



LSI Journal

In the Classroom

**I Believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator
Champion of Atheism Admits, "There is a god"
Evolutionists and Creationists Often Agree**

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I Believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator

John A. Braun

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I cannot count the number of times I have said those words with my fellow believers. I have also taught them to confirmation classes and to adults wishing to join the church. These words begin a long list of beliefs we have learned from the previous generations since the apostles. While the apostles did not formulate this creed, it dates back to about 150 years after Christ.

Saying the Creed reminds me that I believe some specific things. Luther divided the creed into three articles, each article focused on one person of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We have been learning and teaching it that way ever since.

What does it mean to “believe” the specific teachings mentioned in the creed? It means to accept them as true and to trust them as reality. God reminds me so pointedly in Scripture,

Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see. ...By faith we know that the universe was created by God’s word, so that what is seen did not come from visible things. Hebrews 11:1,3 EHV

I did not see God create the heavens and the earth. If I had seen what he did, I wouldn’t have to believe he did it. I would know. My senses would have registered what he did even if I didn’t really understand what I witnessed. If saw it, I could tell others. But they would have to believe that I was telling them the truth. They might think I was just making it up or hallucinating.

I have a lot of questions about what God did and how he did it. A lot of people have questions. Perhaps their questions are the same as mine or perhaps they are different. I would guess that the more someone knows about the sciences, the more profound their questions would be. But we do share one perspective: We weren’t there.

Because we weren't there, we either have to accept someone else's word for how it all came to be or come up with our own explanations. Perhaps we need to explore our beginnings for some wee indication about how we came to be and how our world came to be. Mathematical formulas reveal how vast the universe is, where our little planet resides quietly supporting our lives and the lives of all creatures who dwell here. Chemical analysis can help us understand its composition. Physics can explain how it all works. All these explorations reveal how complex, large, and beautiful it is. But explorations do not explain how it came to be. We have to believe someone's idea about that.

When I confess the Apostles' Creed, I believe what God has revealed about creation. It's different from what many think about origins, but I believe God's account. For one thing, he was there. He knows what he did. Did he tell us about what he did? Yes, he created it. Of course, that still leaves so many questions. All explanations about origins leave questions. God's too.

But I trust what I cannot and did not see. I believe. For another thing, I trust God because he is almighty. I can't even imagine his power, imagination, and intricate planning. His ways, I believe, are far above what any human, even the most brilliant, can do. I don't want to demote God the almighty and make him God the mighty that I can understand and grasp with my mind. He's much bigger than that.

But most importantly, I believe what God says because he promises me forgiveness and eternal life. He loved the world, me included, and gave his Son that whoever believes in him would have eternal life. I am not an eyewitness to the life of Jesus any more than I am an eyewitness to God's creative activity. I believe what he says about Jesus. I am justified. I will live. God has done that for me. I don't want to lose those blessings by discounting his ability to exist or to create. So I confess, "I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

John A. Braun serves as executive editor of Forward in Christ magazine.

In the Classroom

by Holly Schwefel

Many of the concepts presented in this article are applicable to any grade level including high school, even though the author shares her thoughts for teaching 5-year-olds.

I recently took two Martin Luther College (MLC) 1-credit online courses: Creation Apologetics 101 and 102. These were my first experiences with apologetics. I am so thankful to have received such in-depth exposure on the topics of creation and evolution. As a result, I am able to tune into conversations differently now when these topics come up in my classroom and in daily conversation.

**Natural selection can produce
new species, but not new kinds.**

**Natural selection shows how animals from Noah's
Ark diversified into the many species alive today.¹**

The above two statements are among the top concepts I took away from my two MLC creation apologetics classes. I couldn't have made these statements, or even understood them properly, at this time last year! Prior to these classes, I would not have been comfortable using words like "natural selection," "dinosaurs," or "fossil evidence." They screamed evolution to me, and, well, any talk of evolution was bad... or so I thought. I have a much deeper understanding of the concept of evolution now, and am no longer afraid to face it "head on" in the classroom.

¹ Both statements are paraphrased from "Natural Selection" in the fall 2016 *LSI Journal*. www.LutheranScience.org/2016fall (accessed April 8, 2019)

Kindergarteners Can Be Discerning

During these two MLC courses, I was able to brainstorm about ways I could use this newfound information in my kindergarten classroom. For one MLC assignment, I planned out a follow-up discussion for the Old Testament lessons surrounding Creation and the fall into sin. The idea is to provide several statements for the children to evaluate.

Since children learn in different ways, it is useful to offer the statements visually (either on an interactive white board or on chart paper) and auditorily (read out loud while tracking the printed version). To engage both the body and the brain, the children may stand up for true statements and sit down for false, give a thumbs up for true and thumbs down for false, or display one side of a circle to show a smiley face for true and the other side a frown for false. Discussion should ensue on any relevant point that needs to be emphasized, but especially surrounding false statements in order to make them true.

A sampling of these true/false statements could read as follows:

1. God created animals and people on the 6th day of creation.
2. God created the world millions of years ago.
3. Animals were on the earth, then some animals turned into people.
4. Some people think there is no God who created the world.
5. People were created in the “image of God.”
6. Dogs could turn into cats someday.
7. God created the whole world in six days.
8. One of the first people on earth was named Lucy.
9. God designed people to be the most special part of his creation.

As long as the Biblical account has been taught well and thoroughly prior to this exercise, five and six-year-old children (in all their purity of heart and fullness of faith) will think the false statements are so crazy and silly, they will laugh at the absurdity of them. In most cases, on their own or with simple prompting from a classmate or the teacher, they will easily be able to correct the statements to make them true.

