

Darwin, Hitler and Jesus Christ

Introduction

- Growing up in the UK. WWII. Auschwitz. How could this be? What lessons does this hold for us?

Darwin

- On 24th November 1859, Charles Darwin published a book commonly referred "The Origin of Species." Immediately, a controversy began to rage, not only on whether or not organisms arose through natural or supernatural means, but on the moral and ethical implications of the theory of evolution.
- Many adopted Darwinism and rejoiced in the anticipated freedom from God that evolution brings. Daniel Dennett, a leading American materialist philosopher, wrote that evolutionary theory is the "universal acid" that dissolves all traditional ideas of religion and morality.
- Richard Goldschmidt (1878-1958), a leading geneticist of the 20th century, wrote enthusiastically about evolutionary theory. "Evolution was the key to everything and could replace all the beliefs and creeds which one was discarding. There was no creation, no God, no heaven and hell, only evolution...."
- Many objected due to the moral implications. Adam Sedgwick, Darwin's former mentor at Cambridge, wrote to Darwin that, "There is a moral or metaphysical part of nature as well as physical. A man who denies this is deep in the mire of folly....you have ignored this link. Were it possible to break it, humanity, in my mind, would suffer a damage that might brutalize it, and sink the human race into a lower grade of degradation than any into which it has fallen since its written records tell of its history."
- Part of the problem was the full title of the book, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life". Darwin himself explained what this meant in "The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex" in 1871. "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races." In 1881, he wrote that, "Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have to be eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world." How did these Darwinist ideas develop?
- Kossmann, a German zoologist, expounded the implications of Darwinism in an 1880 essay, "The Importance of the Life of an Individual in the Darwinian Worldview." "The human state also, like every animal community of individuals, must reach an even higher level of perfection, if the possibility exists in it, through the destruction of the less well-endowed individual, for the more excellently endowed to win space for the expansion of its progeny....The state only has an interest in preserving the more excellent life at the expense of the less excellent."
- Darwin wrestled with human morality, and argued that all human traits, including moral behavior, are different in degree, but not in kind, from organisms. Morality has no supernatural origin. Rather, the mechanism was natural selection through the struggle for existence. Those groups with more cooperative and self-sacrificing individuals would out-compete those groups with more selfish behaviors. Thus Darwinism replaces Christian ethics and morality with the random, impersonal laws of nature and evolutionary biology. The concept of free will was also denied, as the human race was subject to the laws of causation and evolutionary biology like any other species. There is no absolute morality – all morality is understood in terms of what contributes to the survival of the human species.
- By the early 1900s, Germany had reached a state of ethical and moral crisis. Darwinism promoted secularism, and Darwinists sought a secular, evolutionary replacement for Judeo-Christian ethics.
- 2 movements developed. 1) Social Darwinists. Societies should reject any institution that prevented natural selection, e.g. biblical marriage, and 2) Eugenics. Human should make reproductive choices that promote evolutionary progress.
- The constant stress on physical health in eugenics and Darwinian healthy reproduction gave rise to health reformers, particularly in Germany. Eugenicians wanted to abolish the use of tobacco, alcohol, tea and coffee. Temperance reform was promoted. In 1908, a malt coffee-substitute company promoted its product as a way of winning the Darwinian struggle for existence. "One can only move forward in the struggle for existence if one possesses a healthy body and healthy nerves."

