

EDITORIAL

THE PROBLEM OF MORALS

A recent book, *Abusing Science*, by Philip Kitcher (1982. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) presents a detailed analysis of “scientific creationism.” Kitcher discusses, chapter by chapter, the creationists’ strong points, along with their criticisms of evolutionary theory. In conclusion, he states to his satisfaction that there is no substance to the creationists’ claims to superiority of theory.

In the final chapter, “The Bully Pulpit,” Kitcher believes himself to have at last discovered the fundamental reason for the debate between creationists and evolutionists: the issue of human morality. He provides numerous quotations from creationist authors which blame the theory of evolution for all of society’s evils. The lengthy list of problems include aggressive wars, racism, promiscuity, homosexuality, and communism. Kitcher claims (perhaps rightly so) that evolutionary theory is not the source of all these evils.

He then proceeds to make a case for the recently developed concept that the morals of a society can be the natural result of evolutionary processes. In other words, man’s mind has evolved so that introspection is possible, and with his ability to reason from cause to effect, certain societal behaviors may be advantageous for survival. (Kitcher’s position forces him to swim upstream against a spate of semipopular and popular literature written by *pro-evolutionary* authors. These claim that many abhorrent social traits are rooted in an evolutionary past and that our present war-like, sexual, etc., behaviors are merely remnants of a more primitive stage).

While Kitcher may claim that belief in evolutionary theory is not the basis of society’s ills, he fails to recognize an even more fundamental issue. This is the question of *who* determines the basic morals of a society and what is the end result of this particular choice. Practically speaking, for most of the people on this planet, social morals are determined by their society. Divergent moral codes found throughout the cultures and regions of the earth thereby take on a relativistic position. Thus man himself becomes the final arbiter and determiner of his moral system. It is this relativism that the creationist cannot abide.

Creationists claim that man cannot determine morals, because these must come from an all-wise and loving God if society is to function optimally. The creation of man, his fall from grace, and the Divine rescue mission all shout loudly of man’s inability to determine his moral values. So, while evolutionary theory does not contain the elements of society’s ills, it does provide a philosophical basis for moral relativism which surely is the basis of these ills. It is this contrast between relativistic morals and divinely given morals that will forever be the basis for conflict between these two powerful ideas.

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