

THE VERY INTELLIGENT DESIGNER – PART I

This is a controversy raging in the church, our education system and society at large. In this series we will examine 'intelligent design, the near hysterical opposition to it, and the merits of the theory itself. Ultimately we are left to choose between purposeless evolution and the design of a loving and caring God to explain our existence. And which we choose may have bearing not only on our eternal destiny but the shape of society here on earth.

That's The Way It Is !...?

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” (Romans 1:18-21)

Scientists are very sure when it comes to the theory of intelligent design! It just depends on their understanding though, as to exactly what they are sure of. The Reverend George Coyne, the Vatican's chief astronomer, is very sure that, “Intelligent design isn't science even though it pretends to be.” He further opined that it should only be taught as part of cultural history or religion. Citing “modern science”, Rev. Coyne said, “...believers must move away from the notion of a ...designer God”. However his boss, Pope Benedict begs to differ, stating the universe was the result of an “intelligent project”.¹ And so it goes.

But just what is “intelligent design”? In simple terms it is the theory that the origin of; 1) The Universe, 2) Its Characteristics, and 3) Life Itself, can best be explained to be the result of directed, intelligent causation rather than the accidental processes of Neo-Darwinian evolution. In a nutshell it says, *‘Something doesn't come from nothing. And something with a design doesn't come about by accident’*. There has to be a designer. In contrast, the theory of evolution says that the design found in nature is only an illusion. Saving detail for later, intelligent design (ID), has harnessed the methods of various scientific disciplines, (anthropology, forensics, cryptography etc) to detect evidence that a phenomena was the result of intelligent causation. It's the type of thing done all the time, - in police work for instance, to determine if a death was accidental or a homicide. But of course it is the implications of the evidence that leads to controversy.² It challenges the very basis of modern science; - the assumption that ‘Nature’ is all there is.

Speaking for the scientific community, Wikipedia characterizes the movement as “neocreationist pseudoscience or junk science”.³ Writing for NPR, Jeffrey Dvorkin argues that the question of higher purpose “...is about many things, but ultimately, it is not about rationalism”. Mr. Dvorkin cannot see how science and faith can possibly be mixed. Because after all, being irrational in its very nature, faith “defies explanation”.⁴ In fact it is the position of the modernist, atheistic, naturalistic powers that claim intellectual authority in our society, that science and religion each have their own sphere, - thereby drawing a distinction that cannot rationally exist. If there is Truth, it must be real. It must accurately portray the way things are in the real world. Instead science has arrogated to itself the authority to define truth. It claims this power under what it sees as the unchallenged authority of naturalism.⁵ Science is saying, - that what is real is all that matters, and that all that is real can only be defined by science. Naturalism is a closed system. It describes a world in which ‘all that came to be’, is the result of natural causes, the product of material

cause and effect. There is no room in that line of thinking for the God of creation. God is defined out of the equation.

Some, like Harvard genetics professor Richard Lewontin defend the scientific position with revealing honesty. “The problem”, he says, “is to get them to reject irrational and supernatural explanations of the world, the demons that exist only in their imaginations, and to accept . . . science as the only begetter of truth. We exist as material beings in a material world, all of whose phenomena are the consequences of material relations among material entities.”⁶ Under this mode of thinking, God may be acceptable as a subjective tool, but He can have no basis in reality. God is but a relic of the darkened past, before science enlightened mankind to the true nature of his purposeless existence. Under this system, God is therefore a figment of our wishful collective imagination. Lewontin further admits in the same article, [Now get this!], - that it is not the compelling nature of the evidence that leads to such a conclusion but prior commitment to processes “. . . that produce material explanations.” In that admission, the good professor reveals the movement’s ultimate weakness: It is committed to an evolutionary explanation despite the evidence! This is atheism posing as science!

Observe their tortured logic. Materialism by definition excludes the consideration of outside forces. It can only follow then that a creative outside force, i.e. God, must by assumption be excluded. In effect it is saying; *‘When we consider the origin of man and the cosmos, we will only consider natural, material causes. Aha! We have found that man is the product of natural material causes alone.’* Fettered by their assumptions, they are forced to deny the increasing weight of scientific evidence coming to light in so many areas of inquiry; evidence that points to patterns of intelligent design in the universe and its component parts. That circular logic is pregnant with serious societal implications.⁷

Here are some of those implications to try on for size. If we are but products of an accidental universe, then for all practical purposes: God is dead. If God is dead: There is no Truth, - because there is no source for ultimate truth. If there is no Truth: There is no basis for morality. What this prior commitment to evolution has turned into is a philosophical religious creed that defines the parameters of modern thought. God then becomes simply a human invention. Life is the simple result of purposeless cause and effect. Naturalism is the rule and exclusively defines rational thought. Therefore any consideration of the supernatural is out of order. If we are products of purposeless, happy coincidence, then all definition of morality, of the value of life, - is by right and logic, ours to make. It is the ultimate in liberation theology. If we are but cosmic accidents, what then is our ultimate purpose and value? With this philosophy in place, Professor Peter Singer can argue for the ‘right’ to terminate the life of severely handicapped children during the first month of life. Who can deny Gay marriage or polygamy? And what’s wrong with incest, anyway? Where does one rationally draw that line once you have removed God, (the source of Truth and morality) from His throne? If all science is reality and religion is merely subjective, then morality is individual and God has no place in the public life of the republic. So in debate, - the religious are swept to the fringe, - the kook fringe.