Kindergarten applications need to be simple and obvious. Even so, it is incredibly useful to have young children evaluate statements for truth, based on what they've learned in their Bible lessons and from that, what they know to be true about God and his Word. It helps to train them to be discerning and to realize that not everything they hear will line up with Scripture.

Teach students discernment regarding evolutionist claims

Dinosaurs and Birds

This past fall, one of my kindergarteners commented in passing that “birds are really dinosaurs.” He LOVES dinosaurs and could tell you anything you want to know. My pre-creation-apologetic and dinosaur-il-literate self probably would've said something like, “That sounds silly! Do we even know if there really was such a thing as dinosaurs?” I used to equate dinosaurs with millions of years. Therefore, dinosaurs were a fictional evolutionary idea. This all seems so amateur to my current creation-apologetic self!

At his simple statement, I snapped to attention and asked him where he had heard about birds being dinosaurs. He shrugged and said, “We read it in a book!” At that point, and knowing his fairly advanced memory for Bible stories, I said something like: “Oh.....but remember: Sometimes those dinosaur books say things like millions and millions and millions of years.”

Student: “And that's not right because the world isn't that old.”

Me: “Right. So tell me, what did God create on the 5th day of creation?”

Student: “Birds and fish.” (I taught that lesson back during a preschool session six months prior! This kindergartener has a great memory!)

Me: “...and what did God create on the 6th day?”

Student: “Animals and people.”

Me: “So, if birds were created on the 5th day, and animals including *dinosaurs* were created on the 6th day, could birds have come from dinosaurs?”

Student: “No! I didn’t even think about that! Sometimes those dinosaur books say the wrong things.”

Me: **smiles**

Biblical Connections in Other Subjects

Creation Apologetic applications are not limited to the first few Bible lessons of the school year.

Math: In math, I regularly point out the order and consistency of numbers, which speaks to the order and consistency of God’s creation and how he would like us to be orderly and consistent in our own lives. We also notice numbers that come up in our Bible lessons. We pay special attention to how they are repeated throughout Scripture, and how they point us to other details and truths in the Bible (40 days/nights of rain during the Flood, Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days/nights; 12 sons of Jacob, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples of Jesus, etc.). 1 Corinthians 14:40 (EHV),

Let all things be done decently and in good order.

Science: We do a science lesson in which the children color the tip of each finger, one at a time, and roll out all five fingerprints for each hand. We bring out the magnifying glasses and they inspect the intricacies of their own fingerprints. We discuss how God created each person in the world to be unique, one of a kind. We understand that no two people have the same fingerprints. Once they’ve had ample time to inspect their own prints, they walk around, check out their friends’ fingerprints, and try to spot the similarities and differences. At that point, we take a fun class picture because there are tons of tiny colored fingertips to be held up in the air! Psalm 139:14 (EHV),

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and my soul knows that very well.

Personal Goals

In my daily ministry, I am blessed to guide kindergarteners, showing them how important it is to be discerning when evaluating references to evolution that they may see in science videos or read in books. I can help them, in an age-appropriate kindergarten way, to see the *assumptions* that evolutionists make (millions of years, no creator god, etc.). They can be taught to see that evolutionary assumptions are false, as they compare these false assumptions to what they have learned to be truths from God's Word. I want the children to love science, and to be able to navigate it with confidence during their years in school and beyond.

As both teacher and parent, it is important to pray regularly for wisdom and understanding. In seeking additional growth opportunities, I will be leaning primarily on the *LSI Journal* for solid information, but would also like to peruse the *Answers in Genesis* website to explore the topics offered there. Our church library has several options on the topics of creation and evolution, and, thanks to technology, there are also acquaintances from my online classes I am able to seek out as resources.

Creation Apologetics is a challenge, but so fascinating and very important. It is my prayer that we all continue to grow in our apologetic views so that we can educate future generations of faithful creationist Christians, as well as speak clearly and intelligently should we be given the opportunity to engage in conversation with others who may believe the lies of evolution, that we may point them to the truths of God and his Word.

Holly Schwefel teaches kindergarten (5K) at Redeemer Lutheran School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Champion of Atheism Admits, “There is a god”

Jeffrey Stueber

Antony Flew is a well-known philosopher, and was, until 2004, a well-known atheist. That year he became a deist. His book, *THERE IS A GOD: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, brings out not only his poor assumptions when he was an atheist, but also brings out the fallacies inherent in atheist thinking. Flew was born in 1923, the son of a pastor, but seems to have never had Christian faith. Flew says,

I could never see the point of worship and have always been far too unmusical to enjoy or even participate in hymn singing. I never approached any religious literature with the same unrestrained eagerness with which I consumed books on politics, history, science, or almost any other topic. Going to chapel or church, saying prayers, and all other religious practices were for me matters of more or less weary duty. Never did I feel the slightest desire to commune with God.¹

Flew says that he reached his conclusion about the nonexistence of God too early. One of these reasons was the existence of evil, particularly the antisemitism in Germany prior to World War II. Such experiences, he says, “presented an inescapable challenge to the existence of an all-powerful God of love.”²

Nor is Flew the only atheist to choose such a belief system so early in life. Richard Dawkins was born and raised in Kenya. When he eventually came to England, he attended a Christian school and was confirmed

¹ Antony Flew, *THERE IS A GOD: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 10.

