

The Unbeliever at War with God: Michael Ruse and the Creation-Evolution Controversy

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Abstract

Dr. Michael Ruse spent more than 40 years of his life fighting creationism. This fact requires an explanation; it also raises the need to clarify a number of misconceptions pertaining to the controversy between creationists and evolutionists. First, the controversy is not a battle between science and religion. Of importance is to understand the dominant worldview that is driving the scientific enterprise today, and why. Second, there is no such person as an atheist. If this truth can be demonstrated from Scripture, then we need to know more about the so-called atheist, especially, what is driving him. The evidence indicates that a fear of God and afterlife play a major role in the psychology of unbelief. Third, the identity of the Creator and the place of Scripture in the Intelligent Design Movement and philosophical theology need to be reconsidered. It disappoints on several serious grounds. And fourth, theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with Scripture, contrary to what Ruse would have Christians believe.

Keywords: apologetics, atheist, creationism, evolutionism, fear, materialism, naturalism, physicalism, psychology, theistic evolution, theology, unbelief.

Introduction

The following sentences reflect some of the thoughts and beliefs of Dr. Michael Ruse about himself, Christianity, and creationists:

I have impeccable credentials as a creationism fighter....With respect to the main claims of Christianity—loving God [*sic*], fallen nature, Jesus and atonement and salvation—I am pretty atheistic....As it happens, I prefer the term “skeptic” to describe my position....That the Creationists and fellow travelers, notably proponents of Intelligent Design Theory (IDT) would dislike my views I take as axiomatic....I despise their beliefs, and I think them deeply dangerous....I am an ardent evolutionist....I think that science is the highest form of knowledge—I am a philosophical naturalist (Ross 2005; Ruse 2009a, 2010b, pp. 1, 12).

Ruse, a historian and philosopher at Florida State University, never hesitates to inform both his readers and listeners exactly where he is coming from, what he is doing, and why. Ruse spent 40 years of his life, he says, observing the ongoing controversy between evolutionists and creationists; he is “fighting fundamentalists, including proponents of Intelligent Design, on the podium, in print, and in the court room.” (Ruse 2011).¹ Ruse’s recent evaluation of “Creationism” led him to conclude that “scientifically Creationism is worthless, philosophically it is confused, and theologically it is blinkered beyond repair. The same is true of its offspring, Intelligent Design Theory” (Ruse 2007, p.23).

Ruse’s fight against creationists and his conclusions come as no surprise, given what we know about unbelief in the light of Scripture, as we will see. What is also not strange is that BioLogos (theistic evolutionists) could not resist using the beliefs and arguments of Ruse to bolster their view that “evolution, properly understood, best describes God’s work of creation” (BioLogos 2011).² What they seem to have missed or plainly ignored is the crux of Ruse’s argument.

My aim in this paper is accordingly to provide an explanation for Ruse’s behavior, even if only in part. But Ruse’s arguments also raise the need to clarify a number of misconceptions pertaining to the controversy between creationists and evolutionists. First, I will show why it is a mistake to assume that the controversy is a battle between science and religion. Of importance is to understand the dominant worldview that is driving the scientific enterprise today, and why. The major issues are the nature and character of the Creator and Scripture as the true and authoritative Word of God. I will then argue that there is no such person as an atheist. If this truth can be demonstrated from Scripture, then no person can honestly claim that God does not exist. But there is more; it suggests a revision of the assumptions, aims, approaches and arguments of many Christian apologists. Of importance is to know what is driving the so-called atheist. The evidence to be considered will indicate that a fear of God and afterlife play a major role in the psychology of unbelief, and that points toward the realism of Scripture. In the third section,

¹ See also Ruse (2010a) and Ross (2005).

² Ruse’s views and arguments appear on the BioLogos discussion forum Science and the Sacred (Ruse 2009a), the BioLogos website in the form of an essay (Ruse 2010b), and the BioLogos blog (Ruse 2010c).

I focus on the place of Scripture and the identity of the Creator in the Intelligent Design Movement and philosophical (analytical) theology. We will see that it disappoints on several serious grounds. Finally, I will contend that theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with Scripture, contrary to what Ruse would have Christians believe.

Section I: The Essence of the Creation-Evolution Controversy

Far too many people today, including Christians, conceive of the controversy between Christians and evolutionists as a battle between science and religion instead of creation and evolution (see Collins 2007, pp.4–6). Neither is the controversy a matter of Christians opposing science. There are at least two reasons why conceptions such as these are misguided. First, it is important to understand that it

is a fallacy to believe that [scientific] facts speak for themselves—they are always *interpreted* according to a framework (Sarfati 1999, pp.15–16).

What Jonathan Sarfati referred to as a “framework” is generally known as a paradigm (for example, a scientific field of study), an ideology and worldview. Important about frameworks is their content: concepts and presuppositions (beliefs, assumptions) about reality, the kinds of things that exist, their natures, their origin, how they act, how they hang together, how they may be known, and so on (cf. MacArthur 2003, 2006). Sarfati’s point is that frameworks deeply influence the phenomena scientists observe, how they are conceived of, and the way they are subsequently explained. Ruse (2011) affirms that paradigms “succeed in major part by ignoring certain questions, ruling them off limits,” while there is absolutely no reason why that should be the case or remain so. What is true of scientists is also true of those who are interpreting the Bible. In the words of theologian Andrew Kulikovsky,

all misinterpretations and misunderstandings of Scripture result from either false presuppositions, insufficient data or an inadequate or inconsistent hermeneutic (Kulikovsky 2009, p.37).

It becomes accordingly important to know which framework is driving the scientific enterprise and to see what the results are when phenomena are interpreted within that framework.

It is widely acknowledged that the dominant worldview underlying the interpretation of scientific data today is naturalism (cf. MacArthur 2002; Mortenson 2004). Philosopher Charles Taliaferro describes “naturalism” as “a scientifically oriented philosophy that rules out the existence of God, as

well as the soul” (Taliaferro 2009, p.2).³ Since it is no accident that naturalism targets both the Creator and the existence of the soul, it is important to understand that naturalism comprises essentially three key elements: scientism (a mental posture in terms of which scientific knowledge is held to be superior to any other in kind, if not the only kind of knowledge); an evolutionary story of origins (whatever exists are products of mindless laws and processes of nature and chance; life “emerged” from non-life, and human beings descended from ape-like creatures over millions of years), and physicalism (an ontology of the kinds of things that exist and their natures; all existent entities and their coming to be consists solely of matter or else depend on matter for their emergence). We should bear in mind that scientism serves as justification of the evolutionary (naturalist) story of origins which, in turn, justifies physicalism (materialism).

It will be helpful to demonstrate the points made so far. Theologian and philosopher, Nancey Murphy, who teaches “christian” philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary, expressed her scientism, naturalism, and physicalism as follows:

[F]or better or for worse, we have inherited a view of science as methodologically atheistic, meaning that science...seeks naturalistic explanations for all natural processes. Christians and atheists alike must pursue scientific questions in our era without invoking a creator... (Murphy 2007, pp.194, 195).

Murphy is telling Christians to adopt the rules of so-called atheists but she does not tell them why this should remain so. For her,

[N]euroscience is now completing the Darwinian revolution, bringing the mind into the purview of biology. My claim, in short, is this: all of the human capacities once attributed to the immaterial mind or soul are now yielding to the insights of neurobiology...[W]e have to accept the fact that God has to do with brains—crude though this may sound (Murphy 2006a, pp.88, 96).

