

A Pastoral-Theological Assessment of the Conflict Between Atheistic Evolution, Creationism, and Scripture

Stephen M. Vantassel

KEY WORDS

| Biblical Hermeneutics | Creationism |
| Darwinian Evolution | Pastoral Theology |

ABSTRACT

Atheistic evolution and creationism have been in conflict since Darwin's work in the 1800s. This paper reviews the fundamental concepts and assumptions underlying both positions and discusses how faithful Christians should frame the controversy. Suggestions for how pastors should handle the controversy in their respective churches is also provided..

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between evolution and biblical creationism has raged ever since Darwin's landmark work in 1859. Some Christians, in their zeal for their interpretation of Genesis, have scorned believers who adopted a different view. This infighting has often lacked Christian charity and caused further fracturing of the church's unity.

In light of this debate, it is proper to reassess the evidence in the hopes of finding a suitable Christian stance that will hopefully soften Christian-versus-Christian fighting while not papering over legitimate differences. This article will offer some guidance on framing the debate by showing where scriptural teaching is clear (and less clear) and how it relates to Darwinian evolution. It is hoped that a better understanding of the facts, as presently understood, will help Christians have a more fruitful dialogue with those who disagree with their particular view of creation, while still being faithful to Scripture.

HISTORIC CHURCH TEACHING ON CREATION PRIOR TO DARWIN

In light of our goal, it is appropriate to summarize some of the reasons behind the present creation debate. Church doctrine focused on the meaning of the classical text on creation, Genesis 1-2. Historically, the church recognized that the narrative was a remarkably matter-of-fact account of the universe's beginnings, especially when compared to the creation stories from contemporaneous nations.¹ Readers will search in vain for the rivalries rampant in the polytheistic cosmogonies.² *Elohim* is neither

1 See, E. A. Speiser, *Genesis: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. ed., vol. 1, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 10; P.J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1985). for details and discussion on extrabiblical parallels to the creation account.

2 Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942, 1951), 18. See also Paul Copan and

in conflict with other gods nor is he saddled with the limitations of materials needed for his creative act.³ In short, God creates the form and substance of his desire.

Claims by those asserting that Genesis 1:1 must be understood as a dependent clause meaning “when God began to create...” and not as an independent clause meaning “in the beginning God created...” have not stood up to closer scrutiny.⁴ Von Rad contends that verse 1 is consistent with an *ex nihilo* creation and presents several reasons for this assertion. First, verse 1 clearly begins with God and God alone. Second, the uniqueness of the verb *bara*, “create,” exclusively refers to God’s activity. Third, there is the simple fact that verse 1 occurs before the chaos mentioned in verse 2. Fourth, the writer of Genesis had to use pagan terms in order to find words to characterize the initial chaos. Finally, the concept of chaos is necessary in order to underscore that creation remains orderly by the power of God.⁵ Copan and Craig add other supporting arguments, including the notion that temporal clauses which lack the definite article can act as absolute clauses (e.g. Isa 40:21; 41:4; and 46:10). Their list continues

William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids: Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 30-36.

3 Despite Simkins assertion that biblical scholars have overstated the differences between biblical and non-biblical creation stories, he failed to provide sufficient evidence to counter the view that Moses demythologized the creation accounts of Israel’s pagan neighbors. Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator & Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, 2003), 82-88.

4 Every modern and technical commentary will provide an extended discussion of the question. Much of the material that follows comes from the work of Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 29ff. See also Johnson T.K. Lim, “Explication of an Exegetical Enigma in Genesis 1:1-3,” *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (October, 2002 2002): 301-314), who came to a similar conclusion several years earlier.

5 Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks, Rev. ed. ed., Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 48-51.

to cite many more reasons.⁶ However, for the purpose of this survey, it is enough to simply say that nothing in Genesis 1:1 militates against the New Testament’s interpretation that God created the universe from nothing.⁷

Scripture claims that the universe, i.e. everything that exists outside of God, was made by God.⁸ God was not constrained by matter when he created the universe. God created the universe *ex nihilo* (from nothing), not *ex materia* (from pre-existent matter/energy/substance). It is critical for the reader to understand that the term “nothing” is not to be understood as referring to something that exists. In layman’s terms, nothing is nothing. Nothing is absence of existence. When the term *ex nihilo* is used in relationship to God’s creative act, it means that God was not constrained by anything except his good pleasure. In contrast, an artist is constrained by the medium of his materials, such as paint, canvas, and technical ability. Several key passages tell us that God was subject to no such constraints.

John’s gospel could not be more emphatic (John 1:3). John, endeavoring to substantiate the deity and co-equal nature of the Logos and the Father, echoes themes found in Genesis 1:1 and Isaiah 44:24. He clearly states that all things, *ta panta*, were made by the Logos. Lest we misunderstand, he makes the claim in both positive and negative terms. Interpreters cannot dismiss the *ex nihilo* implications by arguing that matter is not a thing or that matter was pre-existent. John 1:1 excludes the pre-existence of everything except God. Had he wished to

6 Copan and Craig., *Creation out of Nothing*, 39ff.

7 It bears mentioning that the LXX, a pre-Christian document, also understands Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause.

8 Scripture affirms this truth across all genres. See Genesis 1; Psalms 115:15; 121:2; Job 38; Isaiah 37:16; Mark 13:39; Acts 7:50; Colossians 1:16; 2 Peter 3:13; and Revelation 21:1-5. This listing is by no means complete.

suggest that matter was pre-existent, all John had to do was to add "earth" or some other natural noun in the series that was with God. In this context *ta panta* essentially stands place for kosmos and thereby means the universe, the sum total of all created things.⁹

Other passages add weight to the conclusion that Scripture teaches the universe is a created thing, and one created by God from nothing. Hebrews 11:3 says that God brought forth the visible world from that which was unseen. Some may argue that the term "unseen" refers to Platonic forms. But Copan and Craig present convincing evidence that the phrase "that which is unseen" more likely means either "from nothing, i.e. *ex nihilo*" or "the power of God's Word."¹⁰ Although favoring the latter understanding on contextual grounds (note the role the term "word" plays in the book of Hebrews), they point out that all possible understandings are compatible with an *ex nihilo* understanding of God's creative act.

