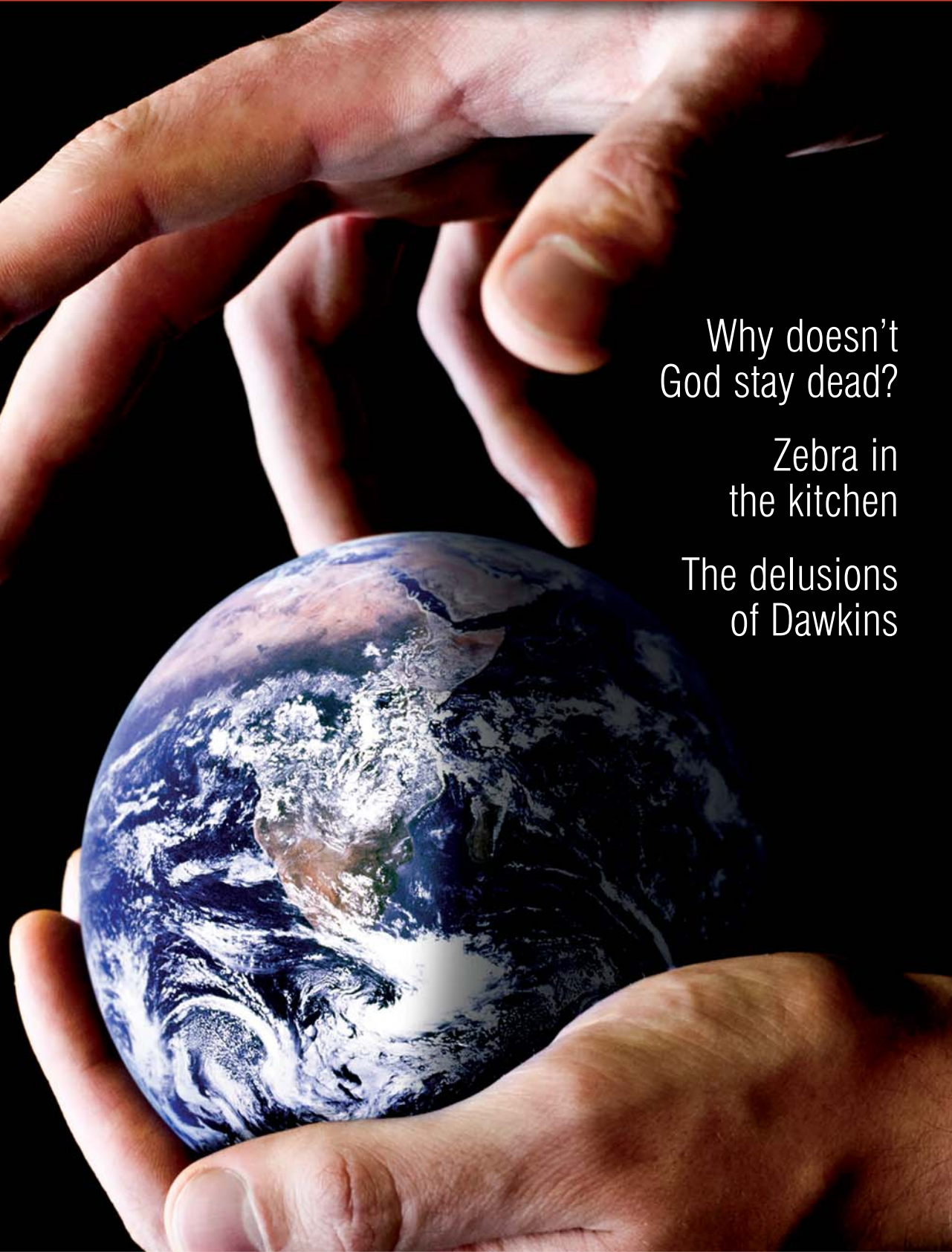


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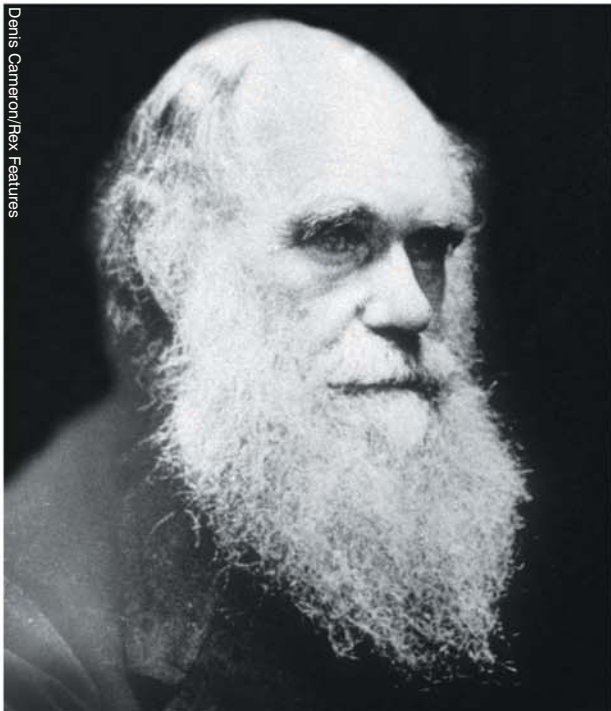
Crisis over Origins



Why doesn't
God stay dead?

