
The Unity of the Spirit

Vol. 8 Issue 2

"In the Bond of Peace"

Fall/Winter 2003-04

A Newsletter of the Foundation for Translation of Biblical Studies, Inc.



Dear Fellow-believers,

One of the most important themes running throughout the Bible is that God created the world with a purpose in mind. This purpose – accomplished in and through God’s Son - is to bring about a family of children who will share in the glory of God’s goodness forever. Though only progressively revealed during Old Testament times, this purpose is revealed in much greater detail in the pages of the New Testament. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians sets it forth in all of its beauty:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (Eph. 1:3-10).

There are several interesting points that can be seen in this section of Scripture. First, it is clear that there is both a spiritual realm and a physical realm in God’s creation. Second, God’s purpose in creation encompasses both of these realms. Third, the fact that there would be a *need* for the redemption of God’s creation – due to sin - was foreknown before God’s creation. And fourth, God’s plan to accomplish his purpose would be carried out in and through the redemptive work of his Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

These truths bring to mind one of the most difficult questions in the history of mankind. It is often called “the problem of evil” and can be posed in the form of a question: Why would a loving and all-powerful God allow evil and suffering to exist in a world that he created? Though this question has often been used by unbelievers as a “proof” against the existence of God, the writers of the Bible simply assume a created order that is set forth in basic form in the first chapters of the Old Testament - with a spiritual and physical realm ruled over by God -

and then explained in much fuller detail throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament. However, nowhere does any biblical writer ever even hint that man understands the full answer to the so-called problem of evil. Instead, throughout the Bible God's ways are considered higher than our ways and his thoughts, higher than our thoughts. No one was God's counselor at creation nor does God need to fully reveal his plan to his creatures. As Job stated, after going through the trials of faith that he endured,

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know." (Job 42:1-3).

When Job, a righteous and godly man, first began to endure his almost unbearable sufferings he tried to reason things out in his own mind based on the limited perspective and understanding he had of God and of God's justice in the world. Despite the wisdom of much of the reasoning that took place, both Job and his friends were unaware of what was taking place in the spiritual realm; that is, Satan's accusation of Job, along with God's allowance of the testing of Job's faith. The perspective of Job and his friends was limited. Thus, when God does finally answer Job the outcome is not at all what any of the characters in the plot expected. Job was vindicated as being a righteous man, thus contradicting his friends. But, he was wrong about his *understanding* of God and God's ways.

Certainly for the Christian believer, as with Job, any attempt to understand the biblical truth about the problem of evil must begin with humility. We must first recognize that God, the Creator, is our Father and that we, his creatures, are his children. While our perspective about any topic in life is limited, God's perspective is unlimited or eternal. This implies that though

we may understand truth to some degree, we as creatures will never understand it to the same degree as the God who created us.

Indeed, throughout the Bible there is a consistent and powerful presentation of the reality of evil and suffering in this world. In fact, the Bible, from among all the great literatures of the world, sets forth the most realistic understanding of the sinfulness of man, the spiritual forces of evil with which we struggle, and the decaying and corrupted natural world in which we live. As Christian believers we should live in the full realization of this state of affairs, but we should also "walk by faith and not by sight" as we look forward to the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan. Paul's Letter to the Romans sums up this Christian point of view:

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay, and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is not seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently (See Rom. 8:16-25).

Richie Temple

The Struggles We Face

By Chuck LaMattina
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To know that God is your Father is one of the most revolutionary truths that can enter your heart. It changes the reality of the Christian life from the ritual of religion to the warmth of family life. To live life with God as your Father gives you greater insight into the promise that God loves you and has destined you for glory. To know that God is your Father means that you can go through life with no fear. As is it written in Romans 8:25,

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [becoming an heir of God] by whom [which, i.e. the spirit] we cry out, "Abba, Father." [NKJV]

But we must not allow the truths of God's Fatherhood and loving care to lead us down life's road looking through rose-colored glasses. We must not think that now God is our Father, life is going to be smooth sailing, and that we will never be confronted with another problem again. To live by faith is a great adventure that often leads down rough roads.

