



What type of God would choose to use evolution?

Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils.
Of what account is he? *Isaiah 2:22*

It was the first day back in the office after my holidays and the first phone call was from a Christian father asking for help with resources. His daughter was away on a camp jointly run by evangelical churches in their area. She had phoned him the previous evening saying she had learned that there was no longer a need to believe in Genesis. He was astounded by this and was looking for advice not only on how to encourage his daughter's confidence in the Bible, but also on how to challenge those who had been teaching her not to believe its record. Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. Since then I have heard of another Christian summer camp where two young Christians found themselves alone in their support of Biblical creation when it was debated by leaders and the other campers.

This year without a doubt has been seen by many as Darwin's year, with its twin anniversaries of two hundred years since his birth, and one hundred and fifty since he published "On the Origin of Species". It has also been a year when those evangelicals who seek to blend secular evolution with theistic Biblical history have been doing all they can to promote their views. Such people are usually described as theistic evolutionists, and from now on I refer to them with the initials 'TE'. In this article I examine some of the things they are teaching and show why any god who chose to use evolution would not be worthy of our worship.

Sola Scriptura or Sola Scientia?

Many years ago I was told that to be an evangelical meant that you were a Bible-believing Christian. It seems that increasingly this is no longer true. On the Evangelical Alliance's web-site there is an article called, "What is an Evangelical?" written by Rev Dr David Hilborn, former Head of Theology at the EA. This short article provides a helpful perspective on the history of the name evangelical,

that is until its final section, which carries the subtitle "Confusion". Here David Hilborn seeks to separate out from the 'Evangelical' fold those he describes as 'fundamentalists'. His final paragraph reads, "*More recently, distinctions between the two constituencies have also emerged in such matters as 'young earth' creationism, the state of Israel and its role in Biblical prophecy, and the role of women in church leadership.* Where Evangelicals tend to 'agree to disagree' on such things, Fundamentalists are more monolithically conservative in their approach to them."

According to the EA therefore, people like those of us at Creation Research and many of our supporters (two of the three issues listed above have their beginnings in the first three chapters of Genesis) should no longer be considered to be evangelicals. What is a greater cause for concern is that they imply that true evangelicals no longer consider Biblical teaching on such issues to be important.

Earlier in his article David Hilborn had cited the three 'Solae' of the Reformation as an important part of evangelical history. These are Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia and Sola Fide - by Scripture alone, by grace alone and by faith alone. Is the modern evangelicalism which he supports faithful to these three foundations? I have space here to consider

only the first one. One of the many books published recently by TE proponents is 'Think God, Think Science: Conversations on Life, the Universe, and Faith', by Michael Pfundner and Ernest Lucas'. It takes the form of a dialogue between these two men, and Paul Garner of Biblical Creation Ministries wrote a very helpful review of it which was published in September's *Evangelicals Now*. Paul points out that as early as page 3, they define science as a way of looking at the world "without invoking the existence or action of God".

Creation film is not about creation!

As November and the anniversary of the publication of "On the Origin of Species" approaches, initiatives in support of evolution abound, some being sponsored by Christians. A film called "Creation" has just been released, but even though it is being promoted by a Christian charity, it actually supports evolution. John Peet of the Biblical Creation Society was invited to a preview by the Damaris Trust and was so concerned about the content of this film and its misleading title, that he alerted us and several other British-based creation ministries about it. We asked him to provide us with a review which we could pass on to our supporters.

John writes: "On September 25th Icon, the film distributors, will release a new film to the UK cinemas called "Creation". This is a misnomer. It is not about creation but rather a biographical film on Darwin and the publication of his work on the process of natural selection. The film centres itself around the years of torment that he experienced following the death of his daughter, Annie. It is based on the book, "Annie's Box", written by Darwin's great great grandson, Randal Keynes. It was produced by BBC Films and the UK Film Council. The story line is sad, describing the suffering of Darwin over Annie's death. He grapples, in parallel with this, the writing of his famous book, "On the Origin of Species - by Means of Natural Selection." Inevitably Bible believers will be concerned about the forceful propagation of the evolutionary line throughout the film. There are also weak arguments against the biblical position."

John Peet also warns that there is a "distressing blasphemous description of our beloved God" near the beginning of the film.