Zebra in
the kitchen

The delusions
of Dawkins



Denis Cameron/Rex Features

Darwin's 200th

Why do folks who don't believe in God write books about him? Some — among them Professor Dawkins — appear to be waging total war on their own heredity.

Others sound like the girl who says of her boyfriend, 'Oh, we're not speaking anymore. I've lost all interest in him. We haven't spoken for three days, six hours and twenty-three minutes.'

The alternative orthodoxy championed by Dawkins had its origins in the work of Charles Darwin, 200 this year!

1809 was a vintage year for babies. William Ewart was born to the Gladstones of Liverpool. Alfred was born to the Tennysons in a Lincolnshire vicarage. Abe came screaming into the world in a log cabin owned by the Lincolns of Kentucky. Charles Robert was born to the doctor's wife in Shrewsbury. The family name: Darwin.

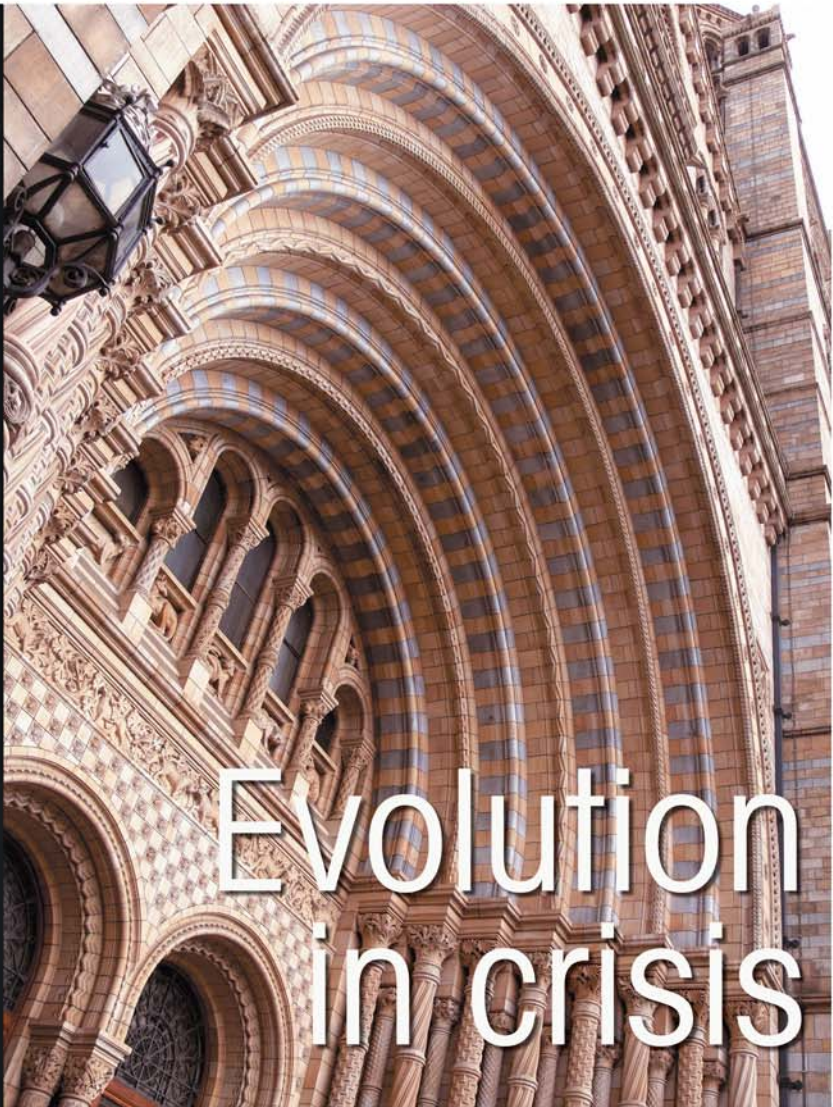
Though the patron saint of God's principal detractors, Charles Darwin did not mean to start an anti-God crusade. Indeed, the authoritarian atheism of Darwin's principal champion at present would have been foreign to his own tentative approach. Darwin, who narrowly missed the Anglican ministry, studied at Edinburgh and Cambridge universities. For years following his *Beagle* research he was a nervous evolutionist. In 1842, in a pencil sketch of his theory of 'natural selection', Darwin included a boost for Intelligent Design. Natural selection produced organisms of 'the most exquisite workmanship'. The existence of natural laws, he wrote, 'exalt our notion of the power of an omniscient Creator'.¹ The version of Darwin's autobiography in which a definitive rejection of Christianity appeared was not published until ninety-nine years after *The Origin of Species*.²