Those naturalist assumptions are firmly entrenched in our educational system. Esteemed historian, Philip Johnson argues powerfully that naturalism has become the quasi-official religious philosophy of the United States. It certainly

has established itself as the guiding force in public education. Johnson points out that "...the power of the federal judiciary, and the mystique of the Constitution, vigorously and almost always successfully, insists that law and public education must be based upon naturalistic assumptions." ⁸ Now naturalism, and the Neo-Darwinian explanation of the origin of man, lies in direct opposition to the notion of the existence of God. As everything is explained in terms of 'natural causes', it renders belief in God impossible. It attacks the notion of design in the construct of both the cosmos and the biological systems that support life here on earth. This is a philosophy of the accidental. There can be no designing God. The world as we know it, is the sum of all the accidental interactions that preceded it. The atheistic assumption is not lost on the students. ⁹ Cornell biologist William Provine admitted the implications of pure naturalism in debate. Darwinism means, said he; "No life after death; No ultimate foundation for ethics; No ultimate meaning for life; No free will." ¹⁰ These then are the implications of the philosophy taught in our schools. But is this the truth? Increasingly scientists are saying, 'It is not!'. Next time we will look at just how science is increasingly beginning to question those underlying assumptions of Darwinian Theory.

THE VERY INTELLIGENT DESIGNER – PART II

In Part II, we'll get into the meat of it as we begin to examine both Intelligent Design Theory (ID) and the flaws in the evolutionary model. The evidence abounds.

According To Its Kind

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.... And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him" (Genesis 1:1-3, 25, 27)

The theory of evolution has long been entrenched in the academic establishment. For decades it was not seriously questioned. But in recent years winds of doubt have begun to blow, and the theory, once thought sacrosanct, is being increasingly challenged by the notion of intelligent design. ID is not 6-Day Creationism. It is not religion in any form. It counts among its chief proponents, avowed agnostics. The leading atheist in the world, Anthony Flew, was so impressed by ID, that he was led to abandon his atheism for, a form of Deism, taking on a belief in an unknowable God. Earlier this year over 400 scientists from various disciplines, (including 70 biologists), signed a formal document sponsored by the Discovery Institute which expressed their dissatisfaction with the Darwinian explanation for the origin of the universe. One called evolution the "...great white elephant of contemporary thought". One Russian bioorganic chemist was quoted saying, "The ideology and philosophy of neo-Darwinism which is sold by its adepts as a scientific theoretical foundation of biology, seriously hampers the development of science and hides ... the field's real problems."¹¹

For the last several years now, scientists have been questioning evolution's underlying assumptions. The publication of *Darwin's Black Box*, by Michael Behe, showed the serious flaws in Darwinian Theory from the standpoint of molecular biology. Michael Denton's *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, seriously questioned the adequacy of the evidence for the theory. The work of William Dembski, and Charles Thaxton among others is making a compelling case for the purposeful design of the universe. And coming from a historical / philosophical perspective, Philip

Johnson has demonstrated the weakness of the assumptions underlying the purely naturalistic approach to the origins of life and the cosmos. The fact is, that the evidence for naturalism is comparatively weak when viewed in the light of the latest scientific work. Naturalism survives because it is the underlying assumption of science.

What the relatively recent evidence has demonstrated however, is that the adequacy of naturalism as a theoretical process to explain the origin of matter, of life - and of man as merely the product of naturalistic forces, - is sorely deficient. Darwinism fails precisely in the attempt to describe the origin of the genetic code or the gradual emergence of the eye, or other highly complex organ systems. But locked into the assumptions underlying naturalism, its proponents struggle desperately, - against the evidence, - to maintain at least the appearance of a coherent theory. That is why, despite the fossil evidence that has never provided a 'missing link', despite the fact that geochemistry has demonstrated that the earth's early atmosphere did not possess the conditions for the spontaneous generation of life, and despite the fact that even the 'Big Bang', points to a definite beginning for the existence of time and matter; - they continue to hold to the notion of an accidental universe. It is not truth they seek but the very idea of God they abhor.¹²