What are the “insights” of neurobiology, according to her? We no longer “need to postulate the existence of a soul or mind in order to explain life and consciousness” (Murphy 1998, p.17). It is easy to see that her physicalist conclusion logically follows from an interpretation of the scientific data (about the brain) within the framework of naturalism. But what about Scripture, which clearly refutes Murphy’s physicalist conclusion (for example, Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:17, 21–22; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Psalm 31:9; Zechariah 12:1; Matthew 10:28, 22:37; Acts 2:27, 31, 7:59; Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 2:11, 7:34; 2

³ For a helpful explanation of the difference between philosophical (metaphysical) and methodological naturalism see Poe and Mytyk (2007).

Corinthians 7:1; James 2:26)? She has to either ignore these texts or reinterpret them in ways that would fit her presuppositions.⁴

The second reason why the conflict between creationists and evolutionists is misconstrued is simply this: evolutionism is as much a religious worldview as any other. Ruse offers at least three arguments in support of this thesis. First, if evolutionists hold that evolution should be taught in schools while it implies atheism or the falsity of Christian beliefs, then “Why are their beliefs exempt?” (Ruse 2009b). Ruse’s point is that evolutionists will be teaching atheism. Second, both the Christian and evolutionary scientist are asking the same questions, even though they give different answers to them (Ross 2005). In other words, and third, if evolutionism is embraced as the only belief-system about what counts as knowledge, the kinds of things that exist, and their origin, then it constitutes a rival religious response to the kind of questions Christians ask. Are Christians correct when they say that creationism and evolutionism are two competing religious systems? Ruse’s answer is, “we have no simple clash between science and religion but rather between two religions” (Ruse 2005, p. 287); “I think they [Christians] are right...both sides are making religious commitments” (O’Hehir 2005).⁵

To summarize, the view that the conflict between creationists and evolutionists is a battle between religion and science is a distorted view of the real state of affairs. It is far from us to think that science is a problem when the real problem is the paradigm, ideology, or worldview a scientist adopts and through which he subsequently filters his interpretation of scientific research results. The essence of the conflict is about creation and evolution, and as we will see, claims that involve the nature and character of the Creator, and the Bible as the biblical Christian’s absolute authority and highest kind of knowledge in all matters about which it speaks.

Section II: The “Atheist” and the Existence of God

Ruse (2009b) wrote, “As a professional philosopher my first question naturally is: ‘Who or what is an atheist?’” This is a very relevant question, both from a biblical perspective and the perspective of

the evolutionist. Jerry Bergman’s (2010) review of the views of most of the leading scientists reveals that evolution demands atheism. I therefore wish to rephrase Ruse’s question: Is an atheist really someone who does not believe in the existence of God? The biblical answer is no! The so-called atheist can refuse to acknowledge the Creator, and he can claim that he has inadequate knowledge of or about God, but he cannot claim that God does not exist. This means that the center of focus in Christian apologetics ought to be the person and work of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. That it cannot and must not be otherwise is underlined by this statement by Ruse: “I cannot bring myself to believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins” (Ruse 2006, p. 148). The evidence to be presented suggests that Christians have to revise their assumptions about the so-called atheist. I will first consider what four passages from Scripture have to say about the matter, after which I will focus on what evolutionists and materialists themselves reveal about the psychology of unbelief.⁶

Psalm 14:1–4 and 19:1–14

The Bible tells us that someone who says in his heart, “There is no God,” is a fool (Psalm 14:1–4; cf. 10:1–4, 53:1–4). The context in which those words appear indicates that this kind of fool is a moral fool, which affects his intellect profoundly. His foolishness, what he thinks and says in his heart about the Creator follows from a corrupt human nature (cf. Ecclesiastes 9:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:1–3). In other words, it is not that the person who says “there is no God” cannot reason; it simply means that his reasoning is distorted.

The same psalmist provides us with the following declaration of fact: “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1). Indications of the existence of God, he says, are not obscure; they are everywhere (cf. Job 12:7–10; Ephesians 2:10). Verse 2 of Psalm 19 says that God’s created works speak to us, but not in an audible voice we can hear (v.3). The inaudible speech of nature is then contrasted by the psalmist with the verbal, spoken word of the Creator, which comprises the “law of the Lord,” “testimony of the Lord,” “precepts of the Lord,” “commandment of the

⁴ Murphy also argued that “we are our bodies,” and a physicalist account of human nature does not conflict with the biblical view of bodies and souls, because “the Bible has no clear teachings here” (Murphy 2006b, pp. ix, 4). Joubert (2011) has shown that this is plainly false.

⁵ What counts as being “religious?” For Ruse it means a deep interest in and commitment to one’s beliefs and “strong moral feelings” toward what those beliefs imply (Ross 2005).

⁶ Geisler and Corduan made their readers aware that arguments to prove the existence of God do not always persuade. Also, “a proof for God as such, if it is successful, leads a person only to believe that there is a God and not necessarily to believe in that God” (Geisler and Corduan 1988, p. 87). But if there is no such thing as an atheist—as I will argue—then the Christian’s task is to help the unbeliever to come to a saving faith in Jesus, which is both the work of the Holy Spirit and gift of God (cf. Luke 24:45 with Acts 16:14 and Ephesians 1:18–20, and 2:4–9). Nevertheless, Geisler and Corduan hold that only “a psychological and spiritual analysis could indicate what is the cause” of why unbelievers choose not to commit themselves to God, “despite the fact that the evidence indicates he is there” (Geisler and Corduan 1988, pp. 87, 88).

Lord,” “fear of the Lord,” and “judgments of the Lord” (vv. 7–9). Each instance or aspect of the word of God exemplifies at once both its ontological nature and its effect: “is perfect, restoring the soul,” “...is sure, making wise the simple” (v. 7); “...is right, rejoicing the heart,” “is pure, enlightening the eyes” (v. 8); “...is clean, enduring forever;” “is true, is righteous altogether” (v. 9).

The contrast between the works of nature (what theologians refer to as the general revelation of God) with God’s word (His special revelation) in Psalm 19 demonstrates that God’s special revelation is superior to the revelation of Himself in His created works in at least two senses.⁷ First, special revelation helps us to understand general revelation in ways we would not otherwise know, and it is therefore more desirable (v. 10). Second, Scripture warns and helps protect us against foolishness (the fool’s thoughts and behavior)—error and sin (vv. 11–12). The psalmist’s prayer is therefore instructive: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (v. 14).

It is no accident that the psalmist declares that the Creation clearly reveals the existence of God. This fact implies and entails that the so-called atheist cannot honestly claim the contrary. It is therefore not a matter of not knowing that God exists, but of wrong reasoning about what is already evident about Him. We shall later see that this is an ancient truth.

Acts 17:16–34

While the Apostle Paul was in the city of Athens, he got deeply disturbed by the pervasive idolatry which he saw (vv. 16, 23). Verse 18 states that Paul was in dispute with Epicureans (materialists) and Stoics (pantheists), who thought that he introduced a new deity to them, since he preached Jesus and the resurrection (see also vv. 30–32). When they later brought Paul to the Areopagus, he told his listeners exactly what his intentions were: to proclaim to them the “unknown God” they “worshipped in ignorance” (v. 23). He then got straight to the point; he revealed the identity and nature of God: He is the all-powerful (v. 24), sovereign, self-subsistent Creator of the world, the source of all life (v. 25), who is also “not far from each of us” (He is omnipresent—vv. 27–29). Thus, contrary to what his listeners assumed, the Creator is neither served with human hands nor a fabrication of man’s hands and mind (vv. 25, 29).