But as Darwin's 200th hoves into view, his theory appears increasingly under threat. Alternative theories of origins — including Intelligent Design — have rattled the cages of Darwin's contemporary popularisers to such an extent that they have abandoned the scholar's equivalent of the Geneva Convention — and are going for Christianity's jugular. Rather than trying to convince Christians of the validity of evolutionary precepts, they give every appearance of wanting to enforce orthodox Darwinism as the centre core of some new atheistic fundamentalism.

DAVID MARSHALL

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¹James Moore, *The Darwin Legend* (Hodder, 1994), page 13. ²*Ibid*, page 6.



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Evolution in crisis

by John Surridge

In terms of days out, for me there's nothing to compare with a trip to London's South Kensington museums. For many years I have dragged my family alternately to the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum, or, on a particularly good day, both. In fact, we've spent so much time in these 'cathedrals to science' that they feel almost like home.

These wonderful museums were built following the success of Prince Albert's Great Exhibition which was held in Hyde Park over the summer of 1851. It was an era of tremendous optimism. Britain's imperial might made her the centre of a vast system of world trade. The industrial revolution had brought about seismic changes in society and was still churning out new inventions by the score. Science was in the ascendancy. There seemed no limit to what man could achieve.

Prince Albert championed the cause of scientific advancement, but he also acknowledged the existence and creatorship of God. For Albert, science was driven by an obligation to make the most of the potential that man had been given by a Creator God. Announcing his plans for the Great Exhibition in a speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in October 1849, he said, 'Man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by



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which the Almighty governs his creation.' (*The Illustrated London News*, 11 October 1849.)

However, change was in the air. Whether the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was a cause, or a result of a fundamental shift in thinking, is open to debate. What cannot be denied is that what became known as Darwinian Evolution was destined to sweep the world, and Prince Albert's view of a Creator God — the view held by the vast majority at that time — was headed for a steep decline.

It took more than a century for the theory of evolution to become overwhelmingly dominant, but eventually it did happen and creationist credibility sank.

That was the case until fairly recently.

Darwin in trouble

Now it should be said that over the last one hundred and fifty years the theory of evolution has not enjoyed a completely smooth ride. Darwin himself would no doubt be surprised that some of the things he predicted never really came to pass. Darwin quite correctly observed small changes occurring in plants and animals as they adapted to their environment. However, his assumption that a lot of small changes would add up to big changes — leaps from one species to another — has not really been observed in nature or the fossil record. In the optimistic era of the late nineteenth century, Darwin assumed that better observation and more fossils would do the trick. It didn't, but, strangely, people still make the same assumptions today.

In isolation, the discontinuity of the fossil record (more crudely referred to as the 'missing links' problem) would not pose too much of a challenge to Darwinian Evolution. Taken together with other weaknesses in the theory, however, it has led some to refer to evolution as a theory in crisis.

Serious writers began pointing out holes in the theory of evolution back in the 1960s. *The Genesis Flood*, by John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, surprised the scientific community with its scholarly treatment of a subject generally considered the preserve of a religious minority. Similarly, the 1967 release of *Evolution or Creation* by Hannington Enoch showed an academic world that not all scholars were buying into the theory of evolution.

Twenty years later, in 1986, Michael Denton, a non-Christian molecular biologist, published *Evolution*:

A Theory in Crisis, an authoritative work which exposed a number of evolutionary proposals as mere conjecture.

Intelligent Design

Today, key players in the anti-evolutionary movement include the biochemist Michael Behe and the philosopher William Dembski. Their concept of Intelligent Design uses a non-religious approach to enable a more scientific and less controversial debate to take place with evolutionists. Intelligent Design hit the headlines in 2005 when a legal case was brought against the governing board of a school in Pennsylvania for their policy of teaching Intelligent Design as an alternative to evolution as an explanation of the origin of life.

In a world so governed by the scientific method — which observes nature, conducts experiments, formulates hypotheses, and then rigorously tests them — it should come as no surprise that scientists are challenging the theory of evolution. *But — and here's the strange thing — many evolutionists are surprised, even affronted, when others dare to question their views. It's as if evolution has itself evolved from a theory to something more — perhaps something more like a religion.*

Darwin's Rottweiler

If we are to pursue this analogy, then the greatest evangelist for evolution today has to be the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins. From the publication of his first book, *The Selfish Gene* (1979), to his most recent, *The God Delusion* (2006), Dawkins has been a leading critic of creationism and Intelligent Design. Now much more a popular writer than a scientist, Dawkins is so renowned for his impassioned attacks on the anti-evolutionary community that he has been nicknamed 'Darwin's Rottweiler'!

