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The Selfless Gene, Living with God and Darwin,

Charles Foster,

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2009

The Selfless Gene says

The eye is not perfect and indeed the eye is not as well designed as it could be. If you believe in evolution you would expect this for evolution depends on making the best of what is there. The creationists object that God is a consummate artist and likes to use versatile techniques but the eye is not designed how a human being for example would design it so that idea of theirs is out (page 50, 51).

The Truth is: I agree. Creationists are saying that what looks like the work of evolution is deceptive for it is God behind it not evolution. This is no better than the idea that the earth is only a few thousand years old despite the evidence that it is astronomically older than that. Some creationists believe in the apparent age theory which teaches that God made the world look older than what it is.

The Selfless Gene says

There is much evidence that we are born with the tendency to adopt religious belief. One example of this evidence is how children seem to be inclined towards religious belief. It is as if their religious tendencies are unlearned and innate but may be lost as the children get older (page 115).

The Truth is: It is more accurate to say that children have a liking for faith in magic and magical beings such as witches and fairies. To make children pray and to urge them to believe in God instead of magic and witches and ghosts and fairies is

The Selfless Gene says

Genesis says that God gave green plants as food for man and all the animals but evolution and science contradicts this. There never were vegetarian lions. The Bible says that God made man and all animals and the creation and said that it was good. We reject the view that God only meant it was good in the sense that it works for he didn't say it works but that it is good. Science says creation was never good - it was always one animal ripping another apart.

The Selfless Gene says

St Augustine taught that animals cannot reason like we can and so God gave them to us to use them in their lives and death. St Thomas Aquinas taught that it is not wrong for man to use animals by killing them or using them in anyway way we want. The Jesuit Theologian Joseph Rickaby taught that animals have no rights for they are not persons and so we can abuse them if we wish for they have as many rights as sticks and stones do and that is none! (page 147)

The Truth is, The Selfless Gene sees arrogance and callousness in such teachings. It says their beliefs contradict Genesis 2 which claims that God brought animals to Adam as friends. The Selfless Gene points out how chimps and dolphins and New Caledonian Crows seem to be conscious beings.

The book says that if animals are not conscious but sentient that does not justify hurting them. Consciousness is being aware that A has passed away and B is happening now and C is to come (page 149). Sentience is merely when an earthworm feels a needle for example . Its just physical. Consciousness is more than physical it is mental too.

The Selfless Gene says

It is a problem how Jesus could be the perfect son of God when he ate the lamb at Passover, told the disciples how to hurt and kill fish by fishing, cooked fish after his resurrection for the disciples, worshipped in the bloodbath of the Temple, never said a bad word against the sacrificial system, magically killed loads of pigs to make a point and so on (page 156).

The Selfless Gene says

Paul declares in Romans 5 that sin (he uses the word paraptoma which means mistake - not an immoral action) came into the world through one man and death came through sin and death spread to all because all sinned. Foster says that this depicts the fall as a gate and says that we are individually responsible because we all sinned. He says that Romans 5 does not actually say that this death is physical death. It could be spiritual death.

The Selfless Gene says

Foster rejects the idea that it helps to people when they believe God is with them when they suffer and that he suffers with them too. He says that it makes no difference when something bad happens to you (page 175).

The Selfless Gene says

Foster says that you will have to hate the body if you want to believe our destiny is to be disembodied beings in Heaven forever (page 187). He argues that the magical body of Jesus that can go through walls etc is MORE material than our bodies are and that God will make all things more material not less when he saves the universe and re-creates it. He says that this is taught in the Bible metaphor of earth being wedded to Heaven and in the idea of all things being reconciled to God (page 187).

The Selfless Gene says

Page 209 says that the fall of Adam and Eve was caused by them coming to their own conclusions about things and not depending on the word of God. God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent comes along and asks Eve if God told her not to eat of any tree in the garden? Foster says he is exaggerating for God never banned the eating of all trees. Eve instead of saying no tells the serpent that he forbade the eating of the tree in the middle of the garden or touch it. She forgot what tree she was forbidden to eat. She made it up then that it was the tree of life she was forbidden to eat. She took the fruit of the forbidden tree and gave it to her husband and caused a disaster for all mankind.

The Truth says: Foster is actually right. The story indicates that we must not depend on reason or memory alone but on the word of God. This means that anyone who makes up their own mind and does not refer to the bible and obey it is another Adam or Eve - or worse for Adam and Eve didn't see the consequences.

MY LAST WORD

Richard Dawkins says that genes do get organisms to behave in unselfish ways so that the genes can ensure they will survive at the expense of other beings. If that is so, then unselfish people are just tools in a scheme where the forces of selfishness are taking advantage of them. Even unselfish is selfish when it is all weighed up.

Interestingly, the argument against the selfish gene is that brothers and sisters have the same percentage of genes as your children and yet you will sacrifice a brother or sister for your child. You will even lose more genes by sacrificing a brother and sister both for your child! Religion celebrates that as being God's plan. But it is obvious that somehow we are working against how we are designed. It's a strange plan. There are brutal errors in how things are organised and often that goes over our heads for we battle nature and normalise the triumph. It is certainly a godless gene!