

TWO CREATION APOLOGETICS OR TWO SCIENCES?

by Warren Krug

The “Two Apologetics” paper amply demonstrates that some Christians have said or written things concerning science which do not always appear to be in harmony. The paper also has value in wisely warning us not to turn science into a means of grace. All of us would agree that science by itself can't save anyone's soul.

However, as a former teacher and longtime editor of LSI, I am skeptical that there exist two clearly defined and conflicting creation apologetics, one of which is being called True Science. Prior to this idea of two apologetics being raised, I had never heard of it. My search of the WELS website did not find any reference to a True Science apologetic or conflict, either current or in the past. The neat tables describing Apologetic A and Apologetic B which the author has provided are his own creation.

The only major philosophical differences between Genesis-defending Christians with which I have had experience is between those who want little or nothing to do with creationism and those who see in creation science a valuable tool for helping remove stumbling blocks or knock down barriers to receiving the Gospel. For those who already have the Gospel, I believe creation science can also be a valuable aid in helping to deflect the temptations of Satan as he tries to get people to abandon their Christian faith, as I am convinced it did for me in my college days. Of course, creation science must ultimately need to lead people whose faith is under attack to the means of grace for them to receive and retain true saving faith in Jesus.

Perhaps Ken Ham has provided a better way to understand the issues raised in the “Two Apologetics” paper rather than invoking the suggestion of two creation apologetics. In his debate with Bill Nye earlier this year, Ham reminded us that there are two kinds of science. First, there is *operational or observational science*, which an article from Answers in Genesis defines as “a systematic approach to understanding that uses observable, testable, repeatable, and falsifiable experimentation to understand how nature commonly behaves.”¹ Operational science makes use of the acclaimed scientific method. Operational science is responsible for putting men on the moon, for conquering diseases such as polio and smallpox, and for modern technological innovations.

Second, there is *historical or origins science* which investigates alleged events in the past. However, the AiG article says “the past is not directly observable, testable, repeatable, or falsifiable; so interpretations of past events present greater challenges than interpretations involving operational science.”² Historical science, which has given us the controversial theories of evolution and the Big Bang, relies heavily on assumptions and is supported by only shallow or superficial evidence. As an example of this shallow evidence I would suggest the fossils. Fossils of alleged human ancestors tend to be seriously fragmented and incomplete. A specific example is the famous Lucy fossil, who is missing about three-quarters of her skeleton. Paleontologists then have considerable liberty to interpret these fossils in such a way that the fossils more closely match the scientists' presuppositions.

¹ Roger Patterson, “Chapter 1—What is Science?” (Answers in Genesis, 2007). <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/ee/what-is-science> (accessed May 14, 2014)

² Patterson, “Chapter 1—What is Science?” (2007).

When creationist writers and speakers, such as myself, use terms like “true science” or “real science,” we are referring to discoveries made by operational science which certainly appear to be scientific truths or facts. For example, no one doubts that the Earth is a globe, or that a water molecule includes two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, or that scurvy is caused by a deficiency of vitamin C. Engineers could not invent anything and doctors could cure no one if they did not rely upon accepted scientific truths in physics and medicine, respectively. While science is, by definition, always a discipline in search of the truth, no one is standing around waiting for the plethora of accepted facts discovered through observational science to be overturned. However, it is true that, on occasion, new research has debunked or called into question some generally accepted truths. An example is the former belief that trans fats were a healthier option to saturated fat, an idea now being discarded. Yet, these exceptions are relatively rare and only prove science, even operational science, can never be as certain as the Word of God.

I believe the conflicting statements of writers and speakers regarding science which the author has uncovered, at least in general, mean these people are not thinking of the same kind of science, even if they may not personally be acquainted with the terms “operational science” and “historical science.” In other words, when writers say “there is no contradiction between science and the Bible” I believe they have operational science in mind, while those who say “there IS a conflict between science and the Bible” likely are thinking of historical science. Those who say there is “no evidence for evolution” undoubtedly mean the evidence set forth by observational science. Those who say “there IS evidence for evolution” surely must mean the shallow evidence to which evolutionists refer. If there were to be any fact or truth in natural science which contradicts the Bible, that would cause a problem. How is it possible for a holy God to contradict Himself, seeing God is both the Creator of nature and the Author of Scripture? If anyone knows how that is possible, please let me know.

The bottom line is that we who write and speak about scientific matters must be careful to clearly define what we mean when we use terms like “science” and “evidence.” On the one hand, we must be careful not to say or write anything that would suggest creation science is a means of grace. On the other hand, we don't want to cast doubt on the doctrine of inerrancy by suggesting scientists might have discovered something that truly discredits Scripture. With the Lord's help, we may avoid confusion just by always clearly defining our terms.

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