These texts allow for a few comments. Paul’s emphasis in both his preaching and dispute was God’s special revelation; Genesis 1–2 (Acts 17:24) and the apostolic witness: “...I proclaim to you...”

(v. 23), and “God is now declaring” (v. 30). Thus, Paul engaged the idolaters on the basis of what he knew to be right and wrong, and true and false. The Creator was Paul’s logical starting point, which is to say that he neither preached nor reasoned as if the Creator were unknown to him. In different words, Paul did not argue for a tentative belief in some vague form of theism. On the contrary, he was very specific about the identity and nature of the Creator. Further, if general revelation played a role in Paul’s preaching and dispute, then it was only insofar as it was undergirded by and accompanied by special revelation. Those who worshipped the “unknown God” were also not people who doubted the existence of “something higher” than themselves; what they believed about the Creator was simply false. Thus, the fact that Paul corrected their false beliefs indicates to us that Scripture does not permit just any belief about God.

But why would one honor “an unknown God?” Could it be because of fear? Could it be that a conscious awareness of “an unknown God” led Paul’s opponents to take precautions to avert His wrath—His righteous anger at wrongdoing—thus explaining why they honored Him with an altar (v. 23)? We notice that Paul told them in no uncertain terms how the Creator can be known in a personal way: through His resurrected Son who would one day judge the world (v. 31). They are therefore without excuse if they do not repent of their ways. Finally, Paul included the resurrection and future Day of Judgment in his Christian apologetic for at least two reasons: this life is not all there is, and such knowledge cannot be gained from general revelation.

Romans 1:16–32

Verse 20 reads: “For since the creation of the world His [that is, the Creator’s] invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they [that is the unbelievers] are without excuse...” This text is widely appropriated by Christians in support of their view that Scripture teaches natural theology (Dembski 1994, p. 114; Moore 2010), and the text is used to justify arguments for the existence of the Creator. But where in Romans 1:16–32 does it say, even once, that unbelievers can honestly deny the existence of their Creator?

Scripture is very clear: “what may be known of God is manifest...” to all people, because “God has shown it to them” (v. 19)—since the “creation of the world” (v. 20). It is impossible for mankind to avoid knowledge of God (Psalm 19:1–4). Thus, so-called atheists must necessarily be those who “...suppress

⁷ For a discussion of the relation between general revelation, special revelation and biblical hermeneutics (interpretation), see Kulikovskiy (2009, pp. 17–27) and Thomas (1998). To understand why it is a mistake to assume that general revelation can lead to salvation, see Hoffmeier (2000).

the truth..." (v.18) of what they already know about God; they are those who refuse to "...glorify Him as God..." (v.21) and "...worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator..." (v.25), and they are those who "...did not like to retain God in their knowledge..." for who He is (v.28). But nowhere in this passage do we read that people can honestly deny the existence of God.

That knowing about someone and knowing someone personally are two different kinds of things, few people would dispute.⁸ The point is, however, that Paul did not present an argument to the effect that Christians ought to help unbelievers to come to a belief in the existence of God when they already know that. Their task is to help unbelievers to believe in God in a personal way (cf. Acts 8:26–39; 14:15). Neither was Paul using knowledge of nature in order to show the rationality of the revealed gospel, nor was he using knowledge of nature to bolster intellectual insecurity. He simply said, and began with God's special revelation: "...I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..." (v.16). What cannot be ignored is that Paul referred to the "wrath of God" (v.18) in the context of unbelievers who suppress their knowledge of the truth. This cannot be otherwise, for the Creator is the only "Lawgiver and Judge" (James 4:12), and His Law is written in the hearts of all human beings, a fact of which their conscience bears witness (Romans 2:15). Knowledge of God is inescapable.

It should therefore be evident that Christians have reasons to think differently about what they assume unbelievers are telling them when they say they do not believe in the existence of God, and what the true purpose of their "theistic proofs" are for. But let us see what unbelievers themselves are telling us why they suppress their knowledge of the truth.

The Psychology of Unbelief

The Apostle Paul used both the future Day of Judgment and the wrath of God as crucial elements in both his preaching and defense of the Christian faith, for "it is appointed for men to die once and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10). It is a deeply unsettling thought, and generates nothing less than fear. In Acts 24 we read that when Governor Felix summoned Paul to hear from him about "faith in Christ Jesus" and Paul spoke to him

about righteousness, self-control and the "judgment to come" that Felix "became frightened" (vv.24–25). It is therefore not strange that people seek freedom from the thought of an afterlife, philosophically as well as psychologically. Consideration of the thoughts and actions of a few naturalists and materialists will help us to make sense of this phenomena even if only in part, and thereby see how it demonstrates the realism of Scripture.⁹

Epicurus

The followers of Epicurus formed part of the group of people with whom the apostle Paul reasoned in Acts 17 (vv.16–34), as we previously saw. What is most known about Epicurus is that he was a naturalist, a materialist and someone who denied the existence of God. Less known about Epicurus is why he chose anti-God naturalism and materialism as his philosophies of life. The reason is because Epicurus was emotionally and mentally in turmoil; he was driven by a single obsession, and that was to free himself and others from any belief in the afterlife.¹⁰

We are able to identify two interrelated causes of the state of his soul. The first cause derived from what he heard about possible divine intelligences in the sky, and that they communicate their pleasures to human beings. This implies that humans could be the objects of their wrath. The second cause, which followed from the first, was the thought of an afterlife. Epicurus thought that, although he may escape their wrath in this life, it would be otherwise in the next. Thus, in order to rid people of this mental condition, he decided to turn therapeutic: exclude the concept of the divine from the universe and eliminate belief in the human soul and afterlife (a fear of hell; cf. Matthew 10:28; James 5:20).

Of interest is to see how he went about achieving his goal. Epicurus was intelligent enough to know that, in order to realize his therapeutic aspirations, he had to create a new cosmology (a new theory about the entities that exist in the world, the nature of cause and effect, and how the various parts of the world fit into the whole) as well as a new epistemology (a new method by which to gain knowledge and a theory of what counts as knowledge). Why in that order, we may wonder. Epicurus had the insight to see that every view or theory of reality and knowledge necessarily has implications for how people would live. Conversely, he saw that every morality necessarily entails a specific

⁸ By "knowing someone personally" I mean knowledge by acquaintance (for example, Exodus 1:8; 1 Samuel 3:7; John 4:10).

⁹ I do not propose a comprehensive account of the psychology of the "atheist." There are many factors that play a role in his thinking and behavior. The challenge is to discern the difference between the cause of his thinking and the outward behavioral manifestations of his unbelief. In Psalm 10:1–4 we read that the God-denier is one who takes pride in his wickedness; he boasts about his desires; he is filled with greed; he curses and renounces the Lord of heaven and earth, and he persecutes the believer. At the bottom of this is a spiritual and moral problem—a sinful nature and rebellious heart—which can only be cured by an intervention of the Spirit of God (cf. John 3:3–7).