A quick look at a few areas will demonstrate the depth of their problem and the many directions they must face to defend their position. The probability of our chemical makeup accidentally combining has been calculated at one in ten to the 40,000th power. Is this mere coincidence or evidence of design? Dr Charles Thaxton holds that the inference of design is inherent in the evidence of human biology. The scientific discipline of Information Theory tells us that the existence of codes or patterns, is the sure sign of an external intelligent agent. If we happen upon a book, or a watch, for instance, - we immediately conclude that it was produced by an intelligent agent, - man. Consider DNA. It contains not only the information for the formation of life on the cellular level but also defines its processes. It therefore is most certainly an informational code requiring an intelligent source; - and therefore the very definition of intelligent design. DNA then an example of where the inference of design is inherent in the science. Where there is design there is a designer.¹³

An even more basic issue arises when we consider the creation of matter itself. The First Law of Thermodynamics states that matter can be neither destroyed nor created. Yet it is just such a '*super-natural*' event that is necessary to explain the spontaneous generation of hydrogen atoms out of the great nothing that the pure naturalist would have us believe. A belief in pure materialism necessitates accepting that matter *did* generate itself out of nothing. This is a notion that runs contrary to the known laws of physics they claim to defend. More pointedly, it forces its atheistic adherents to claim as the basis for all existence that the universe was called into being out of nothing, by no one, for no particular purpose and in violation of the physical laws generated by that act of creation.

Science's belief in the Big Bang theory has further undermined the foundation of Darwinian evolution. Over the last half-century or so, cosmologists came to believe that the universe did have a beginning and that it occurred about 15 billion years ago. Not only did this lay to rest the notion of an eternally-existent universe, but a few simple calculations debunked any idea that there would have been anywhere near enough time for the earth to produce life through evolution, in the less than 100 million years allotted to it by those scientists.¹⁴ Add to that the rediscovery of the Cambrian explosion. Fossil evidence now shows, that in short period of time, virtually every animal phylum came into being without any traceable pre-Cambrian ancestor. What the record displays is an explosion of life forms in a geologically short period of time. Neo-Darwinian theory predicts that through thousands of generations diversity should have increased. New phyla should have appeared and there should have been intermediate forms and

evidence of branches that went extinct because they could not compete. But the record shows nothing of the sort. Instead of the increase in variation required by Darwinism, the number of phyla has actually gone down since the Cambrian period from 50 to 37. Since then, there has been no branching-off into new and more varied forms. Further, no transitional forms have been discovered. That evidence has refuted two of the most basic tenets of Darwinian naturalism.¹⁵

Michael Denton in his book *Evolution; A Theory in Crisis*, levels a blistering critique of Darwinism. As summarized by William Dembski, its shortcomings include, "...the origin of life, the origin of the genetic code, the origin of multi-cellular life, the origin of sexuality, the gaps in the fossil record, the biological big bang that occurred in the Cambrian era, the development of complex organ systems, and the development of irreducibly complex molecular machines".¹⁶ It is precisely the most basic contentions of the evolutionary model that are the most weakly supported. Darwinian Theory has not been able to explain how amino acids became DNA, or find the link between reptile and bird or the early primates and man. And as more and more fossil evidence is assembled the problem of the 'missing link', the connecting transitional form, is increasingly evident. It is not just the link between ape and man that is missing, but the problem is evident across all times and species. Denton, writing about this says, "...the infinitude of connecting links has still not been discovered and the fossil record is about as discontinuous as it was when Darwin was writing the Origin."¹⁷ (Just for the record, at the time of this quote, Denton is writing as an agnostic scientist.)

Perhaps an even more pressing problem for evolutionary theory is coming up with a mechanism "...explaining how anything can evolve that doesn't make biological sense when incomplete". Of what benefit to the organism is an eye that cannot yet see, or wings that cannot produce flight. How or why would an insentient nature *select* for such as these?¹⁸ According to the law of natural selection, nature could only select for components that in themselves produced a definite survival advantage for the organism. A sightless eye or flightless wings would produce no such advantage. So how could the complex systems, (known to exist on all levels, from the molecular to fully articulated organ systems), ever be developed? Michael Behe in *Darwin's Black Box* argues exhaustively that it could not. Behe shows that on the molecular level, the information required by the complexity of the process requires more than a mere chemical reaction. Complex information screams *design*.¹⁹ It is, in Behe's phrase, 'irreducibly complex'. Behe argues convincingly in his thesis that so much of the cell life on the molecular level is just that, - irreducibly complex.²⁰