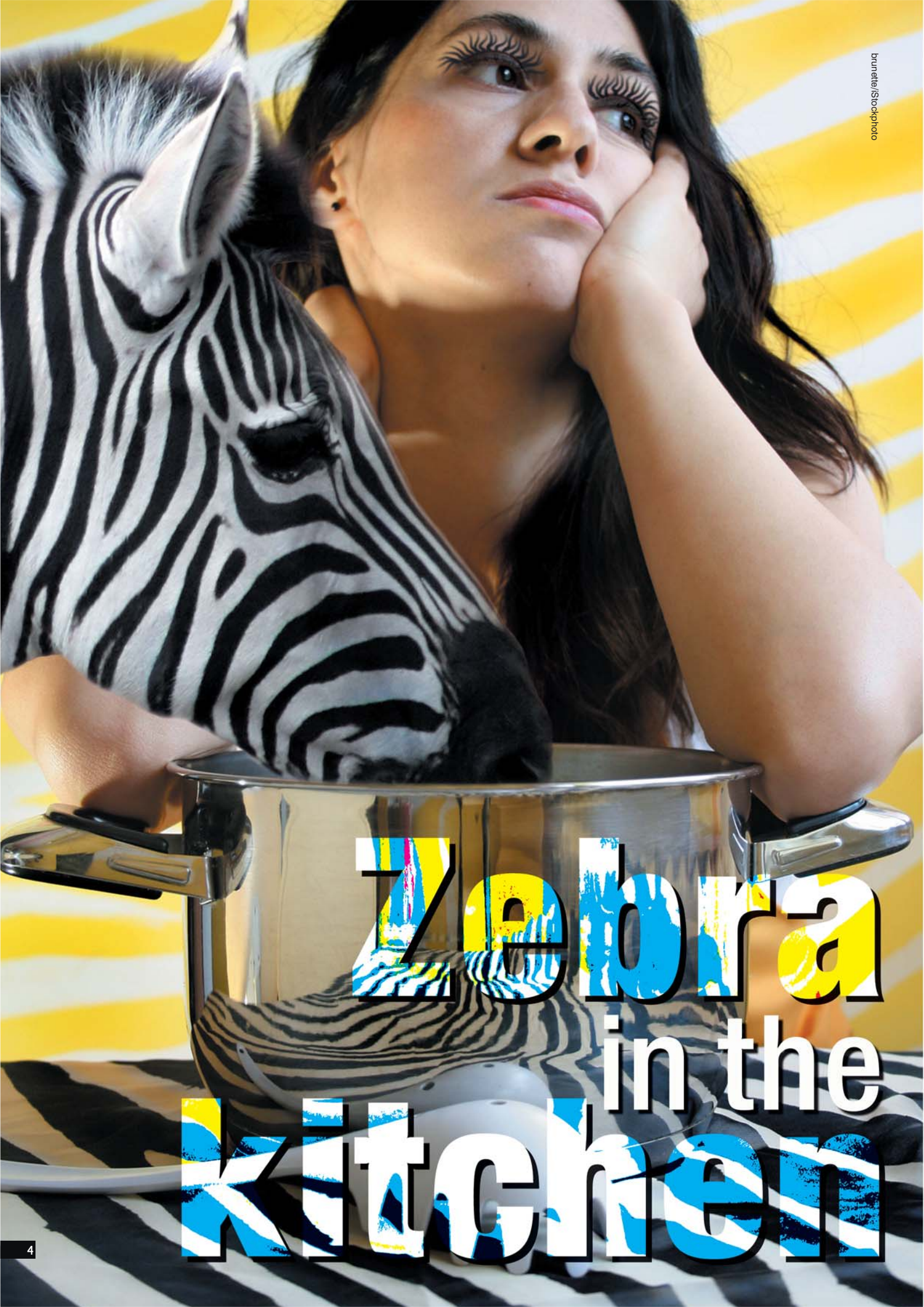
In a post-modern society neither dogmatic nor irrational arguments will be tolerated for long. If we are to have a



genuine debate about the origins of life, then fundamentalists, whether creationist or evolutionist, will find themselves excluded.

Most people would agree that the truth is out there — in the fossil record and the DNA trail, but maybe also in the biblical records and the religious experiences of a people seeking out their Creator. I personally find no incompatibility between the great 'cathedrals to science' in South Kensington and the even more magnificent cathedrals to the Creator that are built throughout the world. The existence of both throws out a challenge to all rational and inquiring human beings: to seek out a theory, a worldview, or a truth, that encompasses all the evidence.