A reviewer in the New Scientist (14 Sept), Jon Amiel, is not impressed by the film either, "Watching this film about Darwin's life, I felt his pain - in having to sit through nearly two hours of Annie's ghost appearing to him and admonishing him. "Don't you dare give up on your book, daddy," it says, wagging its finger when Darwin is agonising about the reception his work will get. I desperately didn't want to give up on the film, but well before the end it had lost me." There is no historical evidence that Darwin said he had seen any spirit which claimed to be his daughter's ghost. Randal Keynes, author of Annie's Box, is quoted as saying "Putting the ghost in can be regarded as the film producer's license to tell the story."

Please advise people who are thinking of seeing 'Creation' that this film is not about Biblical creation, but in reality it is a tribute to Charles Darwin.

Now this is a definition which would be refuted by many of the great scientists of the past. Isaac Newton in 'Principia' wrote "*This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. ...Atheism is so senseless. When I look at the solar system, I see the earth at the right distance from the sun to receive the proper amounts of heat and light. This did not happen by chance.*" Earlier Johannes Kepler, German mathematician and astronomer, is said to have written, "*Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it befits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God.*" (though no reference is available for this statement. [see note 1]) To eliminate from science any reference to God has long been an objective of secular humanists and in many ways they have been successful in achieving this ambition. For example, Judge John E Jones, who presided over the infamous Dover ID trial in Pennsylvania in 2005, rewrote history with the following statement in his judgement, "*Expert testimony reveals that since the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, science has been limited to the search for natural causes to explain natural phenomena. While supernatural explanations may be important and have merit, they are not part of science.*" Kepler and Newton, not to mention Michael Faraday, Louis Pasteur, James Clerk Maxwell and many others are testimony to the fact that this judgement was not just when it defined science as *limited* to natural explanations.

How sad it is then when those who seek to be accepted as Bible-believing Christians set aside the testimony of some of the greatest scientists of history to date and seek to side with atheists by limiting science to explanations which *exclude* God. When this sort of thing happens, what is the result? Later in his review Paul Garner quotes from page 13, showing how the authors argue that where the revelation in Scripture and the revelation in nature appear to contradict one another, "*we must revise our understanding and interpretation of Scripture*". How would Hus and Luther respond to such an argument? Luther's battle in this regard was with those who said six days was too long for an almighty God to make a universe. In response he wrote, "*When Moses writes that God created Heaven and Earth and whatever is in them in six days, then let this period continue to have been six days, and do not venture to devise any comment according to which six days were one day. But, if you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honour of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written...But since God is speaking, it is not fitting for you want only to turn His Word in the direction you wish to go.*"

What Pfundner and Lucas argue for is not *Sola Scriptura* but *Sola Scientia*, and therefore it is they who are departing from the heritage of Biblical Christianity, not those whom the Evangelical Alliance now dismiss as 'fundamentalists'. Undermining the authority of the Scriptures then is one of the first costs which has to be paid by TE in their search to find a compromise between the Bible's clear description of creation and Darwin's secular evolution. This was very apparent in Denis Alexander's debate with Stephen Lloyd (Biblical Creation Ministries) on Premier Radio's Unbelievable programme last November. (The MP3 can still be downloaded from their web-site.) In defending the suggestion that Adam and Eve were neolithic farmers touched by God,

thereby becoming *Homo divinus* - an idea first argued by John Stott - Alexander unquestioningly accepted claimed scientific discoveries and argued that that we must therefore seek, through trial and error, a theology which enabled Scripture to fit in with them.

The light of their own fire

In spite of this need to turn one's confidence away from the Biblical record to the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 2:5), TE is now widely accepted by many evangelicals, which is a serious cause for concern. It is not at just youth camps where it is being taught - organisations which once tried to remain neutral on this issue (actually an impossibility) have now begun to welcome TE speakers onto their platforms. EA once claimed such neutrality as did Spring Harvest, but in April the Theos web-site reported that a team of four TE speakers would be at two Spring Harvest sites this year. Dr Denis Alexander (The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion), Charles Foster (author of *The Selfless Gene: Living with God and Darwin*), Dr Ernest Lucas (Bristol Baptist College) and Nick Spencer (Theos Director of Studies). Theos has been at the forefront of promoting Darwinism to Christians this year through events and research papers - though one piece of research which they commissioned on the nature of belief amongst 'thought-leaders' in UK creationism with funding from the Templeton Foundation has not at the time of writing been published, even though we were told it was due out 'before the middle of the year'. Theos describes itself as a 'public theology think tank' though it seems reluctant to say who is behind it - it does not provide details on its web-site apart from its 'Advisory Group' and to say that it receives "a substantial grant from the Bible Society."