² Flew, 14.

there. Despite his upbringing, by his mid-teens he found Darwinism more intellectually satisfying than Christianity.³

Dawkins' arguments in favor of Darwinism are, however, not compelling. What I have found upon reading Dawkins' defense of the standard evolutionist model of origins is that evolution is based on many poor arguments. Dawkins seems to have embraced evolution because atheism is the only alternative to Christian beliefs.⁴

Peter Hitchens, brother of atheist Christopher Hitchens, set fire to his Bible at the age of fifteen.⁵ At that age he felt that the Bible “was the enemy’s book.”⁶ He knew “there was no God, that the Old Testament was a gruesome series of atrocity stories and fairy tales, while the gospels were a laughable invention used to defraud the simple.”⁷ Later in life he converted to Christianity as he explains in his book *The Rage Against God: How Atheism Led Me to Faith*.

In addition to other atheistic reasons for not believing in God, Flew discusses a few of his own erroneous presumptions starting with what he calls the “presumption of atheism.” What Flew means is that one should naturally presume atheist beliefs are true, while religious claims must be proven in order to be believed. Atheistic naturalism need mount no firm evidence for its claims. Flew says this is not a prejudiced assumption but merely a principle about who bears the burden of proof.

3 Simon Hattenstone, “Darwin’s Child,” *The Guardian*, Feb 10, 2003. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/10/religion.scienceandnature> (accessed April 8, 2019)

4 I critique Dawkins in several articles:

Jeffrey Stueber, “The Delusional Dawkins—A Review of The Greatest Show on Earth” on the website *The Secular Left—Why Most of What they Believe is Nonsense*. www.LutheranScience.org/DelDawkins

Jeffrey Stueber, “Games Richard Dawkins Plays,” *LSI Journal*, vol. 32 no. 1 (winter 2018), 14-19. <http://www.lutheranscience.org/2018winter> (accessed April 8, 2019)

5 Peter Hitchens, *The Rage Against God: How Atheism Led Me to Faith*, paperback ed., (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 7.

6 Hitchens, 8.

7 Hitchens, ix.

Flew is not alone in this approach. I have found that in general many atheists and evolutionists reason just this way. Usually they argue that theistic (and, in general, Christian) beliefs are too unbelievable or unknowable to be true and only the most convincing arguments can overcome atheist presumptions. Usually any creationist evidence that is presented, then, is dismissed with a host of philosophically poor arguments.

This form of argument was echoed in 18th century philosopher David Hume's claim "That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish."⁸ The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy puts it this way: "According to Hume, the evidence in favor of a miracle, even when that is provided by the strongest possible testimony, will always be outweighed by the evidence for the law of nature which is supposed to have been violated."⁹ To Hume, what counted against a claim that a man can rise from the dead is everyday experience – the same experience that tells other atheists that God does no miracles.

Michael Shermer argues similarly in his book, *How We Believe*, when conjuring up a mythical world of Flatland to explain that just as people who live in a world of only two dimensions cannot perceive anything in a third dimension, so we cannot perceive anything about God because we are limited to our world alone. To Shermer, God is simply unknowable. He writes, "God's existence is beyond our competence as a problem to solve."¹⁰

Geoffrey Berg also claims that God is unknowable even though

⁸ Quoted in John Earman, *Hume's Abject Failure* (New York: Oxford, 2000), 38.

⁹ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Hume's Argument," chap. 4 in *Miracles*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/miracles/#H4>. (accessed April 8, 2019)

¹⁰ Michael Shermer, *How We Believe: The Search for God in an Age of Science* (New York, W. H. Freeman, 2000), 7.

I critique Shermer in: Jeffrey Stueber, "Why Michael Shermer Believes Weird Things" on the website *The Secular Left—Why Most of What they Believe is Nonsense*. (accessed April 8, 2019) https://theseкулярleftcritique.wordpress.com/critique-of-michael-shermer/#_ednref9.

he, mysteriously, seems to know that God would not create a world with evil in it.¹¹

To sum up, with atheists, a common position is that belief in God requires extensive proof, while atheism requires no proof at all. Even more, they think theistic claims are nonstarters because we can't know anything about God no matter what the evidence, and everyday experience rules out the existence of miracles of any kind.

While Flew was still an atheist, theists responded to his atheist views by claiming that one is entitled to presume that theism is true before believing that atheism is true—a total reversal of what Flew claimed. Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga, for instance, argues that theism is a “properly basic belief.” What he means by that is some beliefs are natural because a person's normal cognitive faculties favor them. For example, most people believe they have a mind and a free will. Theistic philosopher Ralph McInerny says that it is natural for human beings to think that a deity might exist because of the order and law-like nature of natural events. When you put both Plantinga and McInerny's views together, we could say that there is a natural knowledge of God because of the law-like order of the universe and, therefore, atheists should bear the burden of proof rather than the reverse.

Flew discusses Dawkins' book *The Selfish Gene*, where Dawkins attributes our behavior to the attitudes and intentions of genes that, despite the fact they are not conscious, are supposedly selfish (hence the title of the book). Flew says that Dawkins, in making such claims, has missed fifty or more years of work in genetics that show traits in organisms are affected by the interactions of many genes while most genes have many different effects on many such traits.¹² To say that any particular gene can have a direct impact on our behavior, to the point we could say it comes as a result of the gene's selfish choice, is ludicrous. Dawkins ignored clear evidence against his theories.