Scripture also teaches that God purposefully ordered creation to be fit for mankind (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 8). Creation was designed and goal-oriented to fulfill God's will before the foundation of the world. Christ says that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). In making this claim, he ties together not only the Mosaic law but also hearkens back to God's purpose for creation (Ex. 20:8-11). Paul also speaks to the purposefulness of God in that he chose the redeemed before creating the world (Eph. 1:4).¹¹ The animal and plant kingdoms are

never spoken of as needing salvation from sin. Only the effects of the curse are seen as afflicting them (Rom. 8:22).

In the western world (including the Islamic world¹²), this view of the universe and mankind's place in it was essentially unquestioned. The Westminster Larger Catechism of 1648¹³ exemplifies how Christianity viewed creation prior to Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. It says, in its familiar question and answer format:

Question 15: What is the work of creation?

Answer: The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good....

Question 17: How did God create man?

Answer: After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.

Question 18: What are God's works of providence?

Answer: God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving

before he "sowed the seed" of the earth.

9 Joachim Guhrt, "'Kosmos,'" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1975, 1986), 1:524.

10 Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 79-80.

11 Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, vol. 1, 2 vols., *Anchor Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 79, 104. Although Barth understands "foundation" as a biological term, the point is that God knew his children

12 See 7:54 & 41:9-10 in *The Prophet Mohammed, The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text, English Translation and Commentary* trans. Maulana Muhammad Ali, Second Revised ed. (Columbus, OH: Ahmadiyyah anjuman Isha'at Isam Lahore, Inc, 1951, 1996).

13 Westminster Divines, "Westminster Larger Catechism," Church of Scotland, accessed July 12, 2005. http://www.reformed.org/documents/wlc_w_proofs/index.html. The author used a version that lacked the Scripture proofs as found at the URL above.

and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

In sum, the church believed that God created heaven and earth in the manner described in Genesis and other passages. It also held that God created with purpose and with a goal and not by happenstance. Additionally, it was decidedly dualistic in that the church believed in the existence of matter *and* spirit.

THE CHALLENGE OF DARWINIAN EVOLUTION¹⁴

The status quo came to an abrupt end upon the publication of Darwin's *Origins of the Species* in 1859. It would be no understatement to say that the text rocked the intellectual world and stood the standard understanding of the way things were on its head. Christianity's intellectual dominance, or more broadly theism's intellectual dominance, which had eliminated polytheistic views of creation along with other mythologies, now faced an ideology that did not require supernatural or intelligent oversight to account for the world's existence. Although Darwin's views were much more modest,¹⁵ his boosters quickly took hold of his teaching and used it to reject the notion of a God-ordained creation.

Today, evolution has been co-opted by a worldview known as scientific naturalism. Scientific naturalism asserts that all reality

14 The author recognizes that evolution has multiple meanings. For the purposes of this paper, evolution is being used to refer to the origins of life without the need or existence of a creator or designer. This I have termed atheistic evolution and/or Darwinian evolution. The author understands that some believe that God used/guided evolutionary processes as the means to create the universe as we know it. This paper seeks to avoid that issue and deal with atheistic or Darwinian evolution.

15 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground between God and Evolution* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999, 2002), 289-292.

consists of only one substance (matter-energy).¹⁶ If matter/energy is all there is, it comes as no surprise that every event must have a natural (vs. a supernatural) cause.¹⁷ Adherents believe that the universe and our present world occurred through known, or eventually to be discovered, natural processes. Richard Dawkins, an atheist and also self-anointed evangelist for atheistic evolution from the University of Oxford, explains how evolution can properly account for the world as it now stands. He contends that while the diversity and complexity of the organisms around us are fascinating, they resulted from the forces of natural selection working on materials organized by blind chance.¹⁸ Dennett describes Darwin's theory by contrasting Locke's philosophy with Darwin's. As Locke believed that matter needed the oversight of a mind to become organized, Darwin asserted that matter organized itself and then created mind.¹⁹ Dennett's support of Darwinism makes sense given his belief that all of reality is basically matter/energy, which is just organized in different ways. Dawkins sounds a similar chord, noting that while the world around us is complex, the complexity is due to natural causes, including random mutations,

16 The author is aware that Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$ highlights the interchangeable relationship between matter and energy.

17 Arthur Peacocke, "Biology and a Theology of Evolution," *Zygon* 34, no. 4 (December 1999), 698-9; and William Lane Craig, "Part 3: Christ and Miracles," in *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith and et. al. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 140f.

18 Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*, with a New Introduction (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd. , 1996), 43. Dawkins says that simple items (i.e. non-living) were created by chance but that complex items arose through natural selection.

19 Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), Chapter 1.

and not to a conscious designer.²⁰ Given enough time, Dawkins believes that natural forces are sufficient to explain how the world (and all its complexity) as we know it came to be.

Evolution, understood in an atheistic manner, presents us with a number of troubling ideas. First, evolution denies humanity's uniqueness by asserting that just like all the other organisms, humans are just the result of random mutations²¹ which were able to take advantage of the opportunities provided by natural selection.²² Additionally, evolution's reductionism eliminates any room for freedom and ultimate morality.²³ God, good, and evil were simply figments of a primitive imagination. In short, evolution claimed to be the truth, and with this truth its adherents engaged in evangelism. Evolution's believers were not satisfied to remain in their laboratories and research facilities. Instead, they undertook a crusade to liberate humanity from its superstitions of religion, God, miracles, and fear of the unknown.²⁴ Clearly, evolution presents itself as a direct competitor to Christianity's explanation of the world's origin.²⁵

The ideological threat that Darwinian evolution presented—and continues to have—to Christianity is obvious. Evolution undercuts

several major Christian doctrines, including the existence of God, objective morality, the preeminence of mankind,²⁶ and purposefulness of life. Evolution accomplishes this task by simply presenting another “story” or account for our origins backed by “science.” Using science and reason, evolutionists seek to quarantine Christian beliefs in the land of fanciful stories of Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.²⁷ The clash between Christianity and evolution is nothing less than the struggle for the mind of contemporary man. If Christianity loses the battle, then it will be reduced to mythological status with little more value than the pragmatic “higher power” belief of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Since evolution engenders so many challenges to the traditional doctrine of creation, it is difficult to know where to begin. The controversy engages one within the arcane worlds of science and theology. Rare is the individual who is competent in both.²⁸ Christians, while believing in the value of empiricism and reason, also accept the validity of biblical truth. Unlike our opponents, we have to determine whether or not we have properly understood the physical/scientific evidence as well as the evidence of Scripture. Like scientists, Christians believe that new evidence can modify our theological systems, and we do not simply give up our system just because a problem or two arises.²⁹

20 Richard Dawkins., *The Blind Watchmaker*, 5.

21 Richard *ibid.*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 50.

22 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 168.