The open evolutionist and the open creationist may both honestly claim to be doing this. However, the creationist has a special responsibility: if he genuinely believes himself to be a created being, he has an obligation to represent the Creator correctly. Though it may put him at a disadvantage when facing attacks from the most vocal and extreme representatives of the evolutionist camp, a well-informed, polite and good-natured response will enable genuine and productive debate to continue long into the future.



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Zebra in the Kitchen

Where did we all come from?

Clifford Goldstein explores the two main alternatives

What does the purpose of our lives depend upon? On how we got here — what else? As the oak is in the acorn, so our end is in our beginning.

And what does that mean?

Two primary overarching views of human origins exist. The first sees the universe, and everything in it, as a product of purely material things that arose by chance. Everything — from the Andromeda Galaxy to our deepest longings — has a materialist origin and existence, consisting of atoms and nothing more. All that exists is what some ancient materialists called 'atoms and the void'.

Modern materialists describe this position in the following way. About fifteen billion years ago, a tremendous explosion brought forth matter, energy, time and space all at once — an event they call the 'big bang'. Atoms created in this explosion formed gaseous clouds that coalesced into stars, and amid this interstellar panoply of light and heat, molten globules cooled and hardened into the planets, including ours

— third orb out. After billions of years, pools of water filled with increasingly complex chemicals. Simple life forms emerged from a mix of amino acids and evolved over aeons into human beings.

The crucial point is that these processes had no purpose, no intention and no goals — beginning with the big bang itself. They just happened. 'Our universe,' one scientist commented, 'is simply one of those things which happens from time to time.'¹

If this view is correct, then our end (and our middle, too) — all of which come out of our origins — are as dismal as suggested above. Our existence has no purpose. Because the original mix had no goals or intent, the final product contains none. We're just one of those things that occurs from time to time. As a jack-in-the-box pops out of the box only because something put it in there to begin with, if whatever made us has no meaning, then none can come out of the box with us.

In short, the prevailing scientific view of our origins leaves us with

little hope beyond our flimsy and uncertain existence here. As the twentieth century's leading atheist expressed it: 'All the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius . . . the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins.'²

So, to return to our questions: 'Is this life, with all its toils, struggles and disappointments, the sum of all that we are, or could be? And then, to top it off, the often sad and miserable story of our lives — punctuated with a few lines, or paragraphs, or pages of happiness (if we're lucky) — ends in dust? Is this our fate?'

Yes, if the above view of our origins is correct.

On the other hand . . .

The God hypothesis

. . . we have another overarching view of our origins, one that encompasses a perspective grander and broader than the narrow confines of the scientific materialistic

one. This other position argues that everything created came from a Creator — from a God (or gods) who brought everything into existence. In this view, we're here not by chance but for a purpose and can divine some of those intents through Creation, which itself testifies to the existence of God. After all, just as painting implies a painter, doesn't a creation imply a Creator?

In contrast, the idea of a Creator, particularly a loving one, opens up a whole new realm of hope — of something beyond the hopelessness of the modern scientific worldview, in which destruction ends a universe that lacked purpose to begin with. 'Only God, it seems to me, can take from death the last word,' John Polkinghorne observed. 'If the human intuition of hope — that all will be well, that the world makes ultimate sense — is not a vain delusion, then God must exist.'³

The atheistic materialistic view offers no possibility of any future other than that of cold dust, drifting through a worn-out cosmos. Deity alone offers us the possibility of more. Again, a God is no guarantee of a good end — only the possibility of one. In contrast, the scientific worldview only guarantees us a death much longer than whatever precedes it. 'It's not that life is so

About fifteen billion years ago, a tremendous explosion brought forth matter, energy, time and space all at once — an event they call the 'big bang'. Atoms created in this explosion formed gaseous clouds that coalesced into stars, and amid this interstellar panoply of light and heat, molten globules cooled and hardened into the planets, including ours — third orb out.

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short,' a T-shirt declares, 'it's just that death is so long.'

Our most pressing and important question, then, deals with origins – for only in how we began can we find the answers about our life and, even more important, about our end. Just as our eye colour originates in our genes, our end originates in our beginnings. 'As our fate is totally dependent upon the matrix that produced and sustains us,' Huston Smith commented, 'interest in its nature is the holiest interest that can visit us.'

What produced us? What sustains us? Purposeless, cold forces – or deity of one kind or another? Are we here alone, or does God exist? And if so, does this God come 'only in silent shadows and dreams', or can we know more about him?

Philosopher W. K. Clifford states, 'It is always wrong, everywhere and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.' Of the two options, then, which one follows this better?

Suppose one day you came home and found a massive zebra drinking out of your kitchen sink. Surprised, you ask, 'Where did this zebra come from?'

'It came from nothing,' the other person responds.

From nothing?