But nothing is as discouraging as when you feel that you are in a particular struggle all alone. When no one seems to care, then misgivings about the Christian life begin to plague us. We are never really very strong when we feel alone.

But in the Christian life we must not rely just on the help of other believers, (as great as their help can be and should be). Other believers may not be able to offer the exact help we need, or they may be facing a struggle as well. But God, our Father, has given to us in His Word, the records of hundreds of men and

women whose faith triumphed in the midst of trials, in order to inspire us and give us hope.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [the record of men and women in the Bible], let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and **let us run with endurance** the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, **lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls**. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. (Hebrews 12:1-4)*

The lives of the men and women of the Bible, and especially the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, shows us that we can endure hard circumstances and overcome them. These examples also show us that the trials we face are only temporary.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

God is our Father, and as a loving Father, many times He allows us to go through difficult situations for our spiritual growth.

And have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

(Hebrews 12:5-13)

The word “chasten” is from the Greek word paideia. This word means to train and develop a child by instruction with discipline, reproof and correction. This is what God wants to do with us in the struggles we face in life. When we are young believers, God seems to meet our every need at every turn. And this is how it should be – for babies. A baby simply needs to cry out and instantly Mom or Dad rush to their side to meet the need. This is how parents and child bond and how the child learns

to trust the parent. But Mom and Dad cannot (and should not) rush to the child’s side as the child gets older. Children must learn to grow up. They must receive disciplined instruction and training to learn patience, self-control and responsibility. Children must learn to use the abilities and strengths they have as human beings. Then as they grow stronger by what they have experienced they learn to do more, bear more, and to be more confident in life.

So it is with the Christian life. At the beginning of our new life, God as our Father rushes to meet our every need so we can get grounded in our new birth and learn to trust Him. But sooner or later He wants us to grow up. He wants us to see our abilities in Christ. He wants us to see that no matter how hard the problem is that we may be facing, he will never leave us or forsake us. Therefore, God will allow us to go through tough times not because He wants to tempt us to fail, but because He wants us to see that we can succeed! Again we can look to the life of Christ to see how the Father works in “chastening” His children.

Then Jesus, when He was baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold the heavens were opened to Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
(Matthew 3:16, 17)

What a wonderful and exhilarating experience! God is declaring His pleasure and delight in the Father and Son relationship. But look at what occurs next.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to

Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But he answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:1-4)

This seems almost incredible! Right after this glorious experience between Father and Son, Jesus is led by the spirit of God to be tempted by the devil! Why would God do this? Is He tempting Christ to do evil? Is He unaware that He is putting His Son into harms way? No! God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone to do evil (James 1:13). But God is "chastening" His Son. He is putting His Son into a very difficult situation so that he can learn to flex his spiritual muscles. God is teaching His Son that even after forty days of fasting and perhaps only a little sleep, he can beat the devil with the Word of God! He is teaching His Son that even at his weakest moment, he is more than a conqueror because God is his Father!

And Jesus Christ is learning these great truths not by just writing down notes in his Bible, but out in the rough world of reality. Jesus Christ is earning his Master's degree in the school of life. Look at what Luke says about Christ after this experience.

*Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. **Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. (Luke 4:13-14)*

As a result of this very difficult situation, Jesus Christ became stronger spiritually. This is what God your Father wants for you too. If He allows you to go through tough times it is because He wants to discipline you for your profit.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:13, 14)

As a loving father, God will expose us to as much pressure as we are able to bear. He will do this to teach us how strong we truly are with Him. But He will never expose us to more than we can handle. Nor will He allow us to become weak and flabby by exposing us to less than we can endure. God knows just what we must experience to grow. He knows just what will help us mature and to develop godly character. The key to victory in these situations is to "flee from idolatry." When the pressure is on we must rely upon God and His Word. We must remember that we do not live by bread alone "but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who [which] was given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

What a wonderful thing to know that you are justified from all guilt of sin by faith, that you have peace with God, and that you stand in the very center of God's grace. All of His divine resources are at your aid. And how

wonderful to know that as a result you can “glory in tribulations.” You can triumph in tough times!