23 The author understands that there is diversity of opinion about evolution and its relationship to religion. However, he believes that looking at the extreme positions provides a better foil to evaluate the issue. For another opinion on evolution see Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 203f. Miller, an evolution supporter, uses Quantum Theory to reject hard determinism. Unfortunately, his answer leads to a God who is not really in control (see pp. 204, 234, 289.). He also adopts a materialistic view of humanity (pp. 290-1). Contra Daniel C. Dennett., *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 467ff.

24 Kenneth R. Miller., *Finding Darwin's God*, 165ff. Miller has an excellent discussion on reasons for the hostility between science and religion.

25 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 37. Miller says, “Evolution is history.”

26 Richard Dawkins., *The Blind Watchmaker*, x. Dawkins rejects the notion that the universe is evolving to a higher goal or that man was the destiny of evolution. With the mind as little more than a computer program, one wonders what the point of existence is in the first place. One suspects that Dawkins would consider this question nonsensical, in the same way a theist would if asked to think about life without God.

27 Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 516.

28 The author does not claim to be an expert in science. While interested in science, the author tends toward a more naturalist view of the discipline than the atomistic view that presently pervades the field.

29 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

THE DECISION

Some Christians may wish to side-step the problem by ignoring the doctrine of creation. Yet that road is simply not an option. The doctrine plays too important a role in the development of a worldview to ignore. Information and ideas are simply multiplying too quickly for a believer to have time to investigate and see what the Scripture says on each topic.³⁰ The doctrine of creation provides an ideological rubric by which a person can quickly evaluate an idea and/or thought to see if it merits further investigation. Such a rubric is not perfect, nor is it without exceptions “to the rule.” However, once the outlines of the doctrine are delineated and the implications explained, believers are well on their way to intellectually maturing in the faith and thereby reducing sins of ignorance.³¹ The doctrine also provides a point of engagement with the non-Christian world. Since everyone has beliefs about the world around them, a proper grounding in the doctrine of creation allows believers to discuss issues of societal and spiritual significance without necessarily appealing to Scripture. Under no circumstances should believers avoid their responsibility for the direct proclamation of the gospel (Matt. 28:19-20). It is just that the doctrine of creation gives us a point of contact with non-believers (i.e. we all live on the same planet) upon which we can appeal to their sense of God’s existence (Romans 1) and ultimately to present the full gospel.³²

(Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

30 Neil Postman in his book *Technopoly* decries the loss of wisdom in the fog of volumes of data. Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Paperback ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

31 Simkins presents an interesting diagram to illustrate the elements that comprise a worldview. Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator & Creation*, 27.

32 Paul’s work on Mars Hill is the classic example of

Christians may despair about the evolution-creation debate, but if we take the providence of God seriously, then we must ask ourselves what we should learn from this ideological challenge. It is with persistence that we should engage this issue. Christians must be faithful to God’s Word while endeavoring to engage science. However, we must also be sure that we do not simply change our interpretation because “science” says we should. Likewise, we should not simply hold on to a treasured interpretation of Scripture by arbitrarily denying science. This paper seeks to ascertain the bedrock of doctrine in Genesis in conversation with scientific findings in order to find a way, if any, to bridge the divide. It is imperative for Christians to hold to the truth without becoming dogmatists to a creed that is no longer biblical.

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

Christians derive their understanding of the doctrine of creation from three basic areas: Scripture (including ecclesiastical reflection on Scripture), philosophy (thinking about thinking), and science (engagement with the natural world).³³ Like a criminal investigator, the theologian must sift through mounds of data and testimony, often at conflict with one another, to determine the most coherent and reasonable explanation. The challenge is magnified due to the changes occurring with the various witnesses. When one witness changes his testimony (or if the investigator understands

using the doctrine of creation to engage the attention of non-believers, especially those with little understanding of a biblical worldview. Dr. McGrath sees opportunities for Christianity if it dialogues with ideas of the non-theological world. Alister E. McGrath, *The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 19ff.

33 This idea follows the outline used in the previously cited text by Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*.

the evidence differently), then the relative value or meaning of the testimony of other witnesses is impacted as well. Like a spider web, touch one strand and the entire web experiences the impact. Additionally, investigator bias plays a critical part in how the data is assessed and understood.

Since an unrecognized bias is the most dangerous one, the reader should know that the biases of this investigator, to continue the metaphor, are as follows. First, Scripture holds primacy of place.³⁴ Although biblical critics love to trot out the tragedy of Galileo and the geocentrism debate, the fact remains that Scripture, as traditionally understood by Christians, has a commendable track record when evaluated against the tests presented by archeology.³⁵ Second, science and philosophy equally require faith in their respective presuppositions. Their conclusions are not as objective as their proponents contend.³⁶ Christians should engage these disciplines and serve Christ in them, but always with the mindset that they do so in submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ.³⁷ Finally, the investigator recognizes that his finitude³⁸ and depravity negatively impact his ability to know and properly understand all the data.

The challenge, of course, is finding a way

to harmonize the conclusions of science with those of biblical exegesis. The road is long and full of pitfalls.³⁹ Essentially, the church has three options broadly defined as follows: (1) jettison a Christian understanding of creation and adopt an evolutionary theology;⁴⁰ (2) maintain the *prima fascia* reading of Genesis, often maligned as the literal reading; or (3) adopt a dual sphere approach (also known as a concordism), in which evolution tells the how of creation and Scripture explains the why, thereby harmonizing the two perspectives.

Christians should reject the first option without much consideration.⁴¹ Adherents to these theories adopt critical assumptions toward Scripture and engage in questionable exegesis.⁴² Unfortunately, these evolutionary theologians have accepted the message of the evolutionists. But despite their triumphant claims, evolution is not a fact. This is not to suggest that calling evolution a theory implies that it is just a fanciful idea. But to insinuate that rejection of evolution is on the same intellectual level as rejection of a round earth simply does not understand the graduated level of certainty in

34 Davis provides an excellent summary of the complex hermeneutical issues raised by science and scriptural exegesis in the opening pages of his article, Davis A. Young, "Scripture in the Hands of Geologists (Part 1)," WSTJ 49, no. 1 (Spring 1987).

