one which conveys an irrational and disorderly universe, and which promotes individual self-indulgence and an experience-oriented religion. Our objections to rock music spring not only from its eroticism and rebellion against

authority, but from its rejection of a created universe.

“But they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

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A prolific author, he wrote several books and articles, leaving a lasting legacy of theological insight and pastoral wisdom. Dr. Delnay’s deep love for God’s Word and his dedication to training the next generation of Christian leaders impacted countless students and ministries worldwide. He went home to be with Christ in 2023.