¹⁰ I am indebted to Wiker (2002).

view of reality and theory of knowledge to support it.

What Epicurus saw as the way through which he could realize his goals, was natural science, which he offered as his answer to people's suspicion about heavenly realities. In this regard, his logic was very simple: provide a cure which would eliminate belief in the divine and the existence of the soul. Those without immortal souls, logically speaking, have no reason to worry about an afterlife, thus no fear of punishment. But what did his cosmology look like? And his theory of knowledge (science), where did that come from?

He reasoned that the world (nature) is a "closed system," which means it is free from interferences and influences from intelligences "outside" it. As is well known, he adopted the materialist atomism of Democritus. Again, Epicurus had the intelligence to understand that something cannot come from nothing; all around him he saw things subject to growth and decay, and if there is nothing eternal and everything temporal, then everything would soon be reduced to nothing. So he concluded that the universe itself must be eternal, and if the universe is eternal, then it has no need of any intelligent Being to sustain it. Naturally, he must have asked, what makes the universe eternal? Epicurus thought that every existing thing is composed of unseen, eternal and unchangeable parts, which he called atoms.

At this point we might wonder what happened to the heavenly intelligences—the gods. It logically followed that if everything is reduced to nature, then so must the gods, and in this way be rendered impotent. And what happened to the soul, the source of human consciousness and the principle of life? As can be expected, the soul was transformed into atoms; it dissipates at death along with the body. It is thus that Epicurus offered the following therapeutic advice to his disciples:

Get used to accustoming oneself to hold that death is nothing to us. For all good and bad consists in sense-experience, and death is the privation of sense experience...for there is nothing fearful in life for one who has grasped that there is nothing fearful in the absence of life...So death, the most frightening of bad things, is nothing to us; since when we exist, death is not present, and when death is present, then we do not exist (Wiker 2002, pp. 46–47).

We can summarize: for Epicurus and his followers,

knowledge of the existence of God and the reality of the soul are necessarily connected to the possibility of an afterlife. The fear of God and an afterlife is a kind of mental illness for which anti-God materialism and naturalism became the therapeutic cure. What we need to know next is how the naturalist and evolutionist would explain the moral emotion of fear?

Michael Ruse

Ruse has quite a few things to say about fear, but three are relevant to our question. First, according to Ruse's evolutionary scheme of things, people are equipped with certain natural dispositions or propensities to do certain things, such as to "avoid potentially dangerous things, inanimate or animate, non-human or human," including strangers (Ruse 1989, p.260). Second, dispositions such as fears and prejudices require environmental input. And third, the environmental input can be in the form of an enemy. In Ruse's words, "with respect to strangers, the actual content of fears and prejudices requires environmental input—else, why did the Nazi's go to such lengths to indoctrinate their children against the Jews?" (Ruse 1989, p.260).¹¹ We do not have to accept Ruse's evolutionary explanation of fear and prejudice, but it certainly tells us something about the psychology of Epicurus and the philosophy with which he indoctrinated his followers, even to this day.¹² But what does this tell us about Ruse, the "ardent evolutionist" and naturalist? Can it be that he—consciously or unconsciously—considers the Creator as a stranger, as dangerous, and as his enemy? Can it be the case that his war against creationists is nothing but a front for his war against the Creator? I leave it to the reader to decide, but here follows a few interesting things to consider.

Ruse (2010b) let us know that he, in his book *Taking Darwin Seriously*, "was trying very hard to find a substitute metaphysics for the Christianity of his childhood" (Ruse 1998, p. 8).¹³ He further says that his search was for a rival conceptual scheme, especially when it came to ethics.¹⁴ This was particularly important to him because he "saw the fight against Creationism as a moral crusade" (Ruse 2010b, p.8). We can see that Ruse's ambitions are not unlike those of Epicurus. Now, we already noted that Ruse tells us that his first question as a professional philosopher

¹¹ Note that Ruse did not try to justify the killing of Jewish people.

¹² Epicurus' worldview clearly reflects in what naturalist and philosopher John Searle refers to as "our 'scientific' world view" (Searle 1992, p. 85). About this worldview he says:

Some features of this world view are very tentative, others well established. At least two features of it are so fundamental and so well established as to be no longer optional for reasonably well-educated citizens of the present era; indeed they are in large part constitutive of the modern world view. These are the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology... [A]t present the evidence is so overwhelming that they are not simply up for grabs (Searle 1992, p. 86).

¹³ Ruse (2009a) was raised a Quaker.

¹⁴ God-denier Aldous Huxley admitted that the liberation which he and his fellow naturalists desired was "liberation from a certain system of morality [that is, a biblical morality]. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom" (Huxley 1966, p. 19).

is who or what an atheist is. His own answer is, “If you mean someone who absolutely and utterly does not believe there is any God or meaning then I doubt there are many in this group” (Ruse 2009b). In fact, there are none, as we saw. And strange as it may seem, Ruse let everyone know that he has “little time for someone who denies the central dogmas of Christianity and still claims to be a Christian” (Ruse 2009a). Ruse’s insight can also be put in another way: it is utterly inconsistent to claim to be a follower of Christ and at the same time deny His teachings.

There are two more noteworthy expressions of the role of fear in naturalism and materialism. They are both from philosophers who labor in the discipline known as the philosophy of mind which, traditionally, was dedicated to the study of the human soul.

John Searle and Thomas Nagel

The first is from naturalist and professor of philosophy of mind and language at the University of California, John Searle. His critical examination of the various materialistic views of human beings led him to conclude as follows:

Acceptance of the current views is motivated not so much by an independent conviction of their truth as by a terror of what are apparently the only alternatives.... If we are to think of the philosophy of mind over the past fifty years as a single individual, we should say of that person that he is compulsive neurotic, and his neurosis takes the form of repeating the same pattern of behavior over and over (Searle 1992, pp. 3–4, 31).

Most revealing, and of no little relevance to Christian apologists, is that Searle is telling us that the compulsive-neurotic person cannot be treated with direct refutation of his views:

Direct refutation simply leads to a repetition of the pattern of neurotic behavior. What we have to do is go behind the symptoms and find the unconscious assumptions that led to the behavior in the first place (Searle 1992, p. 31).

So what is the cause of this behavior? Again, Searle provides the answer: “dualism, the belief in the immortality of the soul... (Searle 1992, p. 3).”¹⁵ It seems that science faces an obstacle. If it cannot provide an answer to some of the deepest anxieties that plague the human soul, then it cannot claim to provide answers to all mankind’s problems. In other

words, the existence of an immaterial soul, mind, and consciousness counter the claim that science can present a plausible worldview.

Naturalist and professor of philosophy and law at New York University, Thomas Nagel, has the following to say about the mind, religion, God, and God-deniers:

[It] makes many people in this day and age nervous. I believe this is one manifestation of a fear of religion which has large and often pernicious consequences for modern intellectual life... In speaking of the fear of religion... I am talking about something much deeper—namely the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself. I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that... My guess is that this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition and that it is responsible for much of the scientism and reductionism of our time. One of the tendencies it supports is the ludicrous overuse of evolutionary biology to explain everything about life, including everything about the human mind (Nagel 1997, pp. 130–131).