11 I review Berg's book in: Jeffrey Stueber, “Geoffrey Berg's The Six Ways of Atheism” *LSI Journal*, vol. 25 no. 1 (January-March, 2011), 8–11.

www.LutheranScience.org/Berg6Ways (accessed April 8, 2019)

12 Flew, 78-80.

Later Flew responds to Dawkins' assertion that a deity is too complex a solution. Flew writes,

Richard Dawkins has rejected this argument on the grounds that God is too complex a solution for explaining the universe and its laws. This strikes me as a bizarre thing to say about the concept of an omnipotent spiritual Being. What is complex about the idea of an omnipotent and omniscient Spirit, an idea so simple that it is understood by all the adherents of the three great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? Commenting on Dawkins, Alvin Plantinga recently pointed out that, by Dawkins' own definition, God is simple—not complex—because God is a spirit, not a material object, and hence does not have parts.¹³

The Multiverse

One way some evolutionists attempt to get away from the evidence for design is to claim there are multiple universes so that eventually the correct life-permitting universe will come about by chance—in much the same way you or I might get rich by picking the correct lottery numbers if we play enough times. Flew cites physicist and cosmologist Paul Davies who is opposed to this idea of the multiverse. Davies says that “it is trivially true that, in an infinite universe, anything that can happen will happen.”¹⁴ This is not helpful, Flew says, because it explains everything but as a result explains nothing. A scientific theory must be precise in what it is attempting to explain and also allow for those things that falsify the theory (that is, those things that are not explained by the theory or refute the theory). A multiverse can explain anything because one can always claim that no matter what happens it's just an inevitable result of an infinite number of universes. Flew is devastating here when quoting evolutionist Paul Davies and then Christian philosopher Richard Swinburne.

A true scientific explanation, says Davies, is like a single well-aimed bullet. The idea of a multiverse replaces the

¹³ Flew, 111.

¹⁴ Flew, quoting Paul Davies, 118.

rationally ordered real world with an infinitely complex charade and makes the whole idea of “explanation” meaningless. Swinburne is just as strong in his disdain for the multiverse explanation: “It is crazy to postulate a trillion (causally unconnected) universes to explain the features of one universe, when postulating one entity (God) will do the job.”¹⁵

It is also worth pointing out that the multiverse claim (that there are an infinite number of universes, each different than the other) does nothing to explain how life came about in our universe. We know much about the universe in which we live, yet as Davies recently wrote in *Scientific American*, “We do not know the process that transformed a mishmash of chemicals into a living cell, with all its staggering complexity.”¹⁶

Why would evolutionists choose a theory that is thought of so poorly? I have come to the conclusion that they want to dismiss evidence of God’s creative action which is obvious in nature (See Romans 1:18–32).

I found Flew’s book valuable partly because it shows good reasons to be a Christian apologist and Christian debater. I can see clearly the effects of these debates in Flew as deist arguments began to have their root in his mind. If Flew can find reasons to disbelieve atheism, then possibly fellow atheists such as Dawkins and Shermer can too. Deists, though, are going to hell, just like atheists and agnostics. May God lead atheists, agnostics, and deists to listen to the gospel message through which they can learn about their Savior and come to saving faith in Jesus.

Jeffrey Stueber, a free-lance writer, serves as secretary of the Lutheran Science Institute. He is a member of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown WI.

¹⁵ Flew, 119.

¹⁶ Paul Davies, “Many Planets Not Much Life—We Still Have No Idea How Easy It Is for Life to Arise—and It May Be Incredibly Difficult,” in *Forum—Commentary on Science in the News from the Experts*, *Scientific American*, September 2016, 8.

Evolutionists and Creationists Often Agree

There are many points of agreement on natural selection

Mark Bergemann

Christians can be certain that the universe is only thousands of years old, that birds did not descend from dinosaurs, and that people did not descend from ape-like creatures. Our certainty is based on our faith that God's Word is true.

Many parts of evolution are incompatible with the Christian faith:

Christians who accept evolution place their Christian faith in jeopardy. False teachings about creation are just like all other false teachings, they lead away from Jesus. They are extremely dangerous to a person's Christian faith. ... Evolution denies the doctrines of sin, the law, and death. Evolution dispenses with the need for a Creator. Evolution attacks the gospel and the need for a Savior.¹

That said, there is much in evolution theory with which a creationist can agree. The Christian apologist must keep this in mind, especially when ministering to those who are tempted by evolution to believe in millions of years of common descent. We must avoid the impression that we reject all of evolution, as some parts of evolution are true.

Books written by evolutionists to defend evolution against creationist claims so often describe the science of evolution in ways with which a creationist can agree. So much of what evolutionists see as the proof of evolution are scientific conclusions which do not go against Scripture. Evolutionists regularly discuss natural selection in ways that conform with a young earth and created kinds. Then evolutionists move to claims that go against Scripture. Evolutionists, in essence, claim that since natural selection can produce new species within each Biblical kind, that proves that natural selection can also produce new Biblical kinds.

¹ Mark Bergemann, "Did God Use Evolution to Create?" (Paper presented to the Metro-Milwaukee Pastors' Conference meeting, Nain Lutheran Church, West Allis WI, October 10, 2016). pages 4, 5.
www.LutheranScience.org/DidGodUseEvolution (Accessed April 8, 2019)

New Species of Finches Descended from Finches. Therefore, Birds Descended from Dinosaurs.

The *LSI Journal* has devoted many articles to evaluating best-selling books by famous evolutionists like Bill Nye and Richard Dawkins, and also books written by the very influential National Academy of Sciences. These books by evolutionists explain evolution theory, defend it against the claims of creationists, and condemn those who teach creation. I have noticed a common thread woven throughout these books, often presented as the core reason why evolution is true. That common claim is the one just described in the preceding paragraph: Since natural selection can produce new species within each Biblical kind, that proves that natural selection can also produce new Biblical kinds. Now an evolutionist never uses those words. They simply devote entire chapters to example after example of a new finch species descending from other finches, or a cabbage plant being cultivated from a wild mustard plant (see page 31). Then they literally say something like, “Since artificial selection and natural selection produced all these changes in a relatively short time, imagine how much change would happen in millions of years. Dinosaurs can become birds and ape-like creatures can become humans.”

