

Biblical Creation vs. Darwinian Evolution

“Faith vs. Un-Faith”

by Richie Temple
Cary, North Carolina

Of all the “trials of faith” that Christians must endure, none has proved more harmful in the last two centuries than that due to the wide acceptance of Darwinian evolution.¹ At the beginning of the 19th century the great German writer, statesman and philosopher Goethe made the extremely profound statement that,

“The deepest theme in history has been posed by the conflict between faith and unfaith.” [Lewis Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation*, p. 1],

Goethe’s words not only described the past that he knew but also a future that was just beginning. Though this spiritual conflict between “faith and unfaith” began in the Book of Genesis and has continued down through the centuries to the present time, it has nowhere come out into the open more vividly than in the debate over Biblical creation vs. Darwinian evolution.

This debate has raged now for almost one hundred and fifty years since the

¹ The Bible presents its creation accounts in pictorial and, often, poetic language according to the understanding of the people to whom these accounts were first addressed (e.g. Gen. 1-2, Proverbs 8, Psalm 8, Job 38-41, etc.). It has nothing specifically to say about the subject of evolution. If one takes the biblical phrase “according to their kinds” (Gen. 1) as the basis of life-forms, then a certain type of small-change or micro-evolution could take place within that context from that point onwards. However, Darwinian evolution which postulates evolution arising from one or a few original life forms and proceeding according to random mutation and natural selection is a direct contradiction of the biblical accounts of creation which show life to have been created supernaturally according to the purpose, will and design of a Creator God.

publication of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Scientifically today, the Darwinian “unfaith” of materialism – the idea that things made themselves - dominates our universities, public schools and scientific laboratories; however, for the original scientists of the 16th and 17th century Scientific Revolution “faith” in a God who created the world with a purpose in mind seemed “self-evident” from the design of the world around them. Let’s look at a couple of examples:

“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and domain of an intelligent and powerful Being.” [Sir Isaac Newton].

“The purpose of the world and all creation is man. I believe that it is for this very reason that God chose the earth, designed as it is for the bearing and nourishing of the Creator’s true image, for revolving among the planets.” [Johannes Kepler]

This view, of course, remains the view of the common man today who professes faith in God. It also continues to be held by thousands of believing scientists around the world. It is not, however, the view of modern science as a whole. Instead, modern science upholds with a passion the atheistic philosophy of materialism.

This modern scientific “unfaith” of materialism had its roots in ancient Greece but only emerged full-blown in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was inspired by the humanism and individualism of the Renaissance era and was eventually built on the foundation of the Scientific Revolution which came to full fruition with the work of Isaac Newton in the 16th and 17th centuries. Despite the fact that the Scientific Revolution’s most famous scientists such as Kepler, Newton, Leibniz and Locke all fervently believed in a God who created and governed the world, the system of natural laws that they described was transformed during the Enlightenment period of the 18th century into first, deism, and then finally, materialism.

Deism was the religion of Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire and others. It taught that God was the grand watchmaker who had created the world to run on natural laws and then stepped back to let it run on its own - without his active and personal involvement – just like a clock. Since this made God a sort of Constitutional Monarch without any real power a practical atheism thus set in. From there it was an easy step into the materialism of the late 18th century and beyond. For if man, in fact, possessed the power of reason, there seemed to be no real need for God at all. Instead, it seemed more likely to some natural philosophers (scientists) of the 18th and 19th centuries that the simple cause and effect interactions of matter brought about the world that we see - apart from God altogether. Or, in simple English, “things made themselves.”

The list of ‘isms’ that has grown out of this supposedly scientific worldview reads like a veritable smorgasbord of modern words that have “unfaith” at their core. These words include: “atheism,” “agnosticism,” “materialism,” “naturalism,” “communism” “secularism” and “humanism.” All of these words have either been invented or reinvented over the last few centuries. Put them together in any combination that you like – e.g., “secular humanism” - and you pretty much come out with the same thing: a worldview that is based on and proceeds from “unfaith.”

But the single most important factor in supporting these “isms” was the supposedly scientific materialistic underpinnings for these philosophies provided by Darwin’s work *The Origin of Species*. As the famous Darwinian advocate Richard Dawkins recently stated,

“although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.” [Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, p. 6]

Or, so at least, says Dawkins. In this article we will examine whether or not Darwin’s

materialistic “unfaith” really is a logical and viable alternative to the traditional biblical “faith” in a God who created the world with a purpose in mind.