Ridiculous! Why? Because nothing comes from nothing. The old Latin phrase *ex nihilo nihil fit* ('Out of nothing, nothing comes') is an obvious first principle – a truth too basic even to debate. How could anything arise from nothing? Zebras (whether in the jungle or in the kitchen) must originate from something, because 'out of nothing, nothing comes'. It would be easier to get six out of three than to get something – anything – out of nothing.

Then what about the Earth, the sky, the stars? Or you, your shoes, your mother? Certainly they, like the zebra, couldn't have come from 'nothing', could they? Anything created, anything that once was not but came to be, did so only by something other than itself – by something previous to it. The shoemaker obviously existed prior to your shoe.

For many years, people believed the universe was eternal. Being uncreated, it had always existed. There was never a time when the universe was not. Despite the difficult philosophical questions such a position raised, it removed the need of a Creator. The universe didn't have a Creator because, always existing, it didn't require one. Scientists now believe, however,

that the universe was not eternal but had a beginning. Yes, at some point in the past, it did not exist. Stephen Hawking, perhaps the greatest scientist since Einstein, wrote that 'almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang'.⁵ Like your shoe, the universe wasn't always there.

The conclusion that the universe had a beginning leads to the obvious question: If the universe had a starting point, then what or who set it in motion? If it's absurd to believe that a zebra in your kitchen came from nothing, how much more so to believe that the universe – and all that it contains (ourselves and zebras included) – did as well. Therefore, before the big bang, before the universe was, something had to already be – something powerful enough to set the forces in motion that led to life on Earth, not to mention the existence of God. Who or what could that be, because who, or what, could have created the universe?

Once scientists agreed that the universe came into being at some time or another, they forced upon themselves the inescapable question of God. As Hawking conceded: 'So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator.'⁶

The nothing argument

'Suppose' is right. The implications surrounding a created universe point so strongly to God that some scientists have been compelled by the obvious to embrace the absurd. Instead of God being the Creator of the universe, they argue

that 'nothing' was creator.

Nothing?

That's what some are saying. 'Conceivably,' physicist Alan Guth suggested, 'everything can be created from nothing. And "everything" might include a lot more than we can see. . . . It is fair to say that the universe is the ultimate free lunch.'⁷

How is 'nothing' able to create 'everything'? Through quantum fluctuations, some scientists theorise.

Quantum fluctuations are complicated physical processes that, supposedly, created the universe. If so, that theory begs the question: Where did the laws of physics (much less the energy) needed to produce those quantum fluctuations come from?

As one critic mocks: 'Alan Guth writes in pleased astonishment that the universe did arise from essentially . . . nothing at all: as it happens a false vacuum patch "10⁻²⁶ centimetres in diameter" and "10⁻³² solar masses". It would appear, then, that "essentially nothing" has both spatial extension and mass. While these facts may strike Guth as inconspicuous, others may suspect that nothingness, like death, is not a matter of degrees.'⁸

Or, as another critic of this everything-out-of-nothing hypothesis remarks: 'How do we account for the situation within which one or more gigantic quantum fluctuations could occur? The atheist says we just have to assume it and treat it as a given.'⁹

All scientific intricacies and nuances of quantum fluctuations aside, the critics' points

are well taken. Whatever a quantum fluctuation is supposed to be, it's certainly not 'nothing'. It has mass, energy and physical laws, and these things – like the zebra in your kitchen – had to come from somewhere.

The question, again, is: from where?

Of the two positions – that the universe was created by 'nothing' or that it's the result of a powerful God – which remains more logical, more reasonable? Which better fits the evidence: all that exists (stars, clouds, people, trees) sprang from 'nothing', or came from a Creator? Is it sensible to accept as a given the physical processes needed for quantum fluctuations or to acknowledge a Creator God, one who always existed?

Nothing as creator is, really, the only logical option for the atheist. Why? Because if something other than an eternal God – that is, a God who always existed – made the universe, then whatever it was, it had to be created by something before it, which had to be originated by something before it . . . and on and on endlessly. Thus the universe could never have had a starting point. It would have to be, like God, from eternity. But the universe doesn't endlessly go back in time. Once it just wasn't there. And because there was a time that the universe did not exist, something obviously had to start it, and who or what could that be, other than God?

Unless, of course, nothing created it?

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' (Genesis 1:1) Or was it, 'In the beginning nothing created the heavens and the earth'?

Adapted with permission from *Life without Limits. See special offer.*

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The dangers of fundamentalism poses to authentic Christianity

by Ed Dickerson

Few periods in history so radically altered the lives of ordinary individuals as the 1800s. But today we can hardly conceive of the upheaval experienced by ordinary people during that century. The inventions and innovations of the nineteenth century radically altered nearly every aspect of life. Practices and devices unchanged for centuries – sometimes millennia! – were altered or ended.