Then there are those little matters that we will not have space to fully develop. First there is the precise mathematical structure and form apparent in all of nature. All that is, can be explained using just five laws encompassing eight different equations; - The laws of mechanics, electrodynamics, statistical mechanics, quantum mechanics and general relativity. These govern our universe, regulating everything from the sub-atomic to the cosmic, providing for stable systems at all levels and making life possible.²¹ This leads us to a second area, the existence and fine-tuning of the universal constants. These constants need to be precisely what they are in order to have life exist here or anywhere. The degree of inter-related precision is almost unimaginable and flies in the face of all statistical probability. The more we understand the precision that is necessary and the overlapping dependence and delicate relationship between these variables the more we see the mark of unmistakable design. These constants include; - the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, the ratio of electro to proton mass, the expansion rate of the universe, - 34 constants in all. The precision required for the existence of life has been calculated at one part in 10 to

the 120th power. That all of these constants came together in such a precise way as to produce life, is like winning the lottery a billion times over. The hand of the designer is showing.^{22 23}

So we come to the question: Are the underlying assumptions of naturalism a valid basis on which to order our beliefs. I think not. The weaknesses of pure naturalism are both apparent and inherent. A belief in materialism or naturalism, demands a great leap of faith, - against the assembled evidence. The materialist must believe that 'all that came to be' was the result of a causeless, process. Everything that exists came from nothing without apparent reason. Universal laws came into being without direction. Randomness alone explains the delicate relationships between the physical laws. Pure chance must account for the precise ordering of the universe in relation to the earth which makes life possible. Life spontaneously appeared, and developed complex systems of organs and internal organization. It did so guided by an extremely complex information system, DNA, which appeared as the result of accidental processes. Against the existing biological and fossil evidence, great evolutionary leaps were made. Chemicals became life. Microscopic life begot plants and animals and eventually man. Naturalism seems to require quite the miracle!²⁴

So we began by considering the challenge of scientific claims against the validity of Biblical truth. On which side does the evidence lie? In examining the increasingly questioned claims of pure naturalism, we found that much of its foundation rests on the pre-conceived notions of what constitutes legitimate science. Take away these foundational assumptions and you are left with a philosophy trying very hard to fit the contradictory evidence into its world-view. The advance in the study of Intelligent Design has left the position of naturalism essentially bankrupt, unable to satisfactorily explain the world we find. Intelligent design is not Creationism. But using the methods of science, it has undermined the religion of atheism that has taken over our education system. In the process it has made room for the Creator. A very Intelligent Designer indeed!

Footnotes

- ¹ Vatican Official: 'Intelligent design' doesn't belong in science class, Lawrence Journal World, AP, November 18, 2005
- ² From the definition of intelligent design, given at the Intelligent Design Network.org
- ³ Devolution—Why intelligent design isn't. H. Allen Orr. Annals of Science. New Yorker May 2005, Wikipedia article on Intelligent Design
- ⁴ Jeffrey A. Dvorkin, NPR and 'Intelligent Design': Skeptical or Credulous?, November 29, 2005
- ⁵ Philip Johnson, Is God Unconstitutional?
- ⁶ Philip Johnson, The Unraveling of Scientific Materialism, First Things, November 1997
- ⁷ Philip Johnson, The Wedge, Touchstone Vol. 12 #4, pg 20
- ⁸ Quote taken from Philip Johnson, Is God Constitutional?
- ⁹ Nancy Pearay, Design and the Discriminating Public, Touchstone, Vol. 12 #4, pg 26
- ¹⁰ Quote from William Provine, Touchstone, Vol. 12 #4, pg 26
- ¹¹ 400 Scientists skeptical of Darwin, World Net Daily, July 21, 2005
- ¹² Religion of the Blind Watchmaker, origins.org
- ¹³ Dr. Roy Bohlin's summary of Charles Thaxton's Defending the Faith Scientifically
- ¹⁴ Dr. Roy Bohlin's summary of Charles Thaxton's Defending the Faith Scientifically
- ¹⁵ Robert DeHaan & John Wiester, The Cambrian Explosion – The Fossil Evidence and Intelligent Design, Touchstone, July/August 1999, pg 65-69
- ¹⁶ William Dembski, What Every Theologian Should Know About Creation, Evolution and Design, origins.org
- ¹⁷ Denton was quoted from The Scientific Case Against Evolution, Front Page Magazine, August 20, 2001
- ¹⁸ Robert Locke, The Scientific Case Against Evolution, Front Page Magazine, August 2, 2001
- ¹⁹ Darwin's Black Box, Probe Ministries International
- ²⁰ Darwin's Black Box, Probe Ministries International
- ²¹ Walter Bradley, Touchstone, July/August 1999
- ²² Evidence for the Fine Tuning of the Universe, Godandscience.org
- ²³ Gerald Schroeder, The Science of God, The Free Press, 1997, pg 5
- ²⁴ Some similar thoughts found in Creating the Bridge, Gospelcom.net