“Faith” in Biblical Creation

The Bible clearly teaches that there is an all-powerful, loving and personal God who created the world with a purpose in mind. The first sentence of the Bible boldly sets out the truth that God is the Creator and the rest of Genesis chapters 1-2 sets out the design and purpose of God’s creation. Thus Genesis 1:1 -

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1:1).

- becomes the foundation for the rest of the Bible and, at the same time, the foundation of our faith. For based on the clear teaching of the Word of God the response of the believer when we look at the world is –

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Heb. 11:3).

Thus, the Bible teaches that there is a God, who is spirit and invisible, who has created both an invisible spiritual world and a visible, physical world through his purposeful and powerful Word (Cf. John 1:1-3). Though we experience the physical world through our senses we understand its origin, meaning and purpose through faith in God’s Word.

The Bible also teaches, however, that *all* people can know that there is a God who is “eternal in power” and “divine in nature” because of the created order and design of the heavens and earth. This knowledge should lead a person to “seek God” and when they do, they will find him for God desires for “all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:4). God’s created order can be the first step in coming to know God for those who do not have immediate access to God’s Word. Things cannot “create themselves” and the idea

that the world we know could have evolved from non-life “particles to people” is simply nonsense. This is “plain” and “self-evident” from God’s creation itself and only willful ignorance based on human decision and spiritual deception could bring any human being to such a worldview. This, of course, is exactly what both the Old and New Testaments teach:

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.*

*There is no speech or language where
their voice is not heard.*

*Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
(Psalm 19:1-4).*

The knowledge of God is made manifest by the heavens and earth; there is no place – irrespective of race, language, or culture – where this knowledge of God cannot be known for those who desire to know God.

As Paul’s Letter to the Romans states every person who rejects this self-evident knowledge of God is “without excuse” before God because God has made this knowledge “plain” to all mankind. If man rejects this knowledge of God he starts down the road of “professing to be wise” but “becoming a fool,” of giving oneself over to “impurity” and, finally, to “worshipping and serving created things rather than the Creator.” (Rom. 1:18ff.) The history of Darwinism in the last two centuries – which has done so much to destroy biblical faith - shows that this is exactly what has happened for those who have embraced the all encompassing world-view of materialistic atheism and Darwinian evolution.

“Un-faith” in Darwinian Evolution

In looking at the world and how all of its beauty, order and diversity has come about one

must make a *choice*: whether to accept the self-evident truth that there must be a Creator, or else, to find some other explanation - apart from God - as to how the world and all of life’s beauty, order and diversity has come about. This is exactly what Darwin set out to do. The basic premise of Darwinian evolution is that all living things have descended from one [or a few] original life-form by a process of random mutation and natural selection. Though some scientists have tried to combine the idea of God as Creator with that of Darwinian evolution, it has also generally been assumed by Darwinian scientists that the first living organism somehow arose from non-living matter and that the material universe arose through purely materialistic means such as via the Big Bang. In other words, there is no place for God in the normal scientific scheme of things based on Darwinian evolution.

This conscious *choice* to exclude God in the conduct of “science” is indicated by the following representative quote by the famous Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin:

“We take the side of [materialistic] science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have *a priori* commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.” [Richard Lewontin, “Billions and Billions of Demons,” The New York Review, Jan. 9, 1997, p. 31].

Now to exclude God or spiritual causes in conducting experiments for *applied* science is logical; however, to exclude God or spiritual causes in the attempt to understand the origin, meaning, and purpose of the universe - and of life itself - is patently absurd for such an assumption necessarily rules out from the beginning finding the most obvious explanation of all - God.

But just what are the chances that the universe and life as we know it could have arisen from “things making themselves”? In fact, it is no secret amongst Darwinian evolutionists that the statistical probability of the world as we know it evolving “from particles to people” is practically zero. In fact, so unlikely is this scenario on the basis of statistical probability that by an ironic twist of logic the “unfaith” of Darwinian evolution based on atheistic materialism really becomes the “blind faith” of a person searching for any possible explanation for the natural order of the universe except for the one explanation that is both obvious and self-evident - God. In other words, Darwinian evolution is more like a “pseudo religion” based on blind faith and conjecture, rather than on solid scientific evidence that supports its suppositions.