35 Edwin Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures: An Introduction to Biblical Archeology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1972; repr., 1981).

36 Thankfully, this truth is becoming more recognized by those in the scientific community.

37 1 Corinthians 10:1; Proverbs 1:7.

38 In a principle known as a Godel's Incompleteness Theorem, Kurt Godel contended that man can never know everything. Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993), 85.

39 For an excellent outline of the various Christian views on creation visit Stephen C. Meyers, "The Bible and Science: The Creation Controversy," Institute for Biblical & Scientific Studies, last modified September 14, accessed July 11, 2005. <http://www.bibleandscience.com/science/creation.htm>.

40 Peacocke.696. Peacocke is historically naïve to suggest that "whatever we call it, it is a thought framework now sufficiently well-established that it is impossible, inconceivable, for us to set ourselves back into the temporal framework that has largely shaped theology, which for the present purposes I will take to be Christian theology." He continues on page 698 saying, "Any theology—any attempt to relate God to all-that-is—will be moribund and doomed if it does not incorporate this perspective into its very bloodstream." See similar claims, albeit less arrogantly, by S.R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*, Tenth ed. (London: Methuen & Co. LTD., 1916), xli-lxx.

41 Peacocke.698-9.

42 See *ibid.* and Sjoerd L. Bonting, "Chaos-Theology: A New Approach to the Science-Theology Dialogue," *Zygon* 34, no. 2 (June 1999).

knowledge.⁴³ Consider the following issues that should caution one about blind acceptance of the theory. Aside from the theory's questionable assumptions,⁴⁴ evolution has several key weaknesses. First, does evolution, as explained by Dawkins, allow enough time to mutate into the world as we know it today? Despite Dawkins' claims that "cumulative selection" gives evolution the ability to create life within 4.5 billion years (the age of the earth as he dates it), the question still stands, "Is there enough time for random mutations to give rise to the world as we see it today?"⁴⁵ Yet Dawkins acknowledges the theoretical validity of the argument from complexity but conveniently neglects to provide a specific criterion of what is needed to convince him.⁴⁶ Second, evolutionists frequently crow about the principle of falsification. Yet they have

43 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 22f. The author agrees with Miller that some criticisms of science are little more than a child's game of "were you there?" However, one should respect that finding a fossil doesn't really tell us much, as it must be interpreted within an intellectual framework that often cannot be tested (in contrast to modern criminal investigations of crime scenes). John Warwick Montgomery, *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus*, 2nd. revised ed. (Bonn: Culture and Science Publ., 2003), 41. Montgomery explains the differences between different levels of knowledge. See also Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis. New Developments in Science Are Challenging Orthodox Darwinism*, Paperback ed. (Chevy Chase: Adler & Adler, 1985, 1996). Chapter 8.

44 It is not that questioning the assumptions is not appropriate. It is. But pointing out a system's internal incoherence or its inability to address certain data provides for a more open conversation. Too often debates on presuppositions boil down to a screaming match.

45 Richard Dawkins., *The Blind Watchmaker*, 49, xi, xv.

46 Richard *ibid.*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 91. The author also had the opportunity to speak to a recent B.S. (Biology) graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln about evolution. A supporter of evolution and knowledgeable of the design movement, he candidly stated that the principle of falsification was a real problem for the theory (personal conversation, May 12, 2005). Ironically, Dawkins continually exhorts his reader to avoid the argument from "personal incredulity" (Richard *ibid.*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 38). Yet one wonders what he would think about the possibility of the resurrection. Would he use the "argument from personal incredulity" to deny it? Perhaps Christians would gain a better hearing if we claimed that the body of Jesus immediately evolved into a higher form of life.

not really demonstrated a willingness to show what evidence would in fact falsify evolutionary belief.⁴⁷ Third, how does an evolutionist account for the variety of beliefs in the world? If our minds are just the result of DNA, then how is it that some people believe in God, ghosts, astrology, etc. and others do not? Are these beliefs a necessary part of the process of natural selection? If so, why the contempt for people who believe differently?⁴⁸ Could it be that people who believe in these "unscientific things" have actually adopted a good survival mechanism so they can pass on their genes?⁴⁹ Could they be mutants? And if they are mutants, what criteria should be used to determine who is normal and who is not?⁵⁰

The church should be very wary of any call to jettison its historical understanding of such a significant doctrine as the doctrine of creation without serious reflection. Certainly many point to the church's unfortunate stand with Galileo as evidence that the church's understanding of the Bible is not infallible. Nevertheless, the doctrine of creation is of a different order than the interpretation of one verse in Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 1:5). There can be little doubt that Genesis, and scriptural interpretation of its account (Matt. 19: 3-6; Mark 10:6; Luke 17:26-7), presents readers with a perspective on the world and their place in it.

47 Cf. Michael Denton, *Evolution; A Theory in Crisis*, chap. 15; Phillip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

48 Richard Dawkins., *The Blind Watchmaker*, x-xi, 38, 43. See also Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 284.

49 Inspiration for this argument came from Victor Reppert, *C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2003), which I reviewed for *The Emmaus Journal* 12 (2003): 320-321.

50 Thanks go to my wife, Donna Vantassel, for this thought.

Option number two, the *prima fascia*⁵¹ reading of Genesis, is quite popular in Christian-Evangelical/Fundamentalist circles.⁵² This view, held by individuals known as “Young Earth Creationists,” states that God created the universe, and more particularly the earth, within six distinct twenty-four hour periods.⁵³ The events took place in essentially the order in which they are listed in the biblical record, and God created the universe in complete maturity. They believe that the earth is only around 10,000 years old as compared to an earth of 4.5 billion years.⁵⁴ Fossils and changes to the earth’s geology resulted from the catastrophic effects of the flood. It accords with a plain reading of the text and aligns with many historic teachings of the church. Jesus appears to treat the Adam and Eve and Noahic events as historical (Matt. 19: 3-6; Mark 10:6; Luke 17:26-7). As mentioned above, the plain reading also has the added advantage of being peculiarly believable even in our modern “scientific age.” There is nothing in the passages that smacks of incredulity. Young Earth creationists even read the genealogies of Genesis as truly father to son relationships, which further supports their Young Earth views.⁵⁵

The problem begins when one considers the findings of “science,” particularly in the

area of the age of the earth/universe and the fossil evidence. Scientists claim, on the basis of the time needed for starlight to reach the earth, radioactive dating, etc., that the earth is 4.5 billion years old and the universe is 10-15 billion years old.⁵⁶ Even if one discounts these provincial dating methods, the Young Earth creationists still have to contend with the findings of dendrochronology and varve dating.⁵⁷ Even with the lower dates, one can see that the differences between official scientific belief and the Young Earth creationists is large indeed. It should come as no surprise that the differences spark contentious debates and not a few attacks on the characters of the players.⁵⁸

This author believes that it is impossible for modern man to read the Genesis account from the perspective of a *tabula rasa*. The ideology of evolution has simply permeated too many areas of our culture for someone to read Genesis without thinking about how it matches with the prevailing scientific view of the universe’s age and development.⁵⁹ Therefore, the best

51 This view is often called “literal” in a pejorative manner. The author has chosen to use a less emotionally loaded term, as he believes the Young Earth creationists are not naively simplistic in their understanding of Scripture as the term “literal” would suggest.

