

material of Jesus' attitude to children, and the place of children in the Early Church as mentioned in the Epistles.

In a very interesting chapter on 'Children and the Sacraments', he gives a historical and biblical overview of infant baptism and children at the Eucharist. He does not provide a definitive 'proof' for infant baptism but clearly tries to present arguments that uphold this position while at the same time appreciating those who hold to believers' baptism. Most of the arguments for infant baptism are clearly documented in many other places.

However, I found the survey Dr Strange presents on children and the Eucharist very informative. From a reference to Cyprian (d.258) it appears that children were in the habit of receiving communion from birth (i.e. after baptism). Although Augustine built a powerful case for the admission of Children to Communion, the Western Church at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) barred children from communion, whilst in the Eastern Church the admission of children to communion continued to be the norm, as indeed it remains today.

Those who are convinced that children play a vital role in today's church will find this book very affirming, and those who still need to be convinced on the right place of children will find it thought provoking. The book is not just for ministers and church leaders; it is a well written and accessible volume to all, and it is clearly written by someone who is passionate about children's full involvement (as far as they are themselves able) in the Body of Christ, the Church today.

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God and the Biologist: Faith at the Frontiers of Science

R.J. Berry

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RÉSUMÉ

La science et la foi chrétienne sont deux façons différentes de connaître. A cet égard elles sont complémentaires. La science répond à la question "comment?", la foi à la question "pourquoi?". Dans trois essais, l'auteur, professeur de génétique, plaide pour une position

chrétienne au sujet de l'évolution, de la technologie génétique et de l'éthique de l'environnement. Il prétend que l'évolution est un fait, que les humains sont des animaux, mais que cela ne compromet pas la compréhension de la vérité scripturaire. Au contraire, cela permet aux chrétiens de parler d'un but dans un monde livré au hasard et de l'immanence de Dieu dans un monde hostile. La technologie moderne dans le domaine de la procréation a soulevé la question cruciale du moment précis où commence la vie. Les théologiens ne donnent pas de réponse claire à cette question et nous devons rechercher l'éclairage de la recherche scientifique actuelle. Il appartient aux chrétiens d'introduire l'éthique dans le débat écologique, car les solutions purement politiques et scientifiques sont inadéquates. L'auteur engage l'Eglise à adopter une attitude responsable et réfléchie vis-à-vis de la création dans son ensemble.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wissenschaft und christlicher Glaube stellen verschiedene Arten des "Wissens" dar und verhalten sich zueinander komplementär. Die Wissenschaft beantwortet die "Wie-Frage", der Glaube hingegen die "Warum-Frage". In den drei Essays verteidigt der Autor, ein Professor für Genetik, eine christliche Position zu den Themen Evolution, humane Reproduktionstechnologie und Umweltethik. Er versteht die Evolution als Tatsache und den Menschen somit als Tier. Dies jedoch mache ein biblisches Wahrheitsverständnis keineswegs zunichte. Vielmehr erlaube diese Sicht Christen, in einer Welt des Zufalls über Sinn zu sprechen und in einer feindlichen Welt über die Immanenz Gottes. Die moderne Reproduktionstechnologie hat die drängende Frage aufgeworfen, wann genau das Leben beginnt. Da die Theologie keine endgültigen Antworten auf diese Frage bietet, müssen wir uns anhand aktueller wissenschaftlicher Forschung informieren. Christen haben die Aufgabe, ethische Fragen in die Umweltdebatte einzubringen; denn politische und wissenschaftliche Lösungen an sich sind inadäquat. Der Autor fordert die Kirche heraus, ein verantwortliches Verhalten in bezug auf die gesamte Schöpfung anzunehmen.

We live in an age in which Science is deeply distrusted. The post-war scientific triumphalism has evaporated in the face of nuclear disaster and environmental degradation. Governments have lost confidence in funding scientific research and fewer undergraduates

enrol to study courses in the 'hard' sciences. Science promised a new world, but instead has delivered a tarnished version of the old.

There is of course another view. A view espoused by those who believe in the objectivity of science and the reality of scientific truth. This group would remind us that, whether we like it or not, in the developed world, we enjoy the fruits of modern scientific technology every day of our lives. The practical demonstration that 'science works' is an important strand to their argument, as is argued by Richard Dawkins who highlighted the hypocrisy of those who reject science and still fly in aeroplanes at 30 000 ft.

If we now add to the contemporary debate over the status of science some history—in short a century and more of conflict between some areas of the Christian Church and those who practice science—it is not surprising that many people are confused about the relationship between science and faith. In my experience this area is rife with muddled thinking and unhelpful writing. Many, who might engage in this debate opt out and adopt a simplistic pro-science or anti-science stance. Professor Berry is not one such, for he writes with the explicit aim of 'clearing away the overgrown thickets which confuse and deter those who want to explore the interface of science and faith'. His thesis is simple, but not simple minded—there are two books, the book of nature and the book of scripture, we need to read them both and read them together. Oversimplifying for the sake of clarity he suggests that the book of nature tells us 'How?' whilst the book of scripture tells us 'Why?'. Berry is a committed scientist, working at a high level in his discipline, and a practising Christian who takes a high view of Scripture. He writes to persuade both the sceptic and the muddled Christian believer that Christianity and a scientific understanding of the world can represent complementary insights. He also writes to assure the Christian who is a scientist that there need be no dichotomy between work and faith.