We are not sure why any organisation would want to support the view that the foundation of its chief product, the Bible, is unreliable. However they clearly do, because the Spring 2009 edition of their magazine 'The Bible in TransMission' was given over to a series of articles by TE writers, most of whom have already been mentioned above. Introducing them in the editorial, Michael Pfundner, Bible & Church Development Officer for the Bible Society, points out the difficulties for those who want to take the opening chapters of Genesis literally, but never mentions the even bigger difficulties which face TE proponents. That is an imbalance which needs addressing and this article seeks to do that. I have already shown how rejecting a historic six-day creation necessitates the undermining of the whole of the Scriptures. Creation and the Fall are not just issues of the first three chapters of Genesis, but themes which run right through both Old & New Testaments. Therefore when those who promote TE say that "*we must revise our understanding and interpretation of Scripture*" in the light of science, they are not only demanding a rewriting of Genesis, but of the whole Bible. When Jesus described Himself as the light of the world, He was not speaking metaphorically, but practically and spiritually. When there is a conflict between so-called science and truth, then it is our understanding and interpretation of *science* which must be revised in the light of Jesus Christ. Those who refuse to do this show that they prefer to walk in the light of their own fire rather than in Christ's light, and in their self-imposed darkness they endanger themselves and others (Isa. 50:10-11, Luke 17:1-2).

By one man's disobedience

A second consequence of making the opening events of history into a myth - and this follows on from the need to

reinterpret straightforward scriptures - is that it demands that the legal basis of Christ's redemptive work be discarded. I addressed this at length in a paper called 'From Creation to Calvary' in 2005, so will not do so here. (It is still available on our UK web-site or by contacting the office.) The central point which TE supporters will not engage with is Paul's argument in Rom. 5:12-21, also echoed in 1 Cor. 15:21-22. This principle, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" is either true or it is a lie. If it is true, then no human (or as John Stott and Denis Alexander would have us believe, no pre-human) would have died, because sin, whose wages are death, could not occur until one who was capable of sin existed. If we die physically because death is natural, as Darwin's doctrine demands, then human death is outside of Adam for it happened to his father and grandfather (yes, if TE teaching is true, neolithic Adam must have had ancestors). If The LORD had not supplied an atoning blood sacrifice from His flock on the day Adam sinned, then Adam would not have been driven out from the Garden of Eden, because his physical life would have ended there, since a righteous God cannot allow sin into His presence.

Until that day Adam's fellowship with His Creator had been **by grace** (The LORD warned him not to eat the fruit of that tree out of His grace), **through faith** (all Adam had to do was trust his Creator's word), **not of himself**, (like us, he could not have saved himself), **nor of works** (he did not have to earn The LORD's friendship with him), but it was the completely free gift of God. When Adam valued his wife's friendship over and above fellowship with his Creator, he failed to love The LORD more than the family which God had given him - around four thousand years later Christ taught that those who love their family more than Him are not worthy of Him (Mat. 10:37). Adam's unbelief, his failure to trust his Creator, cost him his friendship with God and would have cost him his physical life as well had not The LORD promised him and us a Kinsman Redeemer who one day would bruise Satan's head, hurting His own heel as He did so. The LORD knew though that the time was not yet right for His Redeemer to be sent, so until that time (and according to Hebrews only until that time, 10:18) there needed to be repeated lesser sacrifices to cover sin. The animal which died that day was not a relative of Adam nor Eve - though if TE teaching is true, it was - it was therefore not a Kinsman Redeemer and therefore did not fulfil God's promise that the coming Redeemer would be from the woman's seed. If sin is not in the world through the sin of this one man, but through the action of many, then Adam's descendent cannot be Kinsman Redeemer to all. For the price of sin to have been paid by one man, then sin and death must, Paul argues, be result of one man's action.