52 Simply type in “Creationism” into an internet search engine to see for yourself.

53 “Institute for Creation Research,” accessed. <http://www.icr.org/>. Dr. Henry Morris is a key proponent of this view point.

54 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God*, 77.

55 Bishop Ussher was so confident in the historical veracity of Scripture that he calculated the year of creation to be 4004 BC. Others must have shared his conclusion, for the date was placed in the margin of some editions of the KJV.

56 The National Academies, *Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences*, Second ed. (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1999), 4-5.

57 Jane McIntosh, *The Practical Archeologist: How We Know What We Know About the Past* (NY: Facts on File Publications, 1986), 134-5. Dendrochronology goes back 8,200 years and varve dating almost one million years.

58 Dawkins claims that creationists have misused or mischaracterized beliefs such as “Cladism,” punctuated equilibrium, and fossil forgeries. Richard Dawkins., *The Blind Watchmaker*, 284, 225ff. Not to be outdone, creationists also charge evolutionists with doctoring diagrams (John Woodmorappe and Jonathan Sarfati, “Miller’s Mangled Arguments,” *TJ*, 2001.): 29-30) or inflating the value of pro-evolutionary findings (Michael Behe, “A True Acid Test: Response to Ken Miller,” Discovery Institute’s Web site, last modified May 28, 2002, accessed July 10, 2005. <http://www.trueorigin.org/behe02.asp>. Granted that Behe is not a creationist, but his critique of Miller is nevertheless illustrative.

59 The author sees this point as self-evident. One need only visit a local public school, museum of natural history, or any science program by Public Broadcasting to see how evolutionary philosophy infiltrates discussion of everything related to the natural world. Even seemingly benign topics such as giraffes on the Serengeti will never fail to include an introductory comment on how many millions of

we can do is to determine the interpretational boundaries for someone with a high view of Scripture.⁶⁰

A CONCORDIST APPROACH?

Christians believe that ultimately science and faith are compatible because God is Lord of both nature and Scripture. Any difficulties present between science and Scripture must be understood as apparent and not real, stemming from either incomplete information, misunderstood information, or improper assumptions. Regrettably, there is little common ground between the various views. Adherents to the hard-line positions of Young Earth Creationism and Darwinian Evolution will certainly criticize middling positions as “weak thinking” compromise. Certainly one must be cautious of the “academic fallacy”⁶¹ which assumes that whenever there are two opposing views, the truth must be in the middle. It could well be that the truth lies closer to one pole than the other. Nevertheless, it is apparent to this author that a compromise approach is both necessary and prudent. By evaluating the Scripture in light of the differing perspectives, we will discover if a compromise is available. Let us begin to search for this middle path by outlining the respective strengths and weaknesses of each source of evidence. In this way, perhaps we can discover how to evaluate the relative weight of each of the pieces of testimony.

years ago giraffes emerged on the earth. See also Michael Heller, “Cosmological Singularity and the Creation of the Universe,” *Zygon* 35, no. 3 (September 2000): 678.

60 A high view of Scripture is understood as belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and the historicity of Genesis in that they accurately portray God’s activities in creation as opposed to a mythical understanding.

61 The “academic fallacy” is not an official fallacy. It was created by the author.

Let us begin with the Young Earth creationists. Unfortunately, Scripture is not as clear about the creation of the universe as they would have us believe. At first glance, Genesis 1 suggests that the universe was created within six twenty-four hour days where God’s creative work entailed little more than the time needed to speak materials (and their organization) into existence. Upon closer inspection questions begin to emerge. First, it is very likely that Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 actually speak of a two-stage creation (as opposed to the gap theory).⁶² In verse 1, God creates matter and space, followed by verse 2, which has God utilizing those raw materials to create the universe.⁶³ With this understanding, the dating of the universe is of a different order than the dating of the earth—and in effect the science behind both issues is different. Second, the semantic range of *yom* (day) prior to the creation of the sun has also been called into question from ancient times.⁶⁴ Ultimately, the issue boils down to an exegetical one. What should be taken as the primary modifier of *yom*? Should we accept science and our knowledge of

62 Hayatah in Genesis 1:2 should be understood as “was” rather than “became.”

63 A strong case is made for this interpretation by Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*. They also claim that a two-stage creation harmonizes well with Scriptures that suggest creation *ex materia* (Isa. 45:18; 2 Pet. 3:5). See also Lim, “Explication of an Exegetical Enigma in Genesis 1:1-3.”

64 Stephan C. Meyers, *The Bible and Science: The Creation Controversy*, says, “In another place Philo says, ‘Creation cannot have taken place in six natural days, for days are measured by the sun’s course, and the sun is but a portion of creation’ (Philo 1929, xiii),” at http://www.bibleandscience.com/bible/books/genesis/genesis1_day1.htm The church Fathers were also divided on the issue. On Genesis. Augustine said, “No Christian will dare say that the narrative must not be taken in a figurative sense,” as found at <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/religiousstudies/alaffey/Augustine-Genesis.htm>. Theophilus saw Genesis 1 as referring to twenty-four hour days (Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology: 3 Volumes in One*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 2:22. See also Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God*, 255.

time, which requires the sun to get a twenty-four hour day, to carry the interpretation (the sun not being created until day four)? Or should we accept the phrase “evening and morning were...day” as requiring *yom* to mean a twenty-four hour period, irrespective of when the sun was created?⁶⁵ Additionally, Scripture does not plainly tell us the earth’s age.⁶⁶ This fact should be not taken as evidence in favor of the view that the universe is billions of years old⁶⁷ or that the earth is millions and millions of years old. It is just to say that Scripture does not give us insight into the age of the earth.⁶⁸ The author has long wondered how the Young Earth creationists could date the earth prior to Noah’s time.⁶⁹ It seems that Peter suggests that the Noahic world was destroyed in a manner that foreshadowed God’s second cataclysmic judgment of fire (2 Peter 2:5).⁷⁰ If that is the case, it would be difficult to think that there would be much viable scientific data available to use to date the earth.