I would expect the author of a book written specifically as a defense of evolution against creationist claims to present evidence which counters creationist claims. Why do so many evolutionists center their message on evidence which does not defend evolution against the creationist position? Often, but not always, it is because the author describes the creationist position in a biased way, and then argues against that false position, instead of arguing against the actual position of creationists. That is an error in reasoning, specifically, the straw man logical fallacy described in the spring 2018 *LSI Journal*.

Dawkins Summarizes the Evidence for Evolution

Let’s examine how one of the most famous champions of evolution, Richard Dawkins, describes natural selection’s ability to produce new Biblical kinds. After writing nine books on evolution, Dawkins realized

that in those books “The evidence for evolution was nowhere explicitly set out.”² In *The Greatest Show on Earth—The Evidence for Evolution*, Dawkins states, “This book is my personal summary of the evidence that the theory of evolution is actually a fact—as incontrovertible as any fact in science.”³

Dawkins is a biologist, so his books highlight biological evolution, and especially, natural selection. He is a gifted writer whose books artfully present the evolution story in ways which hold the reader’s interest. Large sections of his books are devoted to explaining the claims of evolution and refuting common misconceptions about evolution. If you wish to better understand the claims of evolution regarding natural selection, then Dawkins’ books should be on your reading list.

Let’s see what Dawkins has to say about natural selection in his NY Times best seller *Greatest Show*. Remember, this is the book which he wrote to “explicitly set out” the “evidence that the theory of evolution is actually a fact.” We’ll summarize what he says about natural selection, while emphasizing the reasons given to convince the reader that evolution is true. We will cover his introductory chapter one, and the three chapters devoted to natural selection (chapters 2, 3, and 5). We will see that the creationist can agree with most of what Dawkins says about natural selection in these 124 pages. We will also notice that Dawkins speaks rudely about creationists. Such unprofessional comments are examples of what we must avoid while ministering to others. Our creation apologetic should always show the love of Christ.

History-Deniers

The first six pages of chapter one are devoted to Ad Hominem (Latin: *to the man*) attacks on creationists. Creationists are called “brain-washed” people who advance “anti-scientific nonsense” like a real Adam and Eve. Creationists are compared to other “history-deniers” such as those who deny the Holocaust or the Roman Empire. These fallacious ar-

2 Richard Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth—The Evidence for Evolution*, hardcover ed. (New York NY: Free Press, 2009), vi.

3 Dawkins, vi.

guments are directed against the person making a claim instead of against their claim. Such arguments are considered an error in reasoning.

Only a Theory

Dawkins titles chapter one, “Only A Theory?” After six pages of *Ad Hominem* attacks on creationists, he devotes the next six pages to explaining the scientific terms “theory” and “fact.” Creationists should agree with his explanation, as it is correct. Scientific theories are overwhelmingly accepted as true by the scientific community. Creationists often make the claim, “Evolution is only a theory –it is not proven.” Many articles in the *LSI Journal* have warned creationists to never say that, since it shows they know little about basic scientific terminology. Scientific theories do not become laws when they accumulate additional evidence. Both the laws and the theories of science are scientific facts, since those laws and theories are overwhelmingly accepted as such by the scientific community. In science, the terms “theory,” “law,” and “fact” are treated as temporary truth, which can be overturned at any time when falsified, and then replaced with another temporary truth.^{4,5}

In the last four pages of chapter one Dawkins argues that evolution is as well proven as other scientific theories. A creationist can agree with Dawkins when he states on these pages that the sun is larger than the earth, that the earth rotates around the sun, and that South America is slowly drifting away from Africa. A creationist cannot agree that “all living things are cousins” or that humans share a “common ancestry with porcupines and pomegranates.” In chapter one, Dawkins provides no evidence at all for any of these scientific theories.

4 “Fact: In science, an observation that has been repeatedly confirmed and for all practical purposes is accepted as ‘true.’ Truth in science, however, is never final, and what is accepted as a fact today may be modified or even discarded tomorrow.” *Science and Creationism: A View from the National Academy of Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999), 2. [pdf page 13.] <http://nap.edu/6024> (accessed April 8, 2019)

5 For an explanation why laws and theories of science (facts of science) are temporary truth, see: Mark Bergemann, “How Can A Lie Like Evolution Have Scientific Evidence?”, *LSI Journal* vol. 29 no. 1 (2015) www.LutheranScience.org/2015lie (accessed April 8, 2019)

The only evidence for evolution presented in chapter one is that evolution is overwhelmingly accepted by the scientific community as a scientific fact. We all agree that the scientific community proclaims evolution as fact, but truth is not decided by majority vote. Saying evolution is true because most scientists accept it as true, is actually a logical fallacy called the “Faulty Appeal to Authority.” It is a faulty appeal since evolutionists are biased authorities. They reject the possibility of miracles before they begin to examine the evidence. They do not reject creation based on evidence, but based on their biased presuppositions.⁶

Dawkins’ Thought Experiment

In chapter two, Dawkins calls Genesis a “myth,” and then he asks us to participate in a “thought experiment.” We are to imagine a rabbit sitting beside her mother rabbit, who is sitting beside her mother (the grandmother of our first rabbit), and so on for thousands and thousands of generations. As we walk along these generations of rabbits we see very little difference between each generation, but a larger difference as we go thousands of generations. It’s as if we are walking backward in time. Eventually our rabbit ancestor looks more like a shrew than like a rabbit. Three pages are used to describe how this “thought experiment” could be applied to all animals, including people, since Dawkins claims we are all cousins. *This “thought experiment” can help us to better understand the evolutionary claim of common descent but provides no reason to accept that claim as true.*

