

Genesis, Science, and Creationism

He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all.

-Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, "Moral and Religion Aphorisms" no. 25

In this paper, I am going to write about the first two chapters of Genesis, which famously comprise the First Story of Creation (or just The Creation, Genesis 1:1-2:3) and the Second Story of Creation (or the Garden of Eden, the rest of Chapter 2). There are some Christians who find themselves in an ideological war against science. While I applaud any Christian who denies the world in defense of the Truth, it seems to me that some are more interested in picking a fight over the Truth than in trying to understand what the Truth really is.

A) Definitions:

1) Creationism: The belief that God, Jehovah, created the universe. In its proper sense, Creationism is an extremely broad philosophy. It doesn't matter *how* Jehovah created the universe, only that He set things in motion and influenced its development.

2) Fundamentalism: The belief that the Bible is true and complete in the literal sense. Fundamentalists invariably believe in *sola scriptura*, which means that the Bible is the *only* source of information we need. As a result, most Fundamentalists limit Creationism to the 6,000 Year Theory or something virtually identical to it.

3) 6,000 Year Theory: A theory that places the age of the universe and the world at about 6,000 years. I will use this name to cover many other theories that, while they may be slightly different in details, have no meaningful differences in the context of this paper. The theory is based on tracing the genealogies of the Bible to the time of Jesus. By looking at the ages of many of these ancestors when they begat the next generation allows an estimation of the time elapsed between Adam and Jesus. Other time clues found in the Bible are used as well, and used to fill in some gaps when necessary. In the end, it comes to the world being about 4,000 years old at the time of Jesus. To this number, 2,000 more years are added to cover the time between Jesus and today. Obviously, this is a very Fundamentalist approach to Creationism. Other popular theories, usually endorsed by Atheists attempting to mock this theory, include the 5 Minute Theory and Last Thursdayism (**Topic B.2**)

4) Bible: The Greek word for "library," and it literally means "a collection of books." For Christians, the Bible is a collection of books that are believed to be inspired by God and which teach of God's presence and God's plan of salvation for mankind. This collection includes books of poetry, philosophy, ethics, history, law, biographies, prophecies and mythologies. Several books cross genres.

5) Intelligent Design Theory: The belief that the universe did not develop like it did by accident or random chance, but rather that it was willfully created with a purpose in mind. This is essentially Creationism without the political "baggage." Thanks to the efforts of the Fundamentalists, Creationism has become synonymous with the 6,000 Year Theory in public discussion. When one talks of Intelligent Design Theory, however, one is accepting the scientific theory of Evolution. And while Creationism explicitly calls on Jehovah as the originator, Intelligent Design Theory only requires the

existence of a creator god, not necessarily Jehovah. Taking advantage of a quirk in human nature, this subtle difference makes it "less-Christian" and therefore easier to discuss with non-Christians of all types.

6) Evolution: A theory on how the universe changes, and how everything in the universe is formed as a result of these changes. The changes are always in a cause-effect relationship. The theory states that everything that exists now was once something else. For example, a star Evolved out of a cloud of gas that collapsed under its own gravitational pull, and that the star will eventually Evolve into either a white dwarf, a neutron star or a black hole. At some point, one has to either claim that there is an Ultimate-Causation from which all future effects come, or that this chain of events goes back for eternity in what is called Infinite Regress.

B) The Age of the Universe: Science claims the universe is about 14 billion years old, with Earth about 4 billion years old. Science claims that the first single-celled organism emerged from the primordial goo on Earth about 800 million years ago, with man Evolving somewhere about 200,000 years ago. This is, of course, in stark contrast with the 6,000 Year Theory (**Topic A.3**). What is a well-meaning Christian to think?

