

The current debate on Creation and Evolution

In the letters to the editor in *The Chronicle* there is a debate over creation and evolution. Readers should be aware that there is a new element now. Last September Pope John Paul 11 gave an address on evolution to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. There has been some debate over his famous and controversial statement. Some have argued that he was not being accurately reported in the translation from the French of what he said. The original French of the part under debate is translated into English as follows:

Today, almost half a century after the publication of the encyclical *Humani Generis*, new knowledge has led to the recognition of more than a hypothesis in the theory of evolution.

In the November 15 1996 issue of *Remnant*, the editor, Michael J Matt, wrote:

Despite all of the wild claims [that Pope John Paul's statement on evolution was a mistranslation], and predictable denials, *The Remnant* will not be printing any retractions. We have read the Pope's statement to the Pontifical Academy and we have checked several reliable sources, and it remains our firm conviction that... our Pope [did] make these favourable statements on Evolution, even claiming that Evolution is "more than a theory."

Tragically, it is clear beyond any doubt that Pope John Paul was not misquoted. He did in fact say that evolution is "more than a hypothesis." The magazine *Catholic World Report*, one of the organs of the Catholic Press, earlier defended the notion that the Pope's statement on evolution had been translated inappropriately. Now it agrees that the translation above is accurate. In *Catholic World Report*, December 1996 there is an article, "What the Pope Actually Said." It includes the following:

We alleged that a statement by Pope John Paul on the subject of evolution had been inappropriately translated. We have subsequently learned that in fact the original translation was correct... We apologise for our error.

"The February edition of *Catholic World Report* settles the question once and for all. It says: 'Those who consider the assertion that evolution is "more than a hypothesis" problematic should be honest enough to admit that their problem is not with Catholic News Service, but with Pope John Paul 11.'"

There was, earlier, a similar way of proceeding in Roman Catholic sources in the changed Roman Catholic position on the use of "altar girls." First there were clouds of smoke and confusion, and rumours that denied the credibility of sources for the original story. Later it became clear that the first reports were all too true.

The sober truth about evolution is that there is no proof for it. It is a hypothesis and not a story of origins that science has proved. It rests on philosophical assumptions. It assumes that life developed by chance in slime, and evolved through different species, so that it is assumed that human beings have their origin in some form of animal life. There is no room for a separate creation of man by God in His image. Furthermore, the odds against all the wonderful complexity in various forms of life in the world having developed by chance are statistically to great that evolution requires greater blind faith than accepting God's own account of creation in Genesis chapter one.

For many years people who believe the Bible have been pointing out that the Bible text simply does not allow for the many millions of years that evolutionists quote so confidently in varying amounts. The "days" of creation have to be ordinary days, because they are defined as "evening and morning", because of the statement in Exodus 20: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day." Furthermore, "day" in Genesis chapter one applies to the fifth and sixth day, after the sun, moon, and stars had been created. Those days were days of evening and morning, just as the previous ones had all been. Those who want to regard the creation of Adam as figurative should acknowledge that they are attacking the Gospel itself, for one of the most basic teachings of the Gospels rests on the contrast between Adam and Jesus Christ (Rm 1:12-21; 1 Cor 15:21-22). Both are historical!

The ordinary laymen who does not know much science takes for granted very obvious things that cannot fit into the evolutionary hypothesis. Almost all true hybrids are sterile, and left to themselves, hybrids that have been developed revert to type. The attempts to find a "missing link" between apes and human beings have all been frauds. It is a basic law in this world that left to them selves things don't "run up", but "run down."

Besides all that, the Christian who accepts the account of the universal flood in the Bible has no trouble in explaining many things the evolutionists busy themselves with as the result of the flood. The fossil record is one of them, and the fossils reveal no intermediate species. Today, when a fish dies it doesn't turn into a fossil, but is eaten or decays. To become a fossil, something has to be covered quickly, as the flood must have done. If it had not been for the flood, oil and coal reserves in our present world would have been far different.

People who keep up with the various fields of science should also know that many scientists admit that the evolutionary hypothesis of Darwin is inadequate. A fairly recent book by Denton, not a creationist, has shown how the theory simply does not fit the data that scientists observe. One of the recent correspondents to *The Chronicle* mentioned Denton's book.

Christians of all denominations should regard the statement of Pope John Paul II as a truly tragic piece of news. Catholics now have to face the consequences of the Pope's remarks. They have to realise that Pope John Paul apparently believes that Darwin's absurd notion of evolution is "more than a theory." This is nothing short of a woeful development, and one that sincere Catholics everywhere should lament.

The Remnant in the issue of November 15 wrote:

Why Pope John Paul would make such a statement [on evolution] at this particular time especially, we would not hazard to guess. He must have had his reasons - we would not presume to judge his motives. We can only pray for Pope John Paul, my friends, because he is in great need of our prayers, as is the entire Catholic Church. The present Pope is not a prisoner, nor is he a victim, in our opinion. He is a leader of men, he is a passionate phenomenologist, and he is very aware of what he is trying to accomplish with his pontificate. His philosophic ideas are drastically different from those of any other Pope in the history of the Papacy..."

Those who accept the account of the origin of the world that God, the only one present at the time, has given us, should pray earnestly for the preachers and teachers in all denominations, including the Pope, and for scientists, for teachers in schools, and for those whom they teach. Those who want to talk about God using a process of evolution to create the world, including a "big bang", should realise that these do not fit God's own record. Those who promote the theory of evolution as fact are promoting a theory that has no room for God at all, and are using it both as an excuse for their failure to acknowledge God, and to cover their responsibility for their sin. Paul wrote, in Romans 1:18-25

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened... Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.