Dawkins continues chapter two by presenting what he sees as evidence for the truth of common descent (i.e. that all plants and all animals descended from the first life form, some bacteria-like organism). The evidence presented is domestication. “In a few centuries” people bred wild cabbage into “broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, kale, Brussels sprouts, spring greens, romanesco, and, of course, the various kinds of vegetables that are still commonly called cabbage.”⁷ In addition, we learn that, “All

⁶ See Mark Bergemann, “Assumptions of Evolutionists,” *LSI Journal* 31, no. 4 (fall 2017): 7-16. www.LutheranScience.org/2017fall (accessed April 8, 2019)

⁷ Dawkins, 27.

breeds of dogs are modified wolves.”⁸ After ten pages devoted to explaining genetics and gene pools, we learn about Dawkins’ 25-year-old computer program game, where the human player makes decisions which lead to various line drawings. Chapter two concludes with the words,

If human breeders can transform a wolf into a Pekinese, or a wild cabbage into a cauliflower, in just a few centuries or millennia, why shouldn’t the non-random survival of wild animals and plants do the same thing over millions of years? That will be the conclusion of my next chapter; but my strategy first will be to continue the softening-up process, to ease the passage towards understanding of natural selection.⁹

Now creationists agree that natural selection can create change within kinds, and as Dawkins demonstrates in this chapter, it can be done in centuries and even in decades. It does not take millions of years.

So, the only evidence for evolution presented in chapter two is that breeding by humans resulted in changes to plants and animals, but all within their own kind. Dawkins then extrapolates that truth (without presenting any reason for so doing) into the claim that new kinds can be produced given enough time. Dawkins imagines new kinds developing through natural selection but has yet to propose any evidence of that possibility. He asks us to *imagine*,

If so much evolutionary change can be achieved in just a few centuries or even decades, just think what might be achieved in ten or a hundred million years.¹⁰

Insect Selection

Chapter three begins with a claim that just as human selection produced dogs from wolves, selection by pollinating insects produced new

⁸ Dawkins, 28.

⁹ Dawkins, 42.

¹⁰ Dawkins, 37.

types of flowers.¹¹ I agree, but then Dawkins claims (without providing any evidence) this has happened over millions of years.

Dawkins explains that evolutionary science is predictive. Darwin predicted the existence of moths capable of extending their mouth parts 11 inches, since he had found an orchid with an 11-inch tube to its nectar. Such a moth was later discovered.¹² Of course a modern creationist (operating with creationist assumptions and views) would also make that and similar predictions, so shouldn't Dawkins admit that creation has predictive power also?

After twenty pages of examples of human selection, insect selection, and sexual selection, Dawkins finally introduces examples of natural selection. He then declares that every one of these cases of selection (by humans, by insects, etc.) is natural selection.¹³ I agree. My article, "Natural Selection" in the fall 2016 *LSI Journal* explains natural selection that way.

On page 66, Dawkins states (*italics in original*), "Artificial selection constitutes a true *experimental*—as opposed to observational—test of the hypothesis that selection causes evolutionary change." All cases of artificial selection have shown change within the Biblical kind. So again, as with all previous evidence Dawkins has presented, this is evidence that natural selection can produce changes (even new species), all within their Biblical kinds. Dawkins has yet to provide any evidence that new kinds can be produced.

The trade-offs of natural selection are then discussed. Improvements in one feature are bought with declines in one or more other features. Then, flowers that mimic insects are examined with multiple examples. Finally, "co-evolution" is introduced: Organisms which "evolved" together such as flowers and their pollinators, predators and their prey, and parasites and their hosts.

¹¹ Dawkins, 46.

¹² Dawkins, 49–50.

¹³ Dawkins, 64.

Imagine What Evolution Can Do

Dawkins closes chapter three by again asking us to imagine what evolution can do,

Think about the difference between any one breed of dog and any other, for that is on average double the amount of change that has been wrought, by artificial selection, from the common ancestor. Bear in mind this order of evolutionary change, and then extrapolate backwards twenty thousand times as far into the past. It becomes rather easy to accept that evolution could accomplish the amount of change that it took to transform a fish into a human.¹⁴

Dawkins' claim that humans descended from fish is based upon many unprovable presuppositions, such as the assumptions of "no creator," no flood," and "deep time."¹⁵ It is also based on the claim that natural selection can produce new kinds of animals. *We are now 82 pages into the book, yet no evidence for natural selection producing new kinds has been presented, other than the faulty appeal to authority at the end of chapter one.*

Evolution We Can See

The next chapter addressing natural selection is chapter five, "Before Our Eyes." In the first paragraph, Dawkins reports that natural selection (which is part of evolution theory) happens so fast we can watch it take place,

Although the vast majority of evolutionary change took place before any human being was born, some examples are so fast that we can see evolution happening with our own eyes during one human lifetime.¹⁶

¹⁴ Dawkins, 82.

¹⁵ See "Assumptions of Evolutionists" in the fall 2017 *LSI Journal* www.LutheranScience.org/2017fall (accessed April 8, 2019)

¹⁶ Dawkins, 111.

Since evolution is defined as including natural selection, I agree that we can watch some aspects of evolution happen.

Chapter five repeats the same evolutionary claim made in previous chapters: Since natural selection can produce change within each Biblical kind, that proves that natural selection can also produce new Biblical kinds. Dawkins reports on several interesting experiments and observations where evolution happens quickly. He devotes seven pages to detailing experiments where the coloration, size, and reproductive frequency of guppy offspring can change in months or a few years due to stream gravel coloration and levels of predation. The change goes back and forth to meet changing environments. We also learn about a wild lizard population where a valve in their gut went from a rare occurrence to a common occurrence over a few decades as the diet of these lizards changed from insects to plants. The average tusk size on elephants has been reduced by hunters who kill elephants with large tusks. Of course, all of these examples are in keeping with creation since they show change within kinds.