An athlete may feel like he is a champ but he will never know for sure until he gets into the competition. There in the competition he learns the extent of his skill and strength. And he can then rejoice in his victories. This is what God wants for us. In going through tribulations we get to see our strengths and perhaps weaknesses. Our tests of endurance helps us to burn the chaff in our lives. In tough situations we learn perseverance and develop a Christ-like character. In going through tough times we learn to be merciful with those who need mercy. We learn to be compassionate and giving. Having gone through a struggle teaches us how to offer real help to our fellow believers instead of shallow spiritual clichés.

Therefore, we must not think that there is necessarily something wrong with our faith or our relationship with God or the power of the gospel to improve our lives, simply because we are in the midst of a fierce fight of faith. Yes, we should examine our lives to see if this problem is the result of sinful actions or attitudes on our part. But even if they are we can still learn something from it all by the grace of God. Every situation we go through should help us become stronger and more secure in our faith. Writing to the Colossian believers the apostle Paul prays,

that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; (Colossians 1:10, 11)

Paul knew that as these believers progressed in their spiritual lives they would face many struggles. But if they relied upon God they would have strength to be patient.

Sometimes we cannot still the storm but we can wait it out patiently! And patient endurance is a key to real victory.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

“For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:35-39)

We cannot be fooled into thinking that the Christian life is trouble free. When we do think like this we are perplexed when trouble comes. And we begin to wonder if the gospel is inadequate to really meet life’s troubles. We begin to think our faith is weak or worse yet, that God has somehow let us down. We need to see that are perhaps being chastened by our Father and that there is a great lesson he wants us to learn in the midst of a particular problem.

In Daniel, chapter three, there is the record of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These three young men refused to bow down to the idol that their king had set up for all to worship. As a result they were commanded to be burned alive in a fiery furnace. God miraculously saved them, but only **after** they were captured, bound and thrown into the furnace! Most of us would love to see ourselves living powerful and miraculous lives like these men. But are we willing to face the fiery ordeal they faced? Are we willing, as they were, to stand steadfast and not bow even if it means we burn? I am sure that as a result of this very

serious situation Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego learned the reliability of their God.

Like a good parent, God will not allow His children to grow up weak and irresponsible and self-absorbed. He will bring us to the school of life and give us every opportunity to succeed! He wants us to know that even at our weakest moment we are far stronger than any foe. This is the lesson that the apostle Paul learned well.

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Paul's thorn in the flesh was a messenger from Satan. At almost every turn Paul was faced with difficult situations (2 Cor. 11:23-29). But through it all he learned that God's grace in Christ was more than sufficient to help him endure and succeed, even when he felt himself the most weak..

Sooner or later God will take every one of us down some rough road, not because He wants to see us hurt or fail, but because He wants us to see that we can triumph in everything. We can run the race set before us with patience and we can win. We simply need to trust our heavenly Father's wisdom and love

and keep our eyes on Christ. Our faith in God and Christ will never let us down.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tested by fire, maybe found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9)

In all these struggles of ours that we may face, may our faith "be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

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Evolution, Intelligent Design, and Creation

by
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In the mind of a reflecting human being one of the questions that arises almost automatically is that concerning the origin of the world. A special aspect of this question is the origin of life and the origin of biodiversity, i.e. of the amazing richness of the forms of life in our world. In our civilization for a long time the answer came from the Bible: the world was created by God, as it is revealed in the Bible; life came into being by a special creative act of God; and the different forms of life were created by him separately. This answer was found as satisfactory even when the science of nature has begun. The first scientists were people believing in God. They considered the world as created by God; and they considered as their task to study God's world. E.g. Carl von Linné (1707-1778), the father of botanical taxonomy, was firmly convinced that God created separately every kind of plants.

But later, in the 18th century, a significant turn followed. A new philosophy – that of the „enlightenment” (though a more apt name might be the „obscuration”) – was invented, and this new philosophy tried to interpret the world without its Creator. The fashion of *naturalism* appeared. That meant that one wanted to interpret every phenomenon of the world by the recently discovered and actually valid natural laws.