We note several things. The “fear of religion” (that is, God) leads to a nervous condition. This condition has negative consequences for the intellectual life. What could that be but denying evidence inconsistent with evolution? Richard Dawkins, for example, let everyone know that he and his fellow evolutionists would accept Darwinism “even if there were no actual evidence” in support of it; “we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories” (Dawkins 2006, p. 287). The nervous condition is also not a rare condition, which implies that most scientists and philosophers are very much aware of God’s existence, of what Nagel refers to as the “cosmic authority problem.” The cosmic authority problem therefore forces a choice: either the authoritative Word of God or evolution, but not both. From this follows a reasonable conclusion: once a choice has been exercised, there can be no neutral consideration of evidence or arguments.¹⁶

It is also reasonable to conclude that Searle’s reference to “terror” and Nagel’s reference to “nervous,”

¹⁵ Dualists believe that the physical or material world is not all there is. There is also an unseen, immaterial world with spirits, such as God (John 4:24), angels, souls and demons (see Joubert 2011).

¹⁶ Whitcomb asked,

But is the human “mind” not capable of detaching itself from the so-called “heart” and of drawing its own conclusions about God independent of the downward direction of the fallen nature? The answer is no. Mark our Lord’s explanation of the unbreakable relationship between the mind and the heart: “Out of the heart come evil thoughts” (Matthew 15:19; cf. Mark 7:31). He later asked His disciples: “why do doubts arise in your hearts?” (Luke 24:38).”

That

Scriptures offer us no hope of bringing about a fundamental change in a man’s thinking about God apart from a profound change in his ‘heart,’ the moral/spiritual center of his personal being... is a basic reality that no Christian apologist can afford to ignore (Whitcomb 1977, p. 4).

“fear,” “not a rare condition,” and “something much deeper” point toward and confirm the realism and truth of Scripture. People know that God exists but have deliberately decided to exclude Him from their knowledge, and the psychology of unbelief shows that people cannot escape their awareness of the Creator; the condition persists. The mental states of unbelievers make it therefore epistemologically relevant to how we conceive of human beings that are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27, 2:7, 5:1; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9). If such things as thoughts, feelings and emotions, beliefs, desires and conscience (the human moral sense) are properties of an immaterial human nature, and the content of these mental states relate to things such as obsessions, anxieties, distresses, fears and prejudices, then we have a reason to accept them as realities of the human spiritual and moral soul and to take them seriously. Whether objectors would be willing to accept this is beside the point. What they must do is pay attention to their behavior and deal with what is driving them. By implication, they have much explanatory work to do; they owe others at least a plausible explanation for their persistent consciousness of the Creator. John MacArthur expressed it well:

People today, because of what they have on the inside, are conscious that God exists.... In order for the fool to say the word *God*, however, he must have a concept of God. And if he has a concept of God, that implies that God is. It is impossible to think of something that is not, therefore, he is trying to eliminate something that his very reasoning powers tell him exists (MacArthur 1997, p. 17).

To summarize, we cannot escape the truth and

realism of Scripture. What Scripture suggests is that the main problem with so-called atheists is not an intellectual problem, at least not in the sense that they cannot reason. Nor can it be a matter of insufficient knowledge, but a willful desire and choice not to acknowledge the truth. Even though thoughts can be suppressed, they haunt those who suppress them. In different words, Scripture does not negate the existence of “haters of God” (Romans 1:30), people who do not wish to keep their knowledge of God in mind. They are the rebels who do not wish to honor and acknowledge Him for who He is.¹⁷ It is in light of these truths that it becomes disconcerting to see how some Christians approach their apologetic task.

Section III: Scripture and the Identity of the Creator in Christian Apologetics

Ruse made two observations in his evaluation of “creationism” that are relevant to the purposes of this section. The first alludes to the vagueness of the term “theism” in the arguments of leaders in the Intelligent Design Movement, and the second makes explicit reference to the practice of Intelligent Design advocates not to identify the Intelligent Designer with the Creator of the world (Ruse 2007, pp. 15, 23). In other words, Ruse registered his awareness of an anomaly.¹⁸ The impression we get is that it is a virtue to be vague about the identity of the Creator and to avoid referring to the Bible as far as possible.¹⁹

Dr. William Dembski, a leader in the Intelligent Design Movement, told us that the aim of intelligent design theory is to show that living systems (from bacteria to human beings) originated through the

¹⁷ Here one calls to mind the words of Paul to Timothy: “And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the truth” (2 Timothy 3:8). Over 30 years ago Whitcomb observed,

In our efforts to make the Bible and Christianity attractive and acceptable to men we find ourselves immediately confronted with two stupendous obstacles: man’s fallen nature and the Satanic forces which surround him... [I]t is astonishing to me how few of the better known evangelical works on Christian apologetics today give them serious consideration (Whitcomb 1977, p. 3).

It is sad to say, but his observation is as true today as it was when he penned those words.

¹⁸ For one thing, general revelation alone cannot produce a natural theology (Thomas 1998). For another thing, Mayhue’s (2008, pp. 111–115) examination of the texts regarded by most apologists as the basis on which to build a theology of general revelation, indicates the contrary. Whitcomb’s (1977, pp. 11–13) exposition of Acts 17:1–34 also makes it impossible for us to reconcile Paul’s approach to the unbeliever with those of certain Christian apologists today. For an excellent treatment of the necessity of Scripture (special revelation), see Barrick (2004).

¹⁹ Moreland published a paper under the title of “How Evangelicals Became Over-Committed to the Bible and What can be Done about It”. Moreland’s thesis is this: “To be more specific, in the actual practices of the evangelical community in North America, there is an over-commitment to Scripture in a way that is false, irrational, and harmful to the cause of Christ” (Moreland 2007, p. 1). After having clarified what he meant by “over-commitment”—Christians who accept Scripture as their ultimate authority and source of relevant knowledge of the world, but then go on to accept Scripture as the sole authority or source of knowledge—he followed with two suggestions to correct the problem: (1) “...teach people how to avail themselves appropriately of the extra-biblical knowledge available,” and (2) “...develop biblical, theological and philosophical justifications for such knowledge along with guidance for its use” (Moreland 2007, p. 8). He concluded with the following words: “In sum, we Evangelicals rightly confess the ultimate authority of God’s inerrant Word. But we can no longer afford the luxury of Evangelical over-commitment to the Bible” (Moreland 2007, p. 8). While it may be said of many Christians, to this writer’s knowledge there is not a single young-earth creationist who considers Scripture as his sole source of knowledge. What seems clear is that Moreland has not changed his view of Scripture and science since he presented it 10 years ago (Moreland 2002). In other words, Moreland developed an argument against over-commitment to the Bible and for extra-biblical knowledge in order to continue to interpret “day” in Genesis as intrinsically consistent with a long age (see Ham and Mortenson 2009).