- Darwinism offered a secular answer to death. According to Darwin, “Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of higher animals, directly follows.¹” Death is the natural engine of evolutionary progress, representing a radical rejection of the Christian understanding of death as the ultimate enemy to be conquered.
- Von Gruber, a professor in Munich, stated in 1909, that, “The never-ceasing struggle is, according to Darwin, not useless. It constantly clears away the malformed, the weak, and the inferior among the generations and thus secures the future for the fit. Thus only through the inexorable extermination of the negative variants does it provide living space for the strong and its strong offspring, and keeps the species healthy, strong, and able to live.”
- The sanctity of human life was denied and significant debate erupted in Germany relating to infanticide, euthanasia, abortion and suicide. The individual’s life had no significance other than to contribute to the evolutionary progress of the human species. If death was the natural engine of evolutionary progress, then evolutionary progress could only be assured through the elimination of multitudes. The healthy thus had a moral duty to eliminate the unhealthy.
- Eugenicists and psychiatrists drew up lists of the inferior – those fit for “rational” elimination. The disabled, sick, weak, alcoholic, criminal, mentally deficient. The superior were the fit, strong, healthy, intelligent, sober and pure. The inferior were referred to as “ballast” and “pestilent” and people discussed the financial and moral cost to society of allowing such individuals to live.
- Believing that “the fit must flourish, the unfit must disappear,” eugenicists focused on ways to promote reproduction among the superior, and preventing reproduction among the inferior. “Sin” was redefined, no longer as adultery or fornication or homosexuality, but as any sexual relationship that produced an inferior offspring. Birth control was promoted for those determined to be “inferior.” Others called for the incarceration of the mentally ill in segregated labor camps to prevent them from breeding. Polygamy for healthy males was promoted, as were health check-ups before marriage and involuntary sterilization.
- Before the 20th century, euthanasia (meaning “good death”) referred to actions taken to make one’s death less painful, but in the 20th century, it came to mean active measures taken to shorten the patient’s life, i.e. the purposeful intention to hasten the death of the sick or inferior. Because of the need to prevent the “inferior” from breeding, involuntary early euthanasia was to be preferred over voluntary euthanasia late in life to ease one’s death throes. In depicting such “inferior” individuals as a danger to the survival of the human species, killing them could be presented as a righteous act of self-defense.
- Attention was also focused not only on the inferior within German society, but on non-European peoples, who were generally considered to fit into the “inferior” category. Such peoples could not adopt or adapt to the “superior” cultures, worldviews and technologies arising out of Europe. Scientific racism developed. The basic concept from Darwinism was that no species evolves at a uniform rate. In every species there are different groups that are more advanced than others, or better adapted to their environment. In such circumstances, the more advanced / better adapted had an evolutionary imperative to eliminate the less advanced / less well adapted, to ensure the overall survival of the species.
- The destruction of the Hottentots, Herreros, Maori, Aboriginal peoples, Native Americans and Indians of Latin America were generally understood to be necessary to purify the human race and create living room for the superior races within humanity (i.e. the Europeans in general, and Germans in particular).
- WWI. Some eugenicists opposed the draft, because it ended up with the young, fit and healthy dying in the trenches, and leaving the disabled, sick and weak at home to reproduce. Many German Darwinists promoted colonialism, militarism and war as being necessary to eliminate the inferior races, but some objected to WWI, because in the destruction of German and British lives, the Europeans (the highest race) were killing themselves and weakening themselves vis a vis the other peoples of the world.

Hitler

- Thus we come to Auschwitz / Holocaust. It is too easy, and intellectually dishonest, to simply dismiss Hitler as “evil” and fail to recognize that beneath the Holocaust was a coherent set of Darwinist ethics.

¹ Origin of the Species, penultimate sentence.

- Widespread among the German academic, medical and literary elites of the early 20th century was the Darwinian notion that racial extermination is an inevitable process that is ultimately beneficial for humanity. Only through racial extermination could humanity improve biologically and advance to higher culture. Darwinism provided the underlying scientific justification for racial inequality, racial competition and racial extermination. Hitler arose within this existing social milieu.
- For Hitler, as for Darwin himself, the Darwinian struggle for existence, especially between races, was the sole arbiter for morality. The highest good was to cooperate with the evolutionary process. If we abandon that struggle, we will hinder evolutionary progress and promote degeneration of the species.
- As evolutionary process was arbiter of all morality, why not improve humanity by speeding up the destruction in the “Final Solution” of the disabled and “inferior” races? According to this Darwinian logic, the extermination of such individuals and whole races not only morally justified, but morally praiseworthy.
- In practice, this meant 2 strategies: 1) to promote eugenics and healthy rational reproductive practices among the Germans (including discouraging abortion and birth control for healthy German women); and 2) to engage in racial struggle and the extermination of those outside the German racial community. Involuntary euthanasia, involuntary sterilizations, internment in concentration and labor camps, abortions and birth control for “inferior” individuals, infanticide for deficient infants and the Holocaust were the natural and logical outworking of this Darwinian philosophy.
- From 1933, over 350,000 were forcibly sterilized within Germany. From 1939, over 70,000 Germans perished in the compulsory euthanasia program. In both cases, there was extensive support from German physicians, lawyers, courts and psychiatrists.
- Even in the US, Darwinian-based eugenists promoted compulsory sterilization for the disabled and other groups. The first state to propose a compulsory sterilization bill was MI, in 1897 (it failed to pass). After WWII, compulsory sterilization programs became very unpopular in the US due to their relationship to the Holocaust. Over 65,000 individual were forcibly sterilized, with the last one being in 1981.
- And what of us today? In state schools across the West, children are taught the theory of evolution as if it were truth. God and morality are denied. Our progressive elites are redefining marriage and morality and pushing for a secular utopia. Social struggles, race hatred, divisions within society abound. Communist China for decades promoted infanticide under its “1 Child” policy, and in the West we have abortion on demand and a growing voluntary euthanasia movement. Movie-goers laugh at gruesome deaths on the screen. Life indeed is cheap. How do we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, respond?