45,000 Generations of Bacteria

A full 15 pages of chapter five are dedicated to reporting on Lenski's experiment involving 45,000 generations of bacteria. Throughout this section Dawkins claims creationists "hate"¹⁷ this experiment, are "distressed"¹⁸ and "disconcerted"¹⁹ by it, and are "eager to find fault with it."²⁰ He unprofessionally uses terms such as "the twelve tribes of Israel"²¹ and "Noah's Ark"²² in describing parts of the experiment.

Well, I am a creationist who sees no need to find fault with this experiment, which simply shows changes due to natural selection but within the Biblical kind. Here Dawkins commits the straw-man fallacy²³ when he

17 Dawkins, 130.

18 Dawkins, 117.

19 Dawkins, 131.

20 Dawkins, 131.

21 Dawkins, 118.

22 Dawkins, 118.

23 See "Straw-Man Fallacy" in the spring 2018 *LSI Journal*.
www.LutheranScience.org/2018spring (Accessed April 8, 2019)

takes the reaction of a few creationists (especially those with little scientific knowledge, like the two creationists specifically mentioned by Dawkins) and makes that the standard for the creationist view. Dawkins sums up the results of this experiment,

Lenski's research shows, in microcosm and in the lab, massively speeded up so that it happens before our very eyes, many of the essential components of evolution by natural selection: random mutation followed by non-random natural selection; adaption to the same environment by separate routes independently; the way successive mutations build on their predecessors to produce evolutionary change; the way some genes rely, for their effects, on the presence of other genes. ...Creationists hate it. Not only does it show evolution in action; not only does it show new information entering genomes without the intervention of a designer, which is something they have all been told to deny is possible ('told to' because most of them do not understand what 'information' means); not only does it demonstrate the power of natural selection to put together combinations of genes that, by the naive calculations so beloved of creationists, should be impossible; it also undermines their central dogma of 'irreducible complexity'.²⁴

Everything Dawkins reports about this experiment demonstrates variation within kinds. When Dawkins claims new DNA information was produced, he is using a very wide definition for new information, where *any* change in genes (in DNA) is considered new information. This is not the kind of new information which is required to produce a new kind. Lenski's experiment demonstrates the creationist view of natural selection, and of new information, as presented in my article "Natural Selection" (fall 2016 *LSI Journal* www.LutheranScience.org/2016fall). For a more detailed report and update on Lenski's experiment (which continued for 60,000 total generations) see *Hijacking Good Science: Lenski's Bacteria Support Creation*.²⁵

²⁴ Dawkins, 130–131.

²⁵ Scott Whynot, "Hijacking Good Science: Lenski's Bacteria Support Cre-

Never Say, “Evolution is Random”

The summer 2016 *LSI Journal* included the article, *Never Say “Evolution is a Random Process.”* Evolutionists claim evolution is not random. That article includes a quote from Bill Nye chiding creationists for their straw-man claim that evolution is random (such as when creationists say evolution is like a tornado going through a junk yard and producing a Boeing 747 airplane). Well, in this chapter, Dawkins declares creationists wrong since this bacteria experiment showed the non-random nature of evolution (the non-random nature of natural selection).²⁶ Many well-intentioned creationists (including some in the largest creation apologetic ministries) unintentionally criticize this straw-man version of evolution, and in doing so, give Dawkins, Nye, and so many other evolutionists the ability to correctly say that (in this case) creationists are wrong.²⁷

Conclusion

Dawkins claims that humans share a “common ancestry with porcupines and pomegranates.”²⁸ He wrote *The Greatest Show* as his “personal summary of the evidence that the theory of evolution is actually a fact—as incontrovertible as any fact in science.”²⁹ We examined his introductory chapter one, and the three chapters devoted to natural selection (chapters 2, 3, and 5). In those 124 pages, Dawkins explains natural selection and provides reasons why he believes that humans, porcupines, and pomegranates descended from an imagined first living creature (a single-celled micro-organism).

Dawkins provides many reasons why he believes evolution is true, and those reasons are listed below. He gives many examples of plants and animals changing within their own kind. Every now and then, he asks his

ation,” in *Answers in Depth*, vol. 9 (2014).

www.LutheranScience.org/LenskiAIG (accessed April 8, 2019)

26 Dawkins, 124–125.

27 For more on the straw-man fallacy, see pages 13–16 of the spring 2018 *LSI Journal* at www.LutheranScience.org/2018spring (accessed April 8, 2019)

28 Dawkins, 16.

29 Dawkins, vi.

readers to imagine evolution producing new kinds of plants or animals—of course he does not use the Biblical term “kind.” These imagined reasons for common descent being true are in **bold type below** (points 2, 5, 9, 10, 22, and 26). Aside from asking us to *imagine* it is true, the only reason Dawkins provides for the ability of natural selection to produce new kinds of plants and animals is his faulty appeal to authority (#1 below), as we previously discussed on page 21.