For reasons why the doctrine of creation is a key test case revealing the attitudes of Christians toward the authority of Scripture and the proper approach to biblical interpretation, see the three-part article by Elliott (2005a, 2005b, 2005c). Cf. also fn. 20.

agency of “an intelligent cause.” And rightly so; that is what the Bible teaches. But Dembski also says that “intelligent design presuppose[s] neither a creator nor miracles” (Dembski 1999, p.107). Can this statement be reconciled with a Christian? Is it consistent with being a Christian to honestly say that he can detect intelligence in the Creation, and then pretend that he does not speculate “about the nature of the intelligence” (Dembski 1999, p.107)? Not only does no one believe him, but clearly, he is refuting himself; Dembski produced many theological works in which he indicates who the Creator of the world is (cf. Dembski 1999). It is therefore nothing less than misleading to tell others that scientific creationism (young-earth creationism) is committed to theological presuppositions and pretend that proponents of Intelligent Design are not (Dembski 1999, p.247). It is no wonder that Ruse saw through the pretention. Richard Russell makes the following relevant points:

If you begin without God in your assumptions, you will not find Him in your conclusions—unless you cheat. The central problem with natural theology is that it takes certain conceptions of man and the world as given and intelligible without reference to God and then asks—does God exist too? This is diametrically opposed to the biblical view that the revelation of God is given rather than inferred, pervading the whole of creation and therefore leaving mankind “without excuse” for its ingratitude and idolatry and culpable ignorance...[Without] a true knowledge of God...he [the unbeliever] struggles and wanders in darkness (Russell 1986, p.7).

Nancy Pearcey (2005) wrote a book with the title of *Total Truth* and the sub-title of *Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*. On page 25 she wrote,

After all, every philosophy or ideology has to answer the same fundamental questions:

1. CREATION: How did it all begin? Where did we come from?
2. FALL: What went wrong? What is the source of evil and suffering?
3. REDEMPTION: What can we do about it? How can the world be set right again?

By applying this simple grid, we can identify nonbiblical worldviews, and then analyze where they go wrong (Pearcey 2005, p.5).

Every Christian recognizes in Pearcey’s words a summary of the revealed truth and central teaching

of Scripture. These questions are in the minds of most, if not all, people today. It is thus natural to think that these questions serve most appropriately as starting points for Christian apologists. However, it is 390 pages further, in the Notes section of her book that the reader discovers that Pearcey thinks differently. This is how she describes her approach and convictions:

I am often asked about the difference between creationism and Intelligent Design theory. The difference lies largely in the method of approach. Creationism starts with the Bible, and asks, What does the Bible say about science? That is a perfectly valid inquiry, just as we ask what the Bible implies for politics or the arts or any other field. But it is not the way to do apologetics. In speaking to a non-believing culture, we must start with data that our audience find credible. Thus Intelligent Design theory does not begin with the Bible—it begins with the scientific data and asks, Does the data itself give evidence of an intelligent cause? It makes the case that design be detected empirically (Pearcey 2005, p.415, fn.70).

To begin with the Bible—what it says—is not the way to do apologetics? But we thought that “every philosophy or ideology has to answer the same fundamental questions” to which Scripture provides the answers! We must start with what the audience find credible? Pearcey seems assured that the unbeliever will respond to the evidence of design (general revelation) instead of the infallible and inerrant Word of God. But her assurance is wholly arbitrary; if the unbeliever will not respond to the Bible then there is no assurance that he will respond to the witness of general revelation. A better alternative is the Apostle Paul who said that he was “...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...” and “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” (2 Corinthians 10:5)?²⁰

Avoiding the Scriptures is not limited to Christian apologetics. It is also evident in the field of so-called “analytical theology.” Professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, Michael Rea, defined the discipline as follows:

As I see it, analytical theology is just the activity of approaching theological topics with the ambitions of an analytical philosopher and in a style that conforms

²⁰ Here are a few things biblical scholar Richard Mayhue said in relation to Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 10:4–5 and Scripture: Scripture is the mind of God... To think like God one must think like Scripture. That’s why Paul encouraged the Colossians to let the word of Christ richly dwell within them (Colossians 3:16)... [A]ny philosophy, worldview, apologetic, or other kind of teaching that undermines, minimizes, contradicts, or tries to eliminate the Christian worldview or any part of it is to be met head-on with an aggressive, offensive battle-plan. God’s intended end (“destroy” is used in vv.4–5) of that which does not correspond to Scripture’s clear teaching about God and His created world.... How can one think Christianly without thinking theologically, and how can one think theologically without thinking biblically?... Whatever the subject, one must begin with God’s perspective from Scripture rather than with man’s opinion from observation, research, and logic... It is clearly a contradiction to declare oneself a Christian thinker and then relegate God’s mind in Scripture to a place of equal or inferior value to man’s thinking (Mayhue 2003, pp.43, 48, 51).

to the prescriptions that are distinctive of analytical philosophical discourse...in the end, it is the style and the ambitions that are most central (Rea 2009, p. 7).

Given the central importance of the style and ambitions of the philosopher, what happens when the topic of the authority and truth (inerrancy) of Scripture is discussed in analytical mode, but the truth of Scripture is distorted in the process? Among other things, something such as this: “The Bible *teaches*, for example, that Jesus told his apostles to go unto all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I am not sure, however, that it *teaches* that we are to do the same” (Rea n.d., p.38).²¹ A moment’s reflection shows that the writer quotes a text from Scripture (in the context of a discussion of the authority and truth of Scripture) without referencing the text. But the writer misquotes the text; he omits the essential point of the text which it explicitly mentions: “making disciples” (Matthew 28:19). The very next text provides us with the mark of a disciple: “observe all things that I commanded you” (v.20).

The mark of a disciple is elsewhere expressed by our Lord as follows: “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word [teachings], you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8: 31–32). By implication, the teachings of Jesus will prevent His disciples from being enslaved to false ideas. We also see that discipleship appears in both passages in relation to the authority of our Lord (Matthew 28:18). If the writer does not believe that what Jesus told His disciples apply to us, then why would any of His teachings, such as John 8:31–32, apply to us? It should be evident that inscripturated revelation is necessary to prevent and correct tendencies to distort divine revelation, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as a result of error, neglect or presumption.

Nowhere else are the errors that result from a philosophical study of theological topics apart from an exegesis of Scripture more clearly demonstrated than in philosopher Dr. Peter van Inwagen’s *God, Knowledge, and Mystery*. His conclusion that Genesis can be reconciled with evolution follows from his presumption that “a Christian is not logically committed, by the very fact of being a Christian, to regarding the bible as divinely inspired throughout” (van Inwagen 1995, p. 132). The fact that van Inwagen contradicts Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16) explains why he, who does not “claim to know much about

Old Testament studies” (van Inwagen 1995, p.128), failed to cite a single text of Scripture in support of his conclusion. The gravest of dangers is that many people (especially those who have not studied the issues for themselves) will be convinced that van Inwagen is right.

The foregoing discussion calls for clarification, since there seems to be a misunderstanding between God’s special revelation in Scripture and His revelation of Himself in the works of nature and the work of fallible men in science. First, the authority of Scripture is not a derived authority bestowed on it by the arguments (human reason) of human beings. When Scripture speaks, God speaks.²² To assume otherwise is to question the nature and character of the Creator. Not only is every word of God tested—proved true (Proverbs 30:5–6), pure and flawless (Psalm 12:6, 119:140), it is also the “...sword of the Spirit...” (Ephesians 6:17). It is “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Thus, is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Second, there is a distinct difference between “science as the alleged facts of nature explainable by man and Scripture as the certain facts of God given and explained by God” (Mayhue 2008, p.109). Richard Mayhue further observed:

Revelation does not include what man discovers on his own (i.e., knowledge) but rather what God discloses that otherwise man could not find on his own. General revelation in nature, as defined by special revelation, discloses the existence of God, the glory of God, the power and intelligence of God, the benevolence of God, and the fallenness (evil) of humanity” (Mayhue 2008, p. 119).