Jesus Christ

Darwinism / Evolutionary Biology	Christianity
Ongoing life and death struggle between the various races of the human species is beneficial and necessary for evolutionary progress.	There is a great controversy between Christ and Satan in which the eternal destiny of every human being is at stake (Rev. 12.7-17).
The end purpose is the temporal survival of the fittest / superior elements alone within the human species	God’s end purpose is eternal life for all members of the human race (2 Pet. 3.9, John 3.16-16, Ezek. 18.23, 31-22; 33.11).
Anticipates irresistible progress of evolutionary morality.	Anticipates a global descent into utter immorality before the 2 nd Coming (2 Pet. 3.2-7, 2 Tim. 3.1-5).
Morality is relative to the time and situation in which we find ourselves, and we discover it through human reason and experience.	Morality is transcendent, revealed by a loving Creator God, and is based around moral absolutes that express love to God and love to our fellow man (Ex. 20.1-17, Matt. 22.34-40).
The superior races within the human species have a moral responsibility to eliminate the inferior races and elements within the human species to create “living room” for the superior races / elements and thus foster their ultimate survival.	Every individual is morally responsible and accountable before God to love their neighbor as themselves (Matt. 12.36, 2 Cor. 5.10).

The life of any individual has no intrinsic value.	Created in the image of God and purchased with the blood of the Lamb of God, every human being has incredible existential value. God will hold accountable any who dare to take the life of another human being (Gen. 1.27, 1 Pet. 1.19, Rev. 5.9, Eph. 2.4-9, Matt. 6.25-34)).
What is of supreme importance is the survival of the species.	We are saved as individuals, not as a species. God holds us morally accountable for our own sins and response to the promptings of His Spirit, and not for the response of any other person (Luke 12.48, Isa. 30.21, Ezek.18-20).
The disabled, handicapped, physically defective, mentally deficient, alcoholics, criminals and non-European people groups are to be eliminated.	The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats – in the final analysis, our eternal destiny is determined by our loving response, or lack of a loving response, to any we meet who are in need (Matt. 25.31-46, 10.42).
Marriage and reproduction to be guided solely by principles of eugenics and promoting health and strength of the next generation.	Marriage is entered into as an expression and reflection of the self-sacrificing covenantal love within the Godhead (Gen. 2.24-25; Eph. 5.21-33).
Marriage among the inferior portions of the human species is to be discouraged and reproduction prevented, e.g. involuntary sterilization programs or high abortion rates for ethnic minorities.	Marriage is intended to be a divine blessing for all of humanity, and all children are a blessing from God (Ps. 127.3-5, 113.9, Prov. 17.6, Gen. 33.5, Gen 48.9).
Death is a force for good, and under Malthusian principles, the more death the better for the human race, as death in vast quantities eliminates in greater proportion the inferior elements of the human race. Evolutionary progress is facilitated by death.	Death is final enemy, and will be conquered once and for all at the 2 nd Coming and destroyed forever at the end of the Millennium (1 Cor. 15.50-57, Rev. 20.14, Rev. 21.1-4).

Conclusion

- 1) **Ex. 20.8-11.** We reject out of hand the evolutionary worldview of the West, together with the race-hatred and denial of the sanctity of all human life that is a direct and necessary consequence of such a worldview. We affirm the truth of the Biblical account of earth’s origins in a recent 6 day-creation by worshipping on the Sabbath, working for racial reconciliation, justice and harmony, and upholding the sanctity of life.
- 2) **Rev. 13.11-15.** We recognize that in a world where the Roman Catholic Church has accepted the theory of evolution, Sabbath-keepers may well be viewed as “inferior” whose elimination from society will serve the common good of humanity. Thus the global death penalty for those who refuse the Mark of the Beast is socially possible and morally praiseworthy due to the acceptance of Darwinist philosophy by both the global secular elites and the Roman Catholic hierarchy.
- **Rom. 5.8-9, 18.** In the final analysis, there is a struggle between life and death. That we all live and all die is a given, but the solution to this trans-generational struggle is not found in “The Origin of Species”, but in the Word of God. Not in Auschwitz, but at Calvary. “And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2.20, NRSV).