1) The Historical Inaccuracies of Genesis: I find it an endless source of amusement when someone in my presence accuses Catholics of not knowing their Bible. I always ask them about the inconsistencies of the two stories of Creation. This should not be a trick question, as it is in the first two chapters in the first book of the Bible (in many Bibles, only about 2 pages worth of reading). The look on their face when they ask "What two stories?" is priceless. However, I find it less amusing when I see similar situations take place on a podcast or a TV show when the Atheist show host embarrasses a Christian publicly. In the first case, while my reaction may be sinful, it is not malicious. I see an opportunity to educate someone who is both proud and vocal of the Christian Faith. In the other case, I see thousands of viewers, who already think Christians are irrational and silly, have their views reinforced.

In the First Story of Creation, the first humans (male and female) are created last. In the Second Story of Creation, Man is created in the middle while Woman is created at the end. This is not the only case of historical inconsistencies in the Bible, but it is the first and the one most germane to my topic here. If we assume the Fundamentalist approach, we have discredited the Bible in the first two pages of a rather large collection of writing.

But if we look at the Bible as the revealing of God's presence and His plan for the salvation of mankind, then we have no such problem. In the first story, we see mankind as God's crowning achievement of the creation. In the second story, we see the emphasis is not so much on creation itself (it merely provides the backdrop), but really on Man's role within creation and of the ideal relationship between man and woman.

2) The 6,000 Year Theory and God: With the Fundamentalist approach to Genesis discredited, much of the work that went into the 6,000 Year Theory is now suspect. But just because it is suspect does not, by necessity, mean it is wrong. There are some Fundamentalists who are sympathetic to the 4-billion-year-old-Earth theory of science. They do not believe the scientists are liars, but rather that scientists have been deceived. They would say that the Earth *looks* older than 6,000 years because either God made it to look older (Omphalos Hypothesis) or Satan has corrupted the evidence. It is from this failed attempt to cross the gap between Fundamentalism and Science that theories such as the 5 Minute Theory and Last Thursdayism developed.

Now, all knowledge is limited to what can be perceived. I certainly cannot prove that the evidence was *not* corrupted any more than a Fundamentalist can prove it *was*. But there are two reasons why I think this theory is flawed. The first is rather complicated so I will only touch on it here, but the second is not only simpler but I believe more convincing anyway.

In the first case, we have to consider what is meant by time, specifically if our measure of time is constant. Time does suggest an absolute Truth that some things happen before others, and both the First Story of Creation and science agree that man came last. But how we measure the time between these two events is a construct, something made up by man. We constructed a day to be the time it takes for the Earth to complete one rotation on its axis, and a hour to represent 1/24 of a day. Likewise, we constructed a year to represent the time it takes for the Earth to make a full orbit of the Sun, and discovered it currently takes approximately 365 days to do so. What we are doing is trying to superimpose a man made construct (a day) on something that was made by God before man even came to be. It seems presumptuous to me to assume that God worked within our constructs, even if He allowed us to describe creation as taking six days followed by a day of rest. Especially since we see elsewhere in scripture that God specifically claims He does not measure time as we do: But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. (2 Peter 3:8, based, in turn, on Psalms 90:4)

But in the second case, I feel that the 6,000 Year Theory is actually a challenge to God's omnipotence. We clearly see Biblical evidence that God allows the Devil to rule the world, but we also see that God limits just how much destruction the Devil can do. The Devil delights to send tsunamis and hurricanes (yes, I live on the East Coast) to destroy the land, but new life sprouts almost immediately after the storm passes. It may well be that Satan has the power to corrupt the world so it looks much older than it really is, but would the God of Truth allow a change as radical as making 6,000 years look like 14 billion years? An even more troubling question: can a God of Truth deceive us with the Omphalos Hypothesis? I could only believe this to be the case if the *actual age* of the world were *not* important to the revelation of His plan for us. Therefore, even if the 6,000 Year Theory or the Omphalos Hypothesis were correct, it would not be important to our salvation to believe in it.