In other words, contrary to what many Christians assume, special revelation (the Bible) authenticates what man discovers in and through general revelation, and nature is not “the 67th Book of the Bible” (see Mayhue 2008, pp.105–129). With this in mind, we can now focus on theistic evolutionism.

Section IV: Can Scripture be Reconciled with Theistic Evolutionism?

In his “friendly criticism” of the Intelligent Design Movement, Ruse informed his readers that

²¹ On page 1 (fn. 1), Rea wrote: “This paper has benefitted from discussion at the Scripture Project Workshop in June 2010 and in the weekly discussion group of the Center for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame in January, 2011.” It is no surprise that Rea is uncertain whether Jesus included us when He told His disciples to “go to all nations, baptizing them.” For an examination of how various individuals viewed the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) since early church history and how the advent of Historical Criticism has affected even evangelical’s teaching of it, the reader is referred to Thomas (2000).

²² Edwards points out that expressions such as “The Lord spoke,” “The Lord commanded,” and “The Lord said” occur nearly 4,000 times in the Old Testament, and around 500 times in the first five books of the Bible alone (Edwards 1993, p. 79).

his “aim has not been to defend Christianity, but to defend the integrity of the Darwinian who wants to be a Christian” (Ruse 2006, p.148). That it must have been music in the ears of theistic evolutionists (BioLogos) there can be no doubt (see fn.2). However, Ruse had the insight to see that there is only one way a Christian can be an evolutionist, and that is to avoid a literal-historical understanding of the biblical record of creation:

Clearly then, if your theism is one which gets its knowledge of God’s actions and purposes from a literal reading of the Bible, you have a conflict. You cannot accept Genesis literally and evolution. That is a fact (Ruse 2007, p.15).

Naturalist and professor of biology Douglas Futuyma made the same point somewhat differently:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from preexisting species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence, for no natural process could possibly form inanimate molecules into an elephant or a redwood tree in one step (Futuyma 1983, p.197).

Ruse and Futuyma bring the issue into sharp focus; it is either millions or billions of years of evolution or special creation in six literal days of 24-hours each. So what must theistic evolutionists do to overcome this obstacle? First, they must make science their preferred choice of knowledge about origins. The founder of BioLogos, Dr. Francis Collins, is forthright and direct: “Science is the only reliable way to understand the natural world” (Collins 2007, p.6). This is a classical illustration of the mental posture known as scientism. Second, theistic evolutionists must conceive of the historical data of Genesis 1–3 as poetry, allegory, or myth, “rather than a literal scientific description of origins” (Collins 2007, p.206). Third, theistic evolutionists must question the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. Collins and Dr. Karl Giberson, the former executive vice-president of BioLogos and also professor of physics at Eastern Nazarene College, tell their readers that it is

a mistake to assume that the “concept of inspiration” entails the “factual accuracy” of Scripture (Giberson and Collins 2011, p.102; cf. Sparks 2010).

There is something, however, very important that Ruse failed to mention during his evaluation of creationism in 2007, and in the paper which appears under his name on the BioLogos website, and that is that a literal-historical reading of the biblical record of creation is intimately related to the nature and character of the Creator. God is “the God of truth” (Isaiah 65:16), He “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2; cf. Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 6:18), and His “eyes are too pure to behold evil” (Habakkuk 1:13). It would have been an evil thing for God to have allowed the writers of Scripture to record facts which they believed to be true, but God knew were actually false. Therefore, to posit errors in Scripture is to question the truth nature and character of the Spirit of truth (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; 1 John 5:7). But there are also other things theistic evolutionists do to persuade others of their position.

Right after former senior fellow of BioLogos, Dr. Peter Enns, informed his readers that “Evolution demands that the special creation of the first Adam as described in the Bible is not literally historical,” he singles out the apostle Paul as “the ultimate source of the dis-ease for Christians who are seeking a synthesis between the Bible [Genesis] and modern thought [evolution]” (Enns 2010a, p.3).²³ The veiled implication of Enns’ arguments must not escape our attention. If what Paul thought about and taught from Genesis 1–3 is wrong, then Jesus could not have been right in what He thought about and taught from these chapters. The reason is because Paul claimed to have received his gospel through a revelation from our resurrected Lord and Savior (Galatians 1:12). Thus, to claim that Paul was in error is to claim our risen Lord revealed falsehood to Paul (if we are to believe Paul’s testimony about learning from Christ), and that is a serious indictment of our Creator.

Theistic evolutionist and also writer for BioLogos, Dr. Tim Keller, believes that Genesis 1 cannot “be taken literally” because he does not “think the author expected us to.” Yet, contrary to Enns, he affirms that Paul “most definitely wanted to teach us that Adam and Eve were real historical figures” (Keller

²³ Theistic evolutionists who wrote for BioLogos are very well aware of the implications of their assertions and arguments. Enns, for example, wrote:

There is really little doubt that Paul understood Adam to be a real person, the first created human from whom all humans descended. And for many Christians, this settles the issue of whether there was a historical Adam. That is what Paul believed, and for his argument to have any meaning, both Adam and Jesus have to be real people. If there was no Adam, there was no Fall. If there was no Fall, there was no need for a savior. If Adam is a fantasy, so is the Gospel (Enns 2010b, pp.3–4).

Dr. Denis Lamoureux told readers of BioLogos that Adam never existed, while he clearly acknowledged the trouble it creates for theistic evolutionists:

The greatest problem with evolutionary creation is that it rejects the traditional literal interpretation of the opening chapters of Scripture... Even more troubling for evolutionary creation is the fact that the New Testament writers, including Jesus Himself, refer to Genesis 1–11 as literal history (Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 5:12–14; Hebrews 4:4–7; 2 Peter 2:4–5)—(Lamoureux 2010, p.4).

2009, p. 9). But Keller also informed his fellow theistic evolutionists that

When you refuse to take a Biblical author literally when he clearly wants you to do, you have moved away from the traditional understanding of the Biblical authority (Keller 2009, p. 9).

Also, in contrast to Enns who reasons that “Paul was an ancient man, not a modern one” (Enns 2010b, p. 9), Keller says,

You can’t say that ‘Paul was a man of his time’... If you don’t believe what he believes about Adam, you are denying the core of Paul’s teaching (Keller 2009, p. 10).

Thus, once a Christian disconnects the spiritual truth the Bible teaches from the historical events on which it is based, then that Christian must accept that he no longer acknowledges its authority, irrespective what he may say to the contrary.

These are “tip-of-the-iceberg” examples of the hazards theistic evolutionists create for biblical Christians. But there are also inconsistencies that exacerbate the problems already looked at. First, as we have seen, theistic evolutionism is based on the assumption that science is the only reliable source of knowledge of the natural world, which means it is regarded as more reliable and authoritative than the Bible in the matters about which it speaks. But if the Bible’s historical data cannot be trusted, then it does not make sense to trust it in matters of faith (cf. John 3:12).

Second, theistic evolutionism is based on the assumption that the Creator began the evolutionary process. If this is true, and somewhere during the process the Creator infused some ape-like creature with the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27, 2:7, 5:1–2, Zechariah 12:1), then the Creator must have performed a miracle. So, if the theistic evolutionist accepts the miraculous resurrection of our Lord from the dead as detailed in Scripture, then it makes no sense to deny other biblical miracles, such as the teaching that Adam was created directly and immediately by the Creator from the dust of the earth, separately from the animals, and in mature form (Genesis 2:7). In other words, the inconsistency relates to the abilities of the Creator (His almighty power and His ability to communicate truth to man—cf. 2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 66:3; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 22:29).