Last year Denis Alexander published a book, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* In November Randal Macaulay, Francis Schaeffer's son-in-law, reviewed it in *Evangelicals Now*, under the title "Rescuing Darwin or wrecking the faith". In his review he highlights the problems for the Biblical doctrine of salvation which those who teach TE avoid addressing, except in the vaguest of terms. He concludes by saying, "The temptation to elevate scientific theory above Scripture accounts in no small measure for Christianity's decline in recent centuries. Well before the rise of modern science, however, the 'assured results' of countless other human speculations endangered faith, as both the New Testament and church history testify. Were they ever presented as anything but plausible and benign because, like evolution since 1859, so 'obvious' and

'normal' and 'necessary'? From the perspective of God's revealed Word they were simply foolish and destructive. An insistent choice seems almost daily to grow in intensity: do we wreck the church in order to rescue Darwin - or vice versa?" Church leaders should be aware of such warnings; the arguments that the Church must evolve its thinking to embrace modern 'knowledge' are human not divine wisdom and, as Macaulay correctly states, they are responsible for much damage to individuals and to the Church as a whole.

Could you worship a malignant God?

Just before Darwin's birthday, BBC1 broadcast a studio discussion as part of its 'The Big Questions' programme on Sunday, 8th February. One section was focussed on the creation/evolution debate and Paul Taylor from Answers in Genesis UK was one of the invited audience. Across the studio floor from him sat Professor Peter Atkins, Lincoln College, Oxford and amongst the platform guests was Lord Carey of Clifton, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1991 to 2002. Lord Carey was quick to argue that God used evolution and that Genesis and modern science can easily be reconciled. Nicky Campbell, the presenter, turned to Peter Atkins and asked him, "Is it not possible to step back and admire the majesty of the processes of evolution and to ascribe it to God's work?" Atkins replied, "Well, if it were God's work, He choose a particularly nasty way of going about it. For in order for species to evolve you need death, you need conflict, you need one animal to drag another animal apart and *I think it is evidence for a most malignant God*, if there is a God." When Campbell asked Lord Carey to respond to that charge, he avoided any direct answer. However, Atkins' argument is one which has to be addressed by those evangelicals who are telling Christians of all ages that Genesis is not true history, that Darwin was right and that modern science is a higher authority than the Bible.

This objection to TE is not a new one. John Mackay remembers when ABC (Australia) broadcast in 1976 a tribute to Jacques Monod, a French biologist who was awarded a Nobel Prize in Physiology of Medicine in 1965, and who had died earlier that year. In an interview it was suggested to Monod, "One could conceive of God using randomness, just so long as there was a pattern which he was imposing upon the results of the chance mutations." Monod's response was clear, "If you want to assume that, then I have no dispute with it, except one, which is not a scientific dispute, but a moral one: *namely, selection is the blindest, and most cruel way of evolving new species, and more and more complex and refined organisms*. I am surprised that a Christian would defend the idea that this is the process which God more or less set up in order to have evolution." This is a very important challenge to TE. When we read that The LORD in reviewing His work declared it to be *very good* (Gen. 1:31) we need to ask whether He was being truthful or not. In his debate with John Polkinghorne in 2005, John Mackay pointed out that during His earthly life Jesus Christ did *good*, by healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and many other things which are *the very opposite* of the frailties and conflicts upon which Darwin said evolution is founded. If life had taken millions of years of violence, starvation, predation and every other expression of nature red in tooth and claw to evolve neolithic humans, and this was a process set in motion by The LORD, how could He with satisfaction call it 'very good'? Can we believe such a Creator when He says He is a God who is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth?