Dawkins’ Evidence

- 1) Scientists believe that “all living things are cousins” [p. 17–18].
- 2) **Imagine rabbits descending from shrew-like creatures.** [p. 23–27].
- 3) Wild cabbage has been cultivated into “broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, kale, Brussels sprouts, spring greens, ...” [p. 27].
- 4) Wolves have been bred into hundreds of dog breeds [p. 27–37]
- 5) **Since different types of dogs were bred in only centuries, “just think what might be achieved in ten or a hundred million years”** [p. 37].
- 6) Race horses and greyhounds were bred for “athletic prowess” [p. 38].
- 7) Dogs have been bred for “mental” traits such as “sheep-herding skills, or ‘pointing’, or bull-baiting” [p. 39].
- 8) Cows have been bred for large milk production [p. 39].
- 9) **Dawkins’ computer game has players select generation after generation of line drawings on the computer screen** [p. 39–42].
- 10) **“If human breeders can transform a wolf into a Pekinese, or a wild cabbage into a cauliflower, in just a few centuries or millennia, why shouldn’t the non-random survival of wild animals and plants do the same thing over millions of years?”** [p. 42].
- 11) Wild roses were bred into the roses we know today [p. 45].
- 12) Wild sunflowers were bred into the sunflowers we know today [p. 46].
- 13) Insect selection of flowers sculpted flower size, color, nectar, and other features [p. 47–54, 77–81].
- 14) Darwin correctly predicted that there were moths with an 11-inch proboscis so they could reach the nectar in orchids [p. 49–50].

- 15) Female “birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and insects” select males for mating [p. 54–55].
- 16) People have bred canaries which sing far differently than their wild ancestors [p. 56].
- 17) Birds do not eat caterpillars and other insects which look like snakes, bees, or other undesirable food [p. 59–60].
- 18) Prey fish selected angler fish for more tempting lures [p. 60–61].
- 19) “Artificial selection constitutes a true *experimental* – as opposed to observational – test of the hypothesis that selection causes evolutionary change” [p. 66].
- 20) Cultivating maize for high and low oil content [p. 66–67].
- 21) Foxes have been bred to be dog-like in 10–35 generations [p. 73–76].
- 22) **“Think about the difference between any one breed of dog and any other, ...Bear in mind this order of evolutionary change, and then extrapolate backwards twenty thousand times as far into the past. It becomes rather easy to accept that evolution could accomplish the amount of change that it took to transform a fish into a human”** [p. 82].
- 23) Elephant tusk weight decreased due to poaching [p. 111–113].
- 24) Lizards moved to a new island underwent change [p. 113–116].
- 25) Bacteria changed in 45,000 generations [p. 116–131].
- 26) **Since these bacteria changed, “think how much more evolution might happen in, say, 100 million years of mammal evolution”** [p. 119].
- 27) Antibiotic resistant bacteria [p. 131–133].
- 28) Male guppies change through natural selection [p. 133–139].

Three Lessons for the Creationist

1) Never demean evolutionists:

Notice how Dawkins’ demeaning of creationists makes you feel. Does that invite you to read his books, or does it turn you away? Always remember you are Christ’s ambassador to the world, meaning you are

God's representative to everyone, including evolutionists. Do not belittle those to whom you represent God. Reflect the love of Christ as you minister to both creationists and to evolutionists.

2) Avoid even implying that all of evolution is wrong:

A creationist can agree with much of evolution theory. This is especially true of the core evolution teaching of natural selection. Natural selection really does produce new species, but always within the Biblical kind.

3) True parts of evolution used as proof that false parts are also true:

Dawkins shows that natural selection produces new species within their kind. Then he asks his readers to *imagine* that natural selection can also produce new kinds.

Using Apologetics in Your Ministry

Creationists and evolutionists often agree. Point that out as you minister to creationists and to evolutionists. Discuss some of those points of agreement as a path to discussing the assumptions which guide and constrain evolutionary science.³⁰ Always remember that when witnessing to unbelievers, your goal is to present the gospel message (not to discuss creation or evolution).³¹

This article was written as a course text for the Martin Luther College online course "Creation Apologetics 102" [SCI9002] and has been used in that course since October, 2018. Mark Bergemann is a retired electrical engineer with a B.S. from UW-Milwaukee. He serves as president of the Lutheran Science Institute and as Martin Luther College adjunct instructor for the online courses Creation Apologetics 101 and 102. He is a member of Good Shepherd's Evangelical Lutheran Church in West Allis, Wisconsin.

30 For more on the assumptions of evolutionists, see pages 7-16 of the fall 2017 *LSI Journal* at www.LutheranScience.org/2017fall (accessed April 8, 2019)

31 For more on using apologetics in your ministry to both believers and to unbelievers, see pages 8-21 of the spring 2016 *LSI Journal* at www.LutheranScience.org/2016spring (accessed April 8, 2019)



All the Same Plant

Wild mustard (*Brassica oleracea*, which Dawkins calls “wild cabbage”) has been cultivated into cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, savoy, kohlrabi, and other vegetables. These are all the same plant. Richard Dawkins presents this and much more as evidence that evolution can “transform a fish into a human.”¹

photo credit: Pixabay

1 Richard Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth—The Evidence for Evolution*, hardcover ed. (New York NY: Free Press, 2009), 27, 82.



Evolution We Can See

The coloration of guppy offspring can change quickly (in months) due to stream gravel coloration and levels of predation. Females select the most brightly colored males for mating. Predators push in the opposite direction by not noticing males who blend in with the gravel. The change goes back and forth to meet changing environments. This is natural selection in action. God built variation into plants and animals so that successive generations change over time. Natural selection can even produce new species, but not new Biblical kinds.

Richard Dawkins says the changing coloration of guppies happens “so fast we can see evolution happening.”¹ Since evolution is defined as including natural selection, creationists can agree that we can watch some aspects of evolution happen. We can witness the coloration of guppies changing. Of course, they will still be the same Biblical kind of animal, even after an unlimited number of generations. For more, read the article in this issue of the journal, “Creationists and Evolutionists Often Agree.”

Photo of fancy male guppy. credit: Pixabay

1 Richard Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth—The Evidence for Evolution*, hardcover ed. (New York NY: Free Press, 2009), 111.