Third, Genesis reveals that God created various things to produce “after their kind” (Genesis 1:11, 12, 20–25, 6:19–20, 7:3). If each of the created natural kinds had been endowed with inherent limits and fixed boundaries beyond which kind variation could not go, then it is natural to think that it is impossible

for a fruit tree to produce an animal, and impossible for an animal to produce a human being, although natural to think that members of, for example, the dog kind would interbreed and produce varieties of the dog kind. The point is, if evolution is true, then theistic evolutionists cannot refer to things such as human nature, for where one kind of nature ended and the other kind began, becomes an arbitrary affair. The same principle applies to marriage. If human nature does not stop with humans, then we should be able to marry animals since we would be related.²⁴

Fourth, the creation of woman cannot be explained by evolutionists. If Eve, the “mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20) evolved, who or what kind of thing could have given birth to her, since the Bible clearly reveals that the first woman was not from the animal world (Genesis 2:21–23).

Fifth, the Bible reveals that the Creator said at the end of His creative work that “it was very good” (Genesis 1:31), which means that suffering and death could not have been present in the world prior to the Creator’s declaring His work very good. It thus refutes the evolutionary requirement of millions of years of suffering and death prior to the creation of the first human being.

Sixth, the Bible declares that the Creator created the earth and everything in it in six literal 24-hour days. On the seventh day He rested, which means He ceased His work on the sixth day of creation. The observance of the literal seventh day of the week, the Sabbath (Exodus 20:9–11), is rooted in the fact that the six days of creation were six literal days (Genesis 2:2–3). To be consistent with evolution, evolutionists must reason that the creation days refer to long ages of millions or billions of years each and argue for a poetic, allegorical, or mythical understanding of these days. Alternatively, they can continue to contradict Genesis, and claim that God is still creating.

Finally, and most important of all, to be consistent with evolution theistic evolutionists must deny our Lord’s literal-historical understanding of Genesis 1–3 (Matthew 19:4–6; Mark 10:6, 13:19; Luke 11:49–51; John 8:44; cf. 1 John 3:8) and assert that He contradicted Moses, which would be contrary to what He said (John 5:46–47).²⁵ It is in order to summarize a few things our Lord and Savior said and done in relation to Scripture.

- In addition to using the authority of the Scriptures to settle a dispute (for example, Matthew 15:1–14, 22:23–33; John 8), Jesus said that Scripture “cannot be broken” (John 10:35; cf. Matthew 5:19). It is difficult to think of something that

²⁴ I am indebted to one of the reviewers for this point.

²⁵ For a discussion of the issues mentioned in this section, see Mortenson (2008, pp. 315–346, 2009), and Chaffey and Patterson (2012).

cannot be broken as somehow defective. What it shows is our Lord's confidence in Scripture and that He considered the Scriptures accurate and unassailable.

- Jesus affirmed to God our Father, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17), an affirmation which excludes the possibility that it could contain error of any kind.
- Jesus often asked, "Have you not read?" (for example, Matthew 19:4), and then He took the quoted Scripture literally.
- Jesus often said, "It is written" (for example, Matthew 4:1–10; Luke 19:46) or "...as it is written" (Luke 3:4) or "Today this Scripture is fulfilled" (Luke 4:21), which clearly reveal that He accepted both the truth and authority of the Scriptures.
- Jesus often referred to "all of the prophets" (Luke 18:31) or a whole book, such as the "book of Psalms" (Luke 20:42), which imply that He considered every part of the Old Testament as inspired, true and authoritative.
- He taught from the Old Testament after His resurrection (Luke 24:27), which shows that what was true and authoritative for Him before His death remained true and authoritative for Him after His resurrection. In different words, our Lord did not undergo a change of mind about the truth and authority of the Scriptures.
- In Matthew 24:35 Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." In this text our Lord assigned permanence to the words that He spoke on earth just as He did to the words of the Old Testament (cf. Matthew 5:18). As one New Testament scholar observes, "If Jesus could insist on the retention of even the smallest letter of the Hebrew Old Testament and even the smallest part of a letter of the Hebrew Old Testament, one should expect that the Holy Spirit would preside over the inspiration of the New Testament with the same degree of accuracy. If Paul could insist on Timothy's close attention to details of Scripture [cf. 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:14, 15], one of those details would be the very words spoken by Jesus" (Thomas 2004, p.201).
- Whereas "amen" is used in the Old Testament to give assent to God's will or a prayer which agrees with God's character (for example, 1 Kings 1:36; Nehemiah 5:13, 8:6), the Gospels indicate that Jesus placed "amen" 75 times before His own statements to emphasize their truthfulness (for example, Matthew 5:18). In the 25 times that such an *amen* occurs in the gospel of John, it is always doubled (for example, John 3:3, 5, 5:19, 24, 25). The reasonable conclusion is that Jesus' use of "amen" signals His authority and veracity; what He said was absolutely true and the will and word of God.

It is difficult not to conclude that, for Jesus, what Scripture said, the Creator said. If, therefore, theistic evolutionists are prepared to claim that Scripture is the product of divine revelation, then they must accept that they have denied evolution. And since Scripture is the product of divine revelation, we conclude that theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with Scripture.

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Ruse spent more than 40 years of his life giving priority to fighting creationism. But we cannot help wondering about the fight in his soul. What we have seen is that there is an innate antagonism in man's sinful (morally corrupt) nature to divine revelation; a fear of God and the afterlife play a major role in shaping the thinking and behavior of the so-called atheist; naturalism and materialism are the man-made antidotes for a moral and mental condition from which God-deniers do not want to escape, and fighting creationism is a smokescreen for a war against the Creator. This war is not new; it started in the Garden of Eden with a questioning of God's word. Satan admitted its truth to Eve in the form of a question, but then went on to deny its literal meaning (Genesis 3:1, 4). Let it therefore be said, if one's point of departure is faulty, he almost always ends up at an unintended destination (cf. Proverbs 20:12).

In this paper we looked at several points of departure: assumptions about the creation-evolution controversy, assumptions about the so-called atheist, assumptions about the place of Scripture and the identity of the Creator in Christian apologetics, and the assumptions of theistic evolutionists. The psychology of unbelief suggests a revision of some of the assumptions, aims, methods, and approaches of Christian apologists. The question of the knowability of God through His created works is also nowhere disputed in Scripture. Thus, for a Christian to assume the non-identity of the Creator in the face of unbelief is an irreverent thing to do; it is also inconsistent with the testimony of Scripture.

The voice of this writer is by no means a lonely voice (cf. Johnson 2007; Kruger 2001; MacArthur 2002; Mayhue 2008; Moore 2010; Russell 1986; Thomas 1998), and there are other things which could have been said. However, it should be evident that controversies between biblical creationism and other views rest mainly on different presuppositions about the nature and character of the Creator, and the authority and truth of Scripture. Out of this basic difference the other differences arise. Ruse must pay attention to and deal with what is driving him. He has much explanatory work to do, including his persistent consciousness of his Creator.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the reviewers of this paper for helpful and appreciated suggestions and corrections.

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