65 Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 109.

66 See Ronald Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 147-163.

67 G. J. Whitrow, “The Age of the Universe,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 5, no. 19 (November 1954): 223.

68 It is sometimes asserted that God “lied” if the universe looks old and it is in fact not. Of all the criticisms of Young Earth creationism, this is by far the most silly. See the following footnote.

69 Appeal to the genealogical records does not solve the problem because it would assume that the genealogies were complete and were stating a father-son relationship. Consider Matthew 1:1 as an example of a genealogy that, while true, is clearly not a three generation list. However, J. Paul Tanner, “Old Testament Chronology and Its Implications for the Creation and Flood Accounts.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172 (Jan-Mar):24-44 argues there are no gaps in the generations list.

70 Peter uses *kosmos* here suggesting, at minimum, all the people. Walter Bauer, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd English ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979), 446.

Additionally, there is the question of the purpose of Genesis 1 and 2. Some interpreters of Genesis reject the notion that the opening chapters provide a chronological record of God’s activity. Genesis is seen more as providing theological meaning rather than details of God’s creative act.⁷¹ The framework view believes the point of Genesis 1 is to show that God established realms and rulers which ultimately culminated in mankind being the earth’s sub-regent under God.⁷²

On the other hand, some arguments against Young Earth creationism fail to carry much weight. The common assertion that Adam did not have enough time to name the animals, recognize his loneliness, get put to sleep, and find Eve all on the sixth day can easily be explained.⁷³ It is true that ‘*ōp*’ can mean insects as well as birds.⁷⁴ However, a Hebrew phrase string search on the entire phrase “every bird of the sky” (NASB) using BibleWorks 6.0⁷⁵ showed that, in every example, the phrase pertained only to birds (Gen. 2:19; 9:2; Ezek. 31:6; 31:13: 32:4). Contrary to Archer’s claim, Adam did not need to name the insect population on the sixth day. The number of animals Adam needed to name was probably much smaller than people would ordinarily think. God did not bring every animal on the planet to Adam. Rather, he brought *every* animal in the garden to

71 This view can be found in almost any book on creation and evolution written from a western theological perspective (except for those identified as creationists).

72 Lewis and Demarest., *Integrative Theology*, 2:24. Dr. Meredith Kline modified this theory to show the realm/ruler idea.

73 Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 59-60.

74 Carl Schultz, “*ōp*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 655.

75 Michael S. Bushell, Michael D. Tan, and Glenn L. Weaver, *Bibleworks 7.0* ed. (Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 1992-2005).

Adam. The adjective “every” is modified by the geographical context of Adam’s location, which was the garden. It is possible that the modern world has a wider variety of species than that which existed in the days of Adam.⁷⁶ Young Earth creationists do not deny micro-evolution which can have birds forming different kinds of birds. What they deny is that a snake evolved into a bird.

Another common canard used against Young Earth creationism is the strange assertion that God lied if he created the universe with “age.” The argument states that if the world looks old, as we understand the evidence, and in actual fact the earth is not old, then God lied and he is therefore not to be trusted.⁷⁷ The problems with this attitude are so fantastic that it is difficult to know how to convincingly respond. Let us consider the birth of a child. When we ask how old is the child, the parent normally gives its age based on the date of birth. However, the fact is, the child is really nine months older than that. Did the parent lie? When an inventor creates a new tool, how should he date the object? Should it be dated by the time that its constituent parts were created or should it be dated from the time the entire entity was put together?

Theistic evolution can be understood as a mediating position between Young Earth creationism and atheistic evolution. As such, this view does promise some significant advantages. First, it is possible to understand that God’s creative action took varying forms other than the commonly known verbal creation (“**God said....**,” Gen. 1:3). Genesis also suggests that

God employed intermediate creation (“**Let the earth bring forth....**,” Gen. 1:11), and artistic creation (“**God formed man....**,” Gen. 2:7). Granted, the evidence is not overwhelming. Genesis uses at least two different verbs (see Gen. 1:11, 20) and places direct rather than intermediate creative power in God himself in the creation of sea creatures (see Gen. 1:21 versus 1:12 for plants).⁷⁸ However, the Scripture is vague enough to allow some wiggle room. Second, there is value in the notion that scientists need to perform their research from a theistic perspective, as it would be inappropriate to simply use God every time a particular problem arose (i.e. the so-called “God of the gaps”).

On the other hand, the position⁷⁹ has some serious weaknesses. The primary weakness lies in their assertion that Genesis 1 is theological and not scientific.⁸⁰ Obviously Genesis is not a scientific treatise, at least not by modern standards. Nevertheless, Christians must acknowledge that Genesis 1-11 is at least as historical as Genesis 12-50. On a structural level (cf. **these are the generations of...**), Genesis is a coherent whole. Division of the book as mythical and historical at chapter 12 is completely arbitrary. Arguments for figurative language and unscientific language in other portions of the Bible fail to distinguish between passages written from a human perspective and those from a divine one. Clearly Genesis 1-2

76 Michael Denton, *Evolution; A Theory in Crisis*, 44. Denton explains one of the key reasons for evolution’s acceptance was the discovery that species were not as “fixed” as previously thought. Here is an example of how a broader understanding of *min* to mean “kind” rather than the more specific “species” could have muted this evidence for evolution. (cf. Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24-25; 6:20; 7:14; Lev. 11:14-16, 19, 22, 29; Deut. 14:13-15, 18. Ezek. 47:10.)

77 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God*, 76-79.

78 See Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis*, 53, who says “the earth [is] summoned and empowered to maternal participation in this creative act.” Note C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch: Three Volumes in One*, trans. James Martin, vol. 1, 1-10 vols., *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985 reprint), 56, where the intermediary or evolutionary nuance is downplayed.

79 The author understands that there is a broad spectrum of beliefs under the theistic evolution title. However, he trusts the reader will recognize the value of speaking in broad strokes here.