The literature of those who promote Darwinian evolution is simply loaded with admissions that the probability of evolution “from particles to people” actually occurring is practically zero. Indeed, the famous scientists Francis Crick, L.M. Murkhin and Carl Sagan have estimated that the difficulty of a human evolving by chance processes alone is one in 10 to the negative 2,000,000,000th – which Borel’s law says is no chance at all. Let’s look at some quotes from some famous scientists that show just what a “leap of faith” Darwinian evolution, in fact, is:

“An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a

miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going” [Francis Crick, Nobel Prize winner and co-discoverer of the structure of the DNA molecule.]

“The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way [through Darwinian evolution] is comparable with the chance that ‘a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the material therein’”. [Sir Fred Hoyle, founder of the Cambridge Institute of Theoretical Astronomy and originator of the steady state theory of the origin of the universe].

But surely, as we’ve all been led to believe in our schools, the fossil record provides solid proof for Darwinian evolution, does it not? The late paleontologist Stephen J. Gould, sometimes called “Mr. Evolution,” in a moment of unguarded candor puts the lie to this idea by citing the reality of what the fossil record actually shows:

“The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persist as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches ... Most species exhibit no directional change during their tenure on earth ... in any local area, the species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and ‘fully formed’”.

In other words, the fossil record does not in fact show gradual evolution but, if it can be relied on to show much of anything at all, it shows fully developed life-forms with only limited variation within each group – just as the Bible’s wording “according to their kinds” (Gen. 1) would indicate. Why then does science not recognize the likely possibility – at least as an alternative theory to Darwinian evolution – that the universe and life in all its variety are the result of the intelligent design of a creator God? It is entirely a result of philosophical bias: the conscious *choice* to exclude the possibility of

intelligent design theory and its obvious connotation that there must be a creator God that designed his creation. This is plainly evident in all Darwinian evolutionary literature, for as Richard Dawkins states, all schools of Darwinian thought,

“despise so-called scientific creationists equally” and though they all agree that “the only alternative explanation ... is divine creation” they would all “reject this alternative.” [The Blind Watchmaker p. 230].

Why this rejection? Because of the philosophical bias of “unfaith” in materialistic Darwinian evolution, despite the infinitesimal odds against it. In fact, when the subject is closely studied Darwinian evolution seems to be the greatest “leap of faith” of all. As Phillip E. Johnson concluded in his seminal work, *Darwin on Trial*,

“Darwinist scientists *believe* that the cosmos is a closed system of material causes and effects, and they *believe* that science must be able to provide a naturalistic explanation for the wonders of biology that appears to have been designed for a purpose. Without *assuming* these beliefs they could not deduce that common ancestors once existed for all the major groups of the biological world, or that random mutations and natural selection can substitute for an intelligent designer. Neither of these foundational beliefs is empirically testable and ... neither belongs in the science classroom.” [p. 146].

Neither faith in Darwinian evolution nor biblical faith in God as Creator can be “proved”

scientifically. But who says that the scientific method is the only way to know the truth? This is a modern invention of the Enlightenment. Its only source of validity is the reasoning of man. The Bible teaches that God has “made it plain” to mankind that there is a God with eternal power and who is divine in nature. Either we accept this self-evident knowledge and the testimony of Biblical revelation and begin our quest to know that God, or else we reject it and begin looking for the next best explanation [rationalization] that can be found.

But the choice is not really that hard. God’s glorious creation appeals to our common sense and intuition. So, for example, go to the beach; get up early in the morning; go out and watch the sun rise up “out” of the ocean in the east; then watch it proceed majestically across the sky; and, finally, see it set in the west in all its beauty and glory. Then ask yourself the question: is it more likely that this happened by random chance and through strictly unguided materialistic causes or that God has created the universe with a design and purpose in mind? On this self-evident and common sense truth I will rest my case. It is simply the *choice* of “faith” in the self-evident truth that there is a Creator God or else in the blind “unfaith” that the world, man and all of life is simply the product of chance with no intrinsic meaning or purpose at all.

[All quotations not otherwise given reference are from the excellent “Appendix” in *The Creation Hypothesis*, IVP, pp. 270-293].