There is an even more serious question to be asked about a God who would choose to use such a cruel process for His own pleasure. I hope that those who accept TE do not doubt that The LORD is all powerful over His creation, for if they do, this is a further indicator that they have strayed away from a Biblically informed faith. If they still believe in an omnipotent God, then they must face up to the fact that if their theory is right, then this God purposefully *chose* to use death and conflict, violence and disease, suffering and competition over endless years when He could have made a universe without any of those things in it in no time at all. As mentioned above, Martin Luther had to argue against those who wanted to reason that the Creator's omnipotence meant He did not need to take as long as six days. However, Scripture makes clear why He took so long - it was to set us the example of working six days and resting one and that is where our week is derived from (Ex. 20:11 & 31:17). He took six days on purpose - He chose to do so and was not prevented from His purpose by any external factor. Today, those evangelicals who argue that the Biblical record is a metaphor for scientific understandings only recently discovered must address themselves to the implications of their teaching. Why did an omnipotent God choose to take so long? Is there any passage of Scripture that tells us why?

If He did make this choice, as TE proponents assert, He must have had a reason to cause so much suffering over otherwise pointless millennia - although He Himself is outside of time, the creatures which lived, suffered and died during that period were not. If after watching evolution meander through its destructive journey, He suddenly turned round and said, "This is good, very good", what will eternity with Him be like? A god - and it must be a small 'g' - who chose of his own will to create through evolutionary processes, from big bang to mass extinctions, would indeed be a very malignant, pernicious and savage character who could not be trusted in this life, for if he took pleasure in such things how could we be sure that He is not like the gods of the Greeks who enjoyed making fun of humans? He would also surely be a tyrant to live with in eternity.

The apostle John, summarising the core of the message which the disciples had received from Jesus, wrote "*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*" (1 John. 1:5). Death, sickness, genetic degeneration, the survival of the cruellest tell us nothing about the Creator, but they do warn us about the consequences of human sin. TE can only mean that the god who chose to use it has a very dark side to his nature, that he is content with suffering, and that Genesis is a carefully constructed myth to hide such awful truth from every generation until now!

Recently, I was able to visit a local church which was holding a day of quiet reflection. The subject for this day was Charles Darwin. It ended with a discussion group and there was about 15 people present, most of whom were elders of the church. Apart from myself it seemed that the only other people in room who retained any confidence in the Bible's record of creation were one elder and his wife who had contacted us asking for material which they could use in

support of the Scriptures. It was not an easy discussion session, but that did not surprise me. At the end the question was posed, "Has Darwin made any difference to faith?" Most answered no, but when I got the opportunity I said that I could not worship a god who had chosen to use such cruel processes to bring about life on this planet. Evolution may be an acceptable process to those who want to do science "*without invoking the existence or action of God*" (Pfundner and Lucas) but would any genuine believer seek to accept such a process seeing that the Scriptures themselves tell us "*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead*" Rom. 1:20? If the universe tells us about the character of the Creator, in studying it we should (as many of the real giants of science knew) learn about Him through what we discover. If evolution was true, and if it was a process initiated by a god, then its essential ingredients should tell us such a god had the most cruel of divine natures and we should stop calling him a god of love.

Stop trusting in man

We at Creation Research make no apology for continuing to remind everyone what Jesus made clear to the Pharisees, that those who did not believe what Moses wrote, (including every chapter of Genesis) would not believe His teaching (John 5:46-47). This is an incredibly simple principle, but many will not face up to it. Our attitude to the writings of Moses reveal our attitudes to Jesus Christ, no matter what we say. Jesus had already made clear to them why their hearts were hard, "*How can you believe, who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that comes from the only God?*" (v44). Here was their problem; they cared more about being well thought of by their peers than they did about gaining their Creator's approval. Today, academic approval is a powerful lure to many who want to be well thought of by others. It is possible to be approved of by both God and men, but only if loving God is our priority - too high a regard for human approval is as deadly as it ever has been. The opening chapters of Isaiah are a severe rebuke for a nation which had stopped fearing The LORD. In 2:4, we are told that one characteristic of their unbelief is that "*They worship the work of their own hands*". These people refuse to humble themselves and enter into the Rock of God's provision (v10), preferring to shelter in holes in the rocks (v19 & 21). The chapter concludes with a warning which those who teach that we should amend our understanding of the Scriptures in the light of current trends in human knowledge would do well to heed. The prophetic voice cries out loud and clear "***Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?***" (v22 NIV)

Randall Hardy - September 2009

[Note 1. Since publishing this article we have been given the following reference for this quote: *Johannes Kepler: life and letters* By Johannes Kepler, Carola Baumgardt p. 44]

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