80 This point has been mentioned earlier, but see also S. R. Driver, *Genesis*, Driver. lxii-lxx.

was written from God's point of view because no one was around to witness the event. Christ treated the narratives as real and the outline within the book itself compels one to treat the book as a unity and a record of real testimony.⁸¹

Second, Scripture teaches that the universe was created through the action of God *ex nihilo*. While this itself is not a problem for theistic evolution, it does raise the question of why God wanted to wait billions of years before creating the earth.⁸² If God could make matter and energy from nothing, why stop there? Why not make the whole universe in six normal days?

Third, theistic evolutionists need to discuss how the evolution of man relates to Scripture.⁸³ One wonders if they really take seriously the fact that humans are qualitatively different from the animal kingdom. The author studied at a well-known Christian college. During a biology class, he asked the professor the following question, "What makes man different from the animals? Is it that our molecules are just organized differently? If so, at what point in evolution did the animal turn human? Or do humans have something that animals do not have?" The instructor, knowing he was being set up, did the only thing he could and still maintain his position as a supporter of evolution and a Christian. He simply smiled and refused to answer the question.

Another key problem that theistic evolutionists have relates to the randomness

of evolution. If new species form from the mutations of existing species, then it is indeed likely that humans will continue to evolve in a macro-evolutionary way. Granted, the time required would take millennia, but the point still remains—namely, that there is a point at which humans will give rise to another form of life. The difficulty this poses cuts to the heart of the atonement. If God became man in order to deliver us from our sins, then is it possible that forgiveness would only be effective for those organisms which are actually "human"? Would it be necessary that God become incarnate yet again in the new form in order to deliver the new top species from the horrors of hell?

CONCLUSION

Where does all this leave the contemporary Christian? First, science has demonstrated that it is reasonable (at the present time) to believe that the universe did in fact have a beginning.⁸⁴ Second, Christians need to understand that science assumes the regularity of scientific laws through the ages. This is not a criticism, as it would be hard to do science without this assumption. I agree that scientists, even Christian ones, need to adopt a naturalistic approach as a method in their research⁸⁵. But at some point, the method must be replaced with another one, otherwise it is no longer a method and becomes an ideology. The scientific bias against catastrophism and special creation should caution theologians against getting too uptight about every new theory that comes down the pike. There is much that science will

81 From a class with Dr. Kline at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1988; see also Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, vol. 2, 1-3 vols. (S. Hamilton, MA: Meredith G. Kline, 1985), 22.

82 cf. Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 244.

83 Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, 64-65. Archer's method of getting around the problem of the evolution of man is to assert that pre-human hominids were not created in the image of God. His explanation strains belief because it assumes these creatures were in man's line of development and neglects the intimate language surrounding God's direct creation of Adam and Eve.

84 Ross., 67. Michael Scriven questions whether scientific knowledge of the beginning is even possible. Michael Scriven, "The Age of the Universe," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 5, no. 19 (November 1954): 190.

85 John H. Walton. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 2009), p. 153.

never know, and I would suggest that science frequently states it knows more than it actually does. Any survey of the history of science reveals that scientists regularly got it wrong despite their dogmatism at the time.⁸⁶ Third, definitions need to be carefully explained and understood. Evolution can mean change in the species (a.k.a. micro-evolution) or transformation from one species to another (macro-evolution). With all the bluster of atheistic evolutionists, they do not have as much proof⁸⁷ as they think they do. Finding less complicated forms of life in a lower stratum than more complex ones does not prove that one form evolved into another. Sometimes, scientists use terms in place of actual data. One need only look at the arguments being launched against intelligent design. Theologians would do well to carefully inquire about the precise meaning in which a person is using certain language. A Christian can certainly accept the notion of theistic evolution provided that he or she sees evolution as a guided (i.e. non-random) process.⁸⁸ The author suspects that many Christian scientists have accepted evolutionary doctrine and actually see God in a deistic rather than a biblical way. If God rolled the dice when he made the universe, then it is critical that the Christian believe those dice were loaded.

The Christian must also limit evolution to the animal and plant kingdoms only. There is essentially no room to understand humans

86 Consider ideas such as theories using the terms “ether” or phlogiston or read works on the history of medicine to realize that scientific consensus does not mean as much as is often touted.

87 It is true that some creationists have used the “missing proof argument” against evolutionists in a manner akin to that used by defense attorneys defending a guilty client. The author recognizes the importance of circumstantial evidence and arguing from the results to the cause. The author simply takes issue with the arrogance that some have when suggesting that failure to embrace the doctrine of evolution implies that one’s head is in the sand. For an excellent account of evolution’s scientific weaknesses see Michael Denton, *Evolution; A Theory in Crisis*.

88 Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*. pp. 151ff.

as a result of evolution from animals. Genesis 2 is simply too intimate and detailed to allow that sort of allegorization. It is critical that Christians recognize that mankind, although tied to creation, is uniquely different as well.⁸⁹ One also has to wonder that if too much weight is given to science, then theology will always dance to the scientists tune.⁹⁰ What does this tell us about the value of theological exegesis?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASTORS

With those broad parameters established, the author believes that the evidence at the present time suggests that Christians should be focusing more attention on a creational (if not six day creation) perspective. With the rise of the Intelligent Design Movement (<http://www.intelligentdesignnetwork.org/>), it appears that evolution may become passé. It would be tragic for Christians to jump on the evolutionary bandwagon just as the wagon’s wheels start to come off.⁹¹ While that day may be years away,

89 Ronald A. Simkins, *Creator & Creation*. His explanation of humanity’s place in creation is particularly helpful. See also Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 265-6. Chafer also says that “the divine method of creation is constantly reappearing in the text of the Bible and precisely in accord with that first disclosed in Genesis (cf. Matt. 19:4; Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:45-49; 1 Tim. 2:13). The efforts men make to explain away the works of God seem too often to be an attempt to hinder others from any belief in God. The record God has given is worthy of himself. Those who treat the record with contempt treat God with the same contempt, despising divine counsels and rejecting divine grace. The one who embraces the theory of animal ancestry for man dishonors both God and himself.” Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Anthropology: Part I,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 100, no. 398 (April 1943), 227. Contra Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn’t Say about Human Origins*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012).

90 Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God*, 288.

