

Blast from the past

A series featuring abridged versions of past articles from the Journal of Christian Education (JCE).

The teaching of creation, W Grainge Clarke, Senior Lecturer in Science, School of Education, Nepean CAE. JCE Papers 83, July 1985.

If children are taught that creation and evolution are mutually exclusive competing and conflicting theories then every new piece of evidence that can be produced to indicate that species are not fixed but may undergo considerable change with time will be taken as evidence that creation has not occurred and hence Christianity must be false. However the truth of the Christian doctrine of creation does not depend on the falsity of the theory of evolution or even upon the age of the earth. The concept of creation is far too important a concept to be taught as a rather questionable alternative to the widely accepted theory of evolution. The concept of creation is the Christian's answer to the problem of origins.

While the evidence that there has been species modification on a grand scale is so strong as to be almost beyond question, the case that all things owe their ultimate origin to a Supreme Intelligence is even stronger. The suggestion that natural selection could produce rationality is absurd because selection can only discard some of what is already present and make possible the preservation of some of the rest. It can give rise to nothing new.

All forms of human knowledge involve making some unproven and unprovable assumptions. They include:

- (a) The existence of the scientist, of other scientists and of the universe
- (b) That the human mind is capable of rational thought.
- (c) The Uniformity of the Universe
- (d) That the Universe is coherent, and, in part at least, intelligible
- (e) That the scientist is capable of interpreting the sense data which he receives from the outside world
- (f) Certain ethical qualities of honesty, respect for truth, etc, in the observer
- (g) Certain special presuppositions directly related to the subject in hand, e.g. the axioms of geometry

Modern science arose when the consequences of the biblical conception were fully accepted. The picture of the world as an organism was replaced by that of the world as a mechanism. It is not generated but MADE; it is not self-supporting, but needs maintenance. If there is no Creator, no Intelligence behind the universe, science itself rests upon invalid foundations.

Implications for teaching

The evidence that can be presented for non-fixity of species over time is very exhaustive and can only be evaluated by proper scientific means. Most attempts by Christians to challenge this evidence have been misinformed and hence counter productive. Possible mechanisms, is far more open (and) is most interesting but is not vital to a Christian apologetic. It is the third area, that of philosophy, that the Christian apologist must do battle.

No scientific theory should ever be presented as final unchanging truththey are continually updated. It is invalid to use an ever changing science to deny Christian doctrine that claims to be unchanging truth. On the other hand, the practical achievements of science are such that it is unreasonable to deny that most of scientific understanding of the natural world is, within certain limits, a very close approximation to reality. The Christian does no service to the Faith by ridiculing that which he does not understand and has not taken the effort to comprehend.

(The articles then expands on the concept of God looking at the God of the heavens, the God of the gaps and Great Designer. The author emphasises that if evolution or something like it has occurred then *it is part of the creative process that God had design and created.* Ed.)

The whole creation verses evolution argument is a dangerous red herring, destructive to science and Christianity alike. The concept of Creation is not science, rather it forms the only basis upon which the presuppositions of all knowledge, including science, can securely rest. Therefore creation should not be taught as part of the ever changing body of scientific knowledge, as some “creation-scientists” desire, but as the fundamental concept that alone makes a rational universe, and hence all knowledge, including scientific knowledge, possible.

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