3) Evolution and God: With Fundamentalism discredited on the matter, and the 6,000 Year Theory reduced to insignificance at best, we can now look at Evolution and the Intelligent Design Theory. We see in Evolution that the Big Bang Theory answers the Ultimate-Causation question, and the Big Bang set into motion countless Hydrogen atoms that coalesced into unimaginably large clouds of hydrogen gas that likewise coalesced into stars and gas planets. In the stars, the intense heat generated by hydrogen atoms collapsing in on each other fused them to form heavier atoms. Some of these stars exploded and sent the heavier atoms to mix in gas clouds that had not yet reached the critical point where stars and planets could form. About 8 billion years after the Big Bang, a specific gas cloud, seeded with exactly the right amount and type of heavier atoms to allow the potential for life to exist, gave birth to our Sun. This may seem like a long time, but 8 billion years is barely enough time for the first stars to form and die, much less for their debris to arrive in time to seed other gas clouds.

About 2 billion years later, the Earth was born and was further seeded by asteroids that collectively had exactly the right combination of heavy atoms to interact in exactly the right way to produce life. And at this point, we have another Ultimate-Causation. There is only one species that appears to have both life and non-life characteristics: the virus. But the virus can only act like it has life if it inserts itself into something that already has life. This suggests that the virus is not the Evolutionary link between non-life and life, but rather that the virus Evolved in response to life. We

really don't have a clear path of Evolution when going for such a radical change between the non-living and the living.

Over the course of the 800 million years, life Evolved in an untold number of ways until the creature we recognize as being human was formed. And what a creature he was! Of all the animals that ever existed on the Earth those 800 million years, only man has Imagination. Another Ultimate-Causation. And with Imagination came Reason and then Free Will. With Imagination also came language, art, math, philosophy, morality, ethics and religion. No other animal has these things. There is only one non-human animal that can dream, and that is the dog. This is interesting, because dogs did not Evolve, they are the result of genetic engineering done by man while man was still at his most primitive state (another proof of man's Imagination).

What has just been described is what the most Atheistic-minded cosmologist believes. There are only two things that separate this Atheist from a Theist who believes in the Intelligent Design Theory. The first is that the Theist does not believe that all these extremely narrow margins of possibility happened by chance. The Christian and the Deist believe there was a power who saw that what needed to happen actually did happen. The second thing is that the three Uncaused-Causations mentioned were not really uncaused, but that the cause of them was this same power. The Atheist has no real answer to these Uncaused-Causations, but would suggest atoms have mysterious properties that only manifest when the mix is exactly right to create DNA (for life), and that only a precise DNA combination can lead to Imagination. I find this to be remarkably similar to the beliefs the alchemists had in their dream of turning lead into gold.

But in the sixty years or so since the Big Bang and Quantum Theories destroyed Classical Materialism, cosmologists have struggled to explain how the universe could be exactly right for life. While sixty years is a relatively short time, so far their efforts have only backfired. Rather than explain how these narrow margins might have happened by chance, they have actually discovered even more criteria that, if not exactly right, would not even allow the universe to even exist. In other words, Intelligent Design is becoming a harder and harder theory for cosmologists to dismiss. Unfortunately, these three Uncaused-Causations and cosmologists' inability to account for them outside of Intelligent Design seem to be ignored by most other scientific branches. The more popular theories are still grounded in the Infinite Regress of Classical Materialism, despite the growing evidence otherwise.

C) God and Intelligent Design: I mentioned before how Intelligent Design does not by necessity mean that Jehovah was the Intelligence behind the Design. Deism, the belief that a god created the universe but then had nothing more to do with it, does provide an alternative to Jehovah. But Jehovah is the only possibility that gives us any insight as to *why* creation happened the way it did.

1) The Problem with Deism: While this topic deals specifically with Deism, please note that much of it applies with Atheism as well. Perhaps the most famous of the Deist gods is Brahma as the Hindus originally understood him. Nearly every pagan culture had what I call the "Shadow God" who created the world but who likewise remained a complete mystery to the people. On the opposite side of the Faith spectrum, the most developed theories of Atheism recognize that man has a longing for God. They deny God exists, but admit humans have a need for Him anyway. Friedrich Nietzsche recognized the despair of this in his teachings of Nihilism. Representing the Atheistic Existentialist thought, Albert Camus's answer to this need was to distract oneself from its meaninglessness, while his friend and contemporary Jean-Paul Sartre admitted, "There is a God-shaped hole in the heart of man where the divine used to be." So we see both the believers and the disbelievers of God recognizing that man, again alone among all other animals, having a need for something that transcends this reality. C.S.