Concerning the question of the origin of life and biodiversity, the great turn followed in 1859. After certain generally non accepted experiments of giving a naturalistic interpretation of the origins – we can mention e.g. that of Jean-Baptiste Antoine de Lamarck (1744-1829) – in that year was published Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) famous (or using a better word: ill-famed) book *The Origin*

of the Species. The ideas expounded in that book very quickly received general acknowledgment. They represent the theory of *evolution*. According to *evolutionism* life came into being from the lifeless matter due to natural laws, and biodiversity came into being from the first living cell due to the laws of mutation and selection. That would mean that every living being is the descendant of the original one cell.

Evolutionism spread very quickly, at least in the scientific world, and the educational institutions, from the elementary schools to the universities. In the 20th century those who did not believe in evolutionism were considered as people of unscientific way of thinking, even as slaves of superstitions. Unfortunately, even the legislations and tribunals became the supporters of evolutionism, and this theory was made obligatory in the schools. But in spite of the big success of this theory, there were always scientists who could not accept evolutionism, because they were convinced that it is a scientifically unsatisfactory theory; and there were people faithful to the Bible who never gave up the original biblical vision.

The position that refutes evolutionism and believes in God the Creator is *creationism*. After a century of slumber, since the 1960s creationism became stronger and stronger. If we study the creationist literature, we find two main topics. The first is the refutation of evolutionism, and not only and not in the first row on the basis of the Bible, but on the basis of a scientific analysis. The second is the comparison of the biblical data and the facts observable in the nature. Creation science has shown that the biblical description of the events accords much more with the observable data than evolutionism.

In the last decades a new turn seems to appear. The criticism of evolutionism has collected grave arguments against this theory, nevertheless the official science did not show the smallest inclination to deal with these arguments. But recently the situation has

changed. Formerly the arguments of creationism were left out of consideration on the basis of statements that creationists are obscure fundamentalists. But facts are facts. In the last some years a new group of scientists appeared. These people haven't asserted at all that they have anything to do with the Bible. On the contrary, they asserted that they are not creationists, nevertheless studying the nature they arrived at the conclusion that they can understand it only by supposing the existence of an Intelligent Designer.

So concerning the opinions nowadays we can speak of three groups. To the first belong people faithful to the Bible; to the second, scientists who under the weight of arguments accept the existence of an Intelligent Designer (which, of course, is only another name for God); and finally, there are the atheists, who adhere to evolutionism because they have no doubt about the fact that if evolutionism falls, they have to accept God's existence. *Studying the history of science, we can plainly see that the motive for setting forth evolutionism was not founded on scientific facts, but on the desire of expelling God from the world.*

This threefold division above is entirely in accordance with the words of the Bible. Because of their extraordinary importance and perfection we quote the whole passage:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desire of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1,18-32)

What can we infer from these words? First of all, that though God revealed himself above all by his prophets, by his Son and by his Son's apostles, he revealed himself also by his creation. To recognize God's revelation is not possible without the special grace of God, but to recognize God in his creation is possible for everybody. So he who doesn't recognize God is really without excuse.

The evolutionist belongs to this group of humanity. Those who recognized the existence of the Intelligent Designer, have not (we hope, not yet) participated in the redemptive grace, nevertheless they can be called normal people. Some Christians say that those who confess an Intelligent Designer, are only half way between faith and atheism, and they compare them to the deists of the 18th century. They are in some respects right. Nevertheless, if we speak about a way, it is essential to investigate in which direction one moves on it. The deists of the 18th century moved from the faith towards atheism. It seems, people who are actually on the half way, move from atheism towards faith.

We know that the Bible is neither antique nor modern: it is eternal. Yes, if we read the words of the apostle Paul, we have the impression that he is writing about our world. We read about all the sins of our modern world. I don't want to repeat them, but from lesbianism to every kind of wickedness we find everything, and we find the main shame of our age: people who approve of all these monstrosities. And the root of all these monstrosities is the fact that people are atheist, that they don't recognize God, who is visible in his creation.

We know that evolutionists often mock creationists that they are stupid. When we hear such words, we must never forget that they are the ones who "claim to be wise", but ultimately "they are fools"!