The heart of this book is a short collection of essays on the subjects of evolution, human life issues (genetics) and environmental ethics. Each essay (briefly reviewed below) is developed with scientific integrity and argued from a Christian viewpoint. Professor Berry is an ecological geneticist, that is to say he is an evolutionary biologist, and is Professor of Genetics at University College London. He writes with an authority which comes from a deep involvement with his subject matter over

a long period of time. He has chaired a working party to advise the Church of England on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, he is a member of the UK Government Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, was commissioned to write an 'ethical response' to the World Conservation Strategy and more recently chaired a working party to formulate a 'Code of Environmental Practice'.

Evolution is fact.

The author opens his discussion of evolution with two very clear statements. Evolution is a fact, and humans are animals. Few working in the Life Sciences and the Earth Sciences would disagree. Many religious people on the other hand find these ideas unpalatable. One critical area of confusion in the evolution debate which Professor Berry seeks to clarify is the use of the term 'theory'. To the layman "Evolution is *only* a theory". Berry argues that this betrays an ignorance of the use of scientific language. In science the word 'theory' is a technical term which means 'an established interpretation of facts; a corpus of ideas as firmly grounded as any other in the field', not, as many would claim 'a speculative, untested idea'.

There remain however, some difficult questions. For if evolution is a fact and humans are animals, what precisely is our 'humanness' and how do we interpret the creation accounts in Genesis? For Berry, the Biblical record must be read not as a scientific description of events but as theological statements. Two simple but profound observations follow. Firstly, the creation accounts show a clear description of progress, from chaos to humankind, broadly supporting the notion of evolution. Secondly, 'humanness' defined as 'man made in the image of God' becomes relational, not physical; thus palaeontology becomes subservient to mankind's (geologically) recent history. For any scientist working with the bricks and mortar of evolution the Creationist position is untenable. For Berry, Creationist logic is encapsulated in one word—"wrong". Nevertheless the author does not attempt a 'hatchet job', even though he could have done, rather, he makes an important theological point, a clever approach which meets the Creationists on their own ground. He shows that the great irony of the Darwinian revolution, although few could see it at the time, is that in evolution God is brought back into his world from whence He had been excluded by the theologians of the 18th and 19th Century.

That God is active in his creation is the opposite of the Creationist position which focuses on God's past work in Creation. For the Christian both truths are vital—God has worked and is working in our world, He is both transcendent and immanent.

You are more than your genes dictate

To what extent are we programmed by our genetic make-up? Some would argue that we are imprisoned by our genes and that the blue-print laid down at fertilisation determines for all time our physical and moral character. Professor Berry presents an opposing view. He shows that even if all the details of human DNA were known, human beings cannot be adequately described by their genes. There is no such thing as a behavioural gene. Every behaviour is the result of interactions between inherited (genetic) and environmental (physical, social, cultural) factors.

Currently, there are two broad areas of genetic research which raise major moral issues. The first is genetic manipulation, presently the subject of intense media debate in the UK. The second area is reproductive technology, a topic discussed at some length in this book. The landmark birth of Louise Brown the first 'test tube baby', conceived through *in vitro* fertilisation raises two important moral questions—when *precisely* does life begin? and, what is the nature of the marriage bond in the light of donor insemination? The author dwells chiefly on the former of these two issues and argues that the evidence is against the proposition that life begins at conception, whilst remaining agnostic about the point at which God's image is impressed upon the physical nature. For some this is unsatisfactory, but the reality is that scripture gives very little guidance on these issues. In the light of this Professor Berry has powerfully restated his principal thesis. Here is new ground being broken. No-one has trodden this way before and so we need all the help we can get including the insights of modern science as well as those of biblical scholarship.

Green Christianity

The current environmental debate frequently addresses itself to those with political power, but at its heart the environmental 'problem'

requires scientific and moral solutions. The complexity of environmental pathways are such that events triggered by this generation may have consequences far removed in time from the present. Thus current political systems, with their short time scales and immediate agendas can be irrelevant. However, the author documents the way in which scientific solutions to environmental problems are also inadequate by showing that the premise 'accurate knowledge leads to right solutions' is flawed. He shows how early environmental strategies which ignored the moral dimension were doomed to failure and describes his own involvement in seeking to bring ethical issues to the fore.

Some have argued that 'Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt' over environmental degradation because Christian theology has encouraged humankind to exploit the natural world for their own ends. To counter this view Berry restates the Christian doctrine of conservation—we live in God's world, which He has entrusted to us and so we are required to be responsible stewards. He compares the Christian position with that of other religious groups and explores what is meant in the concept of stewardship. He challenges the Christian church to adopt an accountable, responsible behaviour towards the whole of creation which may then form the basis of a Christian challenge to the wider world.

Berry concludes his book with a call to 'a mature doctrine of creation'. Sadly, an area of Christian thought which has lost confidence and suffered massively from internal disagreements. Disagreements which arise from misunderstandings at the science-faith interface. It is time for scientists and theologians alike to state more boldly their understanding of God's work and purpose in creation. We have here a neglected and yet powerful apologetic for our age, for in many ways Christian thinkers have been ahead of the game in anticipating the post-modern loss of confidence in science. They always knew that science held only partial answers. As contemporary society questions meaning and purpose, we have in a mature Christian doctrine of creation, confident answers to vital questions.

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