91 While listening to National Public Radio, the author was impressed with the level of stress in the voices of people worried about the public’s continued animosity towards, and ignorance of, evolution. The fear in their

if it ever arrives, there are too many reasons why Christians should be apprehensive about theistic evolution.

Nevertheless, on a pastoral level, Christians should not elevate concerns regarding the manner of God's creative activity to the level of dogma. Churches should avoid using creationism as a test of orthodoxy. The most important issue is a person's relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Questions related to the doctrine of creation can occur in the context of the believer's growth in the faith. To do otherwise is to put the meat of Christianity before the milk. In other words, the mode of God's creative activity should stay in the charitable no-man's land of "let's agree to disagree."⁹²

Likewise, I would suggest that pastors, church elders, and Christians in general, learn to take the latest "breakthrough" or "finding" in favor of atheistic evolution in stride. Relax. Like military reports, the initial ones are usually wrong. Likewise, Christians should not get too excited about evidence that supports a traditional view of creation. These "facts" often are overstated when looked at with greater scrutiny. Instead, focus on the Gospel and salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. When Jesus is the focus, these other, albeit important, questions, often lose their urgency to be answered.

voices suggests that the pendulum may be swinging in the other direction.

92 The author would like to thank Dr. Calvin Smith for his helpful comments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge several reviewers, both known and unknown, who have provided comments that have helped improve this paper.

"Institute for Creation Research." Last modified Accessed. <http://www.icr.org/>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archer, Gleason L. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- Barth, Markus. *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3. Vol. 1, 2 vols.* Anchor Bible, edited by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974.
- Bauer, Walter, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Edited by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979.
- Behe, Michael. "A True Acid Test: Response to Ken Miller." Discovery Institute's Web site. Last modified May 28, 2002, 2000. Accessed July 10, 2005. <http://www.trueorigin.org/behe02.asp>.

- Bonting, Sjoerd L. "Chaos-Theology: A New Approach to the Science-Theology Dialogue." *Zygon* 34, no. 2 (June 1999): 323-32.
- Bushell, Michael S., Michael D. Tan, and Glenn L. Weaver. *Bibleworks 7.0* ed. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 1992-2005.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. "Anthropology: Part I." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 100, no. 398 (April 1943): 220-43.
- Copan, Paul and William Lane Craig. *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Craig, William Lane. "Part 3: Christ and Miracles." In *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, edited by Francis J. Beckwith and et. al., 139-43. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Dawkins, Richard. *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*, with a New Introduction. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd. , 1996.
- Dennett, Daniel C. *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- Denton, Michael. *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis. New Developments in Science Are Challenging Orthodox Darwinism*. Paperback ed. Chevy Chase: Adler & Adler, 1985, 1996.
- Divines, Westminster. "Westminster Larger Catechism." Church of Scotland. Last modified 1648. Accessed July 12, 2005. http://www.reformed.org/documents/wlc_w_proofs/index.html.
- Driver, S.R. *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*. Tenth ed., edited by Walter Lock. London: Methuen & Co. LTD., 1916.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Guhrt, Joachim. "'Kosmos'." In *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown, vol 1, 521-26. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1975, 1986.
- Harrison, Ronald Kenneth. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.
- Heidel, Alexander. *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942, 1951.
- Heller, Michael. "Cosmological Singularity and the Creation of the Universe." *Zygon* 35, no. 3 (September 2000): 665-85.
- Johnson, Phillip E. *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Keil, C.F. and F. Delitzsch. *The Pentateuch: Three Volumes in One*. Translated by James Martin. Vol. 1, 1-10 vols. Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985 reprint.

- Kline, Meredith G. *Kingdom Prologue*. Vol. 2, 1-3 vols. S. Hamilton, MA: Meredith G. Kline, 1985.
- Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Lewis, Gordon R. and Bruce A. Demarest. *Integrative Theology: 3 Volumes in One*. Vol. 2, 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Lim, Johnson T.K. . “Explication of an Exegetical Enigma in Genesis 1:1-3.” *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (October, 2002 2002): 301-14.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004.
- McIntosh, Jane. *The Practical Archeologist: How We Know What We Know About the Past*. NY: Facts on File Publications, 1986.
- Meyers, Stephen C. “The Bible and Science: The Creation Controversy.” Institute for Biblical & Scientific Studies. Last modified September 14, 2004. Accessed July 11, 2005. <http://www.bibleandscience.com/science/creation.htm>.
- Miller, Kenneth R. *Finding Darwin’s God: A Scientist’s Search for Common Ground between God and Evolution*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1999, 2002.
- Mohammed, *The Prophet. The Holy Qur’an: Arabic Text, English Translation and Commentary*. Translated by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Second Revised ed. Columbus, OH: Ahmadiyyah anjuman Isha’at Isam Lahore, Inc, 1951, 1996.
- Montgomery, John Warwick. *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus*. 2nd. revised ed. Bonn: Culture and Science Publ., 2003. Originally published as 2002.
- National Academies, *The Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences*. Second ed. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1999.
- Peacocke, Arthur. “Biology and a Theology of Evolution.” *Zygon* 34, no. 4 (December 1999): 695-712.
- Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Paperback ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- Reppert, Victor. *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Ross, Allen P. *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.
- Ross, Hugh. *The Creator and the Cosmos*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993.
- Schultz, Carl. “öp.” In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, edited by R. Laird Harris, vol 2, 664-55. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Scriven, Michael. “The Age of the Universe.” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 5, no. 19 (November 1954): 181-90.

Simkins, Ronald A. *Creator & Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, 2003.

Stephen M. Vantassel

Stephen M. Vantassel is a tutor of Biblical Studies and Theology at King's Evangelical Divinity School, Broadstairs, UK.

Speiser, E. A. *Genesis: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 1. 3rd ed. ed. The Anchor Bible, edited by William Foxwell Albright et. al. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964.

Von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis*. Translated by John H. Marks. Rev. ed. ed. Old Testament Library, edited by Peter Ackroyd et. al. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972.

Whitrow, G. J. "The Age of the Universe." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 5, no. 19 (November 1954): 215-25.

Wiseman, P.J. *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1985.

Woodmorappe, John and Jonathan Sarfati. "Miller's Mangled Arguments." *TJ* 2001.

Yamauchi, Edwin. *The Stones and the Scriptures: An Introduction to Biblical Archeology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1972. Reprint, 1981.

Young, Davis A. "Scripture in the Hands of Geologists (Part 1)." *WSTJ* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 1-34.