In 1800, as they had since the dawn of time, people and goods travelled only as fast as draft animals could carry them on land, or as fast as the wind could drive them across water. By the end of the century, mechanised travel on trains, steamships, and the earliest automobiles transported people across continents in days.

At the beginning of the century, messages could travel, in written or coded form, as fast as animals and wind could carry them. By the end of the century, trans-oceanic cables transmitted messages at the speed of light. Telephones carried living voices across vast distances.

Armies relied upon the muzzle-loaded, single-shot, smooth-bore musket in 1800. By the end of the century, the ordinary infantryman carried a repeating rifle, and machine guns fired hundreds of rounds a minute. Light bulbs began replacing candles and kerosene lanterns. Clothes were sewn by machines.

This dazzling rate of change affected not only technology and commerce. It extended into politics and religion, the very fibre of people's existence.

During this period, theologians using 'higher criticism' seemed to be disassembling the Bible. In politics, Marx predicted the overthrow of the social order. And then came Darwin's work, which challenged the origin of life itself.

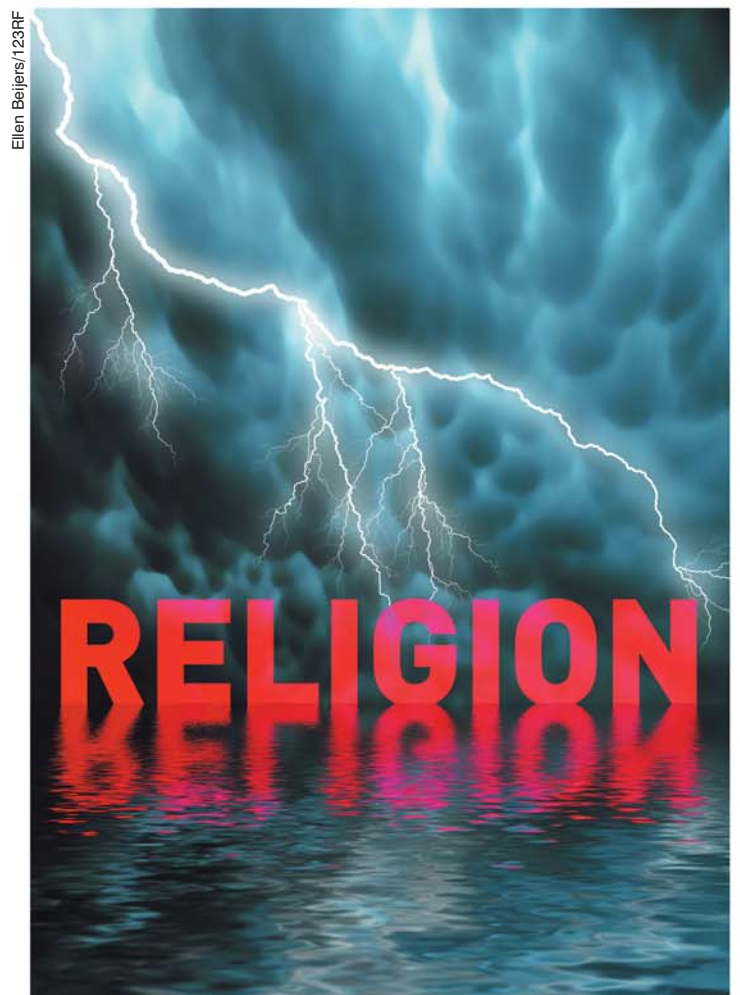
Change can be frightening, especially when it causes us to question

our very existence. With the pendulum wildly lunging in the direction of change, many people understandably rode it back to the other extreme – to fundamentalism. Fundamentalism attempts to deal with change through denial and retreat to the familiar and the simple. We see this all around us.

Darwin's theories that humans evolved from lower life forms threatened people's basic understanding of themselves and their world. Many Christians were driven back to a more rigorous study of the Bible. Their new-found knowledge led to a number of revivals. However, on the fringes, a minority of biblical fundamentalists championed the Bible as infallible and literally correct in all matters; scientific, geographical, everything.

But this position, comforting as it may be, hides several basic – dare we say 'fundamental' – weaknesses. To begin with, no one, not even the most ardent fundamentalist, actually takes the entire Bible as literally true. Not only do we have the symbolic prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, the Bible contains poetry filled with metaphors in the Psalms and elsewhere, and parables such as 'the trees went out to anoint a king' in Judges 9. No one takes these literally. And once the absolute of 'literal reading' loses its, er, absoluteness, everything becomes a matter of interpretation – and the notion of inerrancy was intended to avoid the necessity of interpretation. More devastating, and often overlooked, the Bible itself makes no absolute claims about history, or geography. And science, as we understand it, did not yet exist in Bible times.