Lewis, being quite a practical philosopher, asked why either god or nature would give humans a need if there was no means to fill it.

Every other need one has can be met by this universe. The need for food, water, air and protection against the elements can all be provided for by nature. We can even extend this list to every want we have as well. Except for God. It seems inconceivable, Lewis reasoned, that we could have this need and desire if there were no means to have it satisfied. Furthermore, and regardless of what one thinks of Lewis's reasoning, the fact is that to have such an unmet need or desire is quite contrary to Evolution. Evolution, especially among living things, tends to reward changes that result in something becoming stronger. Without Jehovah, this need or desire for God that only humans have would be worse than useless, as it is actually destructive. I won't make a proof of it here, but I hope it is obvious to the gentle reader how much harm has come to those who tried to fill this "god-shaped hole" with Earthly things. It's hard to believe Deists are right in saying that their god has no interest in us when he made us to have such a strong interest in him.

2) Jehovah: Jews and Christians not only believe in a God who created the universe, but one who *does* want to satisfy that need we have to know of Him. While many pagan priests and prophets claimed to know what one god or another wanted, none of them claimed to know anything about their all-creator Shadow God. If they did, he would no longer be a Shadow God. So, if we believe in a God who does indeed want us to know about Him, and realize that only the Jews and the Christians claim to have firsthand knowledge about this God, then we really only have them to turn to. So, what do the Jews and Christians say about creation? Here, I will focus on the First Story of Creation.

There are three things from the lessons of Genesis that I want to address. The first is that man was created last. The second is that God breathed life into Man after shaping him out of clay, as opposed to simply creating Man like He did the other animals. The third is that Man was made in the Image of God. For the first point, I have already discussed that man is a relative newcomer to life on this planet (200,000 years out of 800 million). Except for the dog (which man created), it's hard to think of any important species of animal that has been around for less time than man, and no animal had such a radical change from its parent species than man did from his own. It seems to me that to argue over this point is simply a distraction from more important philosophical Truths.

The second point, that God breathed life into Man, I believe is very profound. While I do not doubt that other animals do indeed "live" in the literal sense, man lives differently. Man has something called "personhood" that we simply don't apply to other animals. Thanks to advances in computer technology and popular Science Fiction stories, philosophers are talking about considering Artificial Intelligence and alien races as candidates for personhood. But these discussions don't deny my point; they reinforce it. They show how repulsive an idea it is to assign personhood to any other Earthly animal. However personhood is eventually defined, it will clearly require something more than merely being alive. It requires living in a higher sense. And science is at a complete loss as to how to explain the Ultimate-Causation of Imagination, which *is* the defining attribute of living in this higher sense.

The third point, that we are made in God's Image, is easy to see. Imagination allows Man, alone among the animals, to be creative. In the 800 million years life has existed on Earth, the most sophisticated non-human is no more artistic than the first single-celled organism that came to be. In contrast, even before art, perhaps 36,000 to 40,000 years ago, man was performing genetic manipulation of the grey wolf to produce what we call the dog today. Yet, who is more creative than God? Science tells us that no two snowflakes in the world are exactly the same. Yet to come up with a seemingly infinite number of unique snowflakes pales to the creativity and uniqueness of the universe

as a whole.

Conclusions: There are indeed a great many ideas about creation, but the more we learn scientifically, the more Genesis seems to be validated. Regretfully, many Christians seem less interested in pursuing the Truth than engaging in a foolish and self-destructive war of words against science. While scientists are human as well and likewise can become petty in some matters, as a professional group they are much more open to new ideas and to accepting facts that challenge their beliefs than most Christians. For the last sixty years or so, scientists have been forced to accept that the beliefs they held for millennia were wrong. Their new ideas really are not that far from what Moses chose (through God) to write down. If we truly believe in a God of Truth, then we Christians are morally bound to support and guide any honest and moral effort to seek the Truth.

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