There is an opinion according to which it's true that nowadays evolution is a discredited theory, but when it was formed it was correct.

But that opinion isn't true at all. Evolution is not and never has been a justified theory. Even we can assert that from the first minute of its proclamation one could see that it is not, even cannot be true. And if we read again the biblical section we quoted, we can discover that people who taught it were people who suppressed the truth by their wickedness. That is in accordance with the assertion that in the background of evolutionism there is the wicked intention of denying God. So again: evolutionists "are without excuse." We should remember such truths when we hear of evolution, intelligent design and creation.

Soli Deo Gloria

[To God alone be the glory].

[Ferenc Jeszeszensky is a retired physicist who worked in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, Hungary for many years. He has also been active for many years in lecturing on Creation Science to Christian groups in Hungary and elsewhere including at several of our summer conferences in Poland. He and his wife Elisabeth are dear friends to many of us and their lives have added so much light, love and life to us all. May God continue to bless them for many years to come!]

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"My argument is not simply that it is not given to human beings to explain or know everything, including the universe. When human beings recognize that they cannot create everything, such limitations do not impoverish but enrich the human mind. We must recognize, too, that our concepts of matter, and of the universe, are models. A model is man-made, dependent on its inventor. More important: the model cannot, and must not, be mistaken for the world." John Lukacs, *At the End of an Age*, p. 113.

Books in Review

Books on Creation vs. Darwinian Evolution

Quality books on Creation vs. Darwinian evolution have multiplied in the last two decades. These books are usually from one of two points of view:

1. The so-called “young-earth” biblical creationist perspective in which biblical accounts of creation are understood from a mostly literal perspective and are based on a biblical time chronology in which the universe would be no more than about 10,000 years old.
2. The so-called “intelligent design” perspective in which the emphasis is on the necessity of there being a God as creator and designer of the universe but with no necessity of interpreting the biblical accounts of creation in a literal fashion and with no set position on the age of the universe.

There are many good books from both of these perspectives and one need not be concerned with the above difference of perspective in reading them. There are many more common points of agreement than disagreement. Following are books that I especially recommend on this topic:

1. *It Couldn't Just Happen*, by Lawrence O. Richards and published by Thomas Nelson Inc. This book is good for both children and adults. It is very biblically oriented, the language is simple but not simplistic; the pictures and layout are very nicely presented; and, it focuses on the main points of the beauty, order and design of God's creation.
2. *Refuting Evolution* by Jonathan Sarfati, published by Answers in Genesis. This is an excellent “young-earth” presentation of the key issues in the

debate. Readable for high school age children and adults.

3. *Darwin on Trial* by Phillip E. Johnson; published by IVP. This is the book that launched the “intelligent design” movement. It was first published in 1991 and remains a classic. It is a treasury house of reasoned thought and perhaps the best critique of Darwinism written.
4. *Icons of Evolution* by Jonathan Wells; published by Regnery Publishing Inc. This is now another classic from the intelligent design movement that exposes deceptions promoted by Darwinian scientists for decades. It shows specifically that despite the fact that the main pillars of Darwinian theory have been shown to be false, they continue to be stated as fact by scientists and continue to be published in textbooks – diagrams and all - that are still used in high schools and colleges today.
5. *Shattering the Myths of Darwinism* by Richard Milton; published by Park Street Press. The best of all. Written by a non-believer British science writer, this book does exactly what the title indicates: it shatters the myths of Darwinism one by one. Milton's logic is penetrating and merciless in showing the fallacies that have been promoted by Darwinists both in history and still today.
6. *Where Darwin Meets the Bible: Creationists and Evolutionists in America*; by Larry Witham, published by Oxford Press. This book gives a history of this debate, focusing primarily on America. It is very well researched and written and gives an even-handed account of the debate up to the present.

Two web-sites that are especially helpful follow; the first from an intelligent design

perspective and the second from the young earth view:

1. <http://www.arn.org/>
2. <http://www.answersingenesis.org>

Notes & Quotes

On the Bible

Biblical Creation vs. Darwinian Evolution

“Faith vs. Un-Faith”

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

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.

debate over Biblical creation vs. Darwinian evolution.

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

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