Inerrancy, the fundamentalist position that insists that the Bible contains no errors of any kind, appears to solidify faith. In fact, inerrancy makes the authority of the Bible and faith more fragile. Because for the one who holds this



belief, the tiniest mistake, the smallest inconsistency, a solitary error, denies inerrancy, and thus invalidates the whole book. Suddenly, the question of whether God came to Earth as a human being to save us depends upon reconciling Matthew's account, which says that Jesus sent out twelve disciples, with Luke's account, which mentions seventy. Or finding a way to accommodate whether Jesus met one or two demon-possessed men among the tombs in the land of the Gerasenes. Such details only matter when the reader insists on biblical inerrancy.

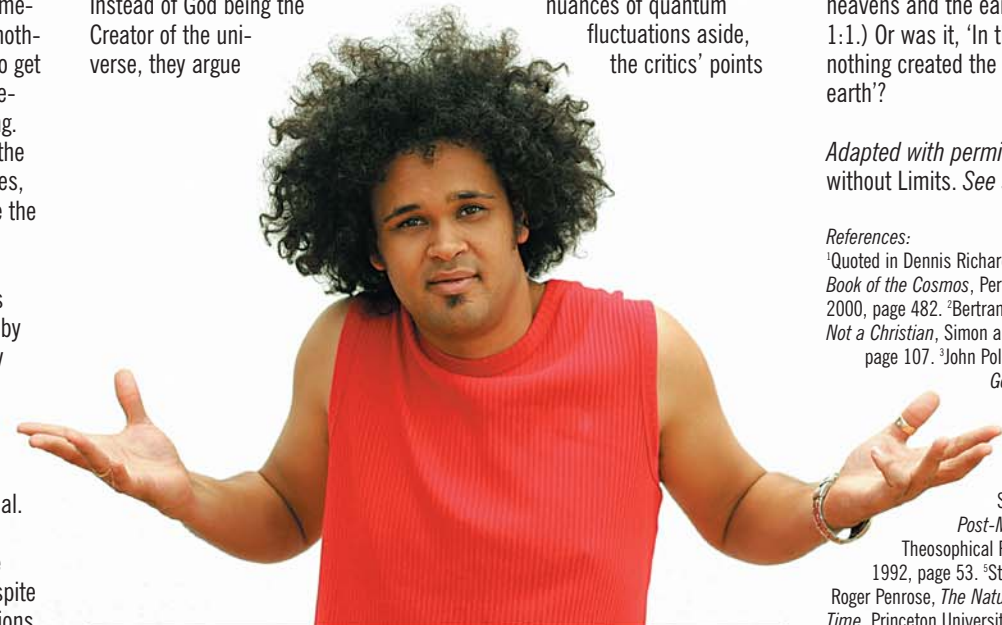
Fundamentalism began as an attempt to flee from the complexity and rapid change of the real world. But the real world has a way of catching up with us, no matter where we run. And that flight from complexity can lead in many directions, sometimes very surprising directions.

Since Darwin, another kind of fundamentalism has taken root, though it is seldom recognised as such. That's the belief that science can provide the answer for everything; that everything that really matters can be weighed, measured and examined under a microscope. And, like any sort of fundamentalism, it requires us to deny or ignore certain realities.

Science cannot distinguish love from lust, cannot give us guidance between right and wrong, and cannot give meaning or purpose to our lives. But those who experience love know it exists; intuitively, we know that some actions and behaviours are right and just; and we recognise that purpose and meaning bring joy and fulfilment to life. These things cannot be weighed or measured, but they exist nonetheless. Scientific fundamentalism also fails to account for these realities.

The latest version of fundamentalism we call 'postmodernism', which holds that absolute truth cannot be known. In other words, 'Don't worry about complexity, you can't understand it anyway. Now you have an excuse not to try.' But ignoring complexity won't make it disappear.

American newspaper man, and renowned sceptic, H. L. Mencken, said, 'For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.' Neither the Bible nor science presents us with a simple reality. Both require us to exercise our minds and our spirits to the utmost, to grapple with the complexities of the universe and of living. In other words, both require us to grow, in maturity and in understanding, and thus to live life more fully.



How is 'nothing' able to create 'everything'?

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Why doesn't God stay dead?

by Professor John C. Walton,
Department of Chemistry, University of St Andrews

'The Intelligent Design movement has drawn a massive response from evolutionary scientists. However, the published rebuttals are essentially restatements of standard evolutionary positions, laced with ideological prejudice. The real issues raised by ID have not been refuted; they remain intact and represent a major challenge to mainstream evolution.'

Triumph of the inheritors
'God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him,' wrote the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in 1882, giving voice to an increasingly popular worldview that banished God from the universe. The cultural abolition of God and of religion received huge impetus over the next half century with the ascendancy of Marxist ideology in the political arena, of Freudian psychology in the behavioural sciences, and of Darwinian evolution in the biological sciences. This climate of godlessness approached its zenith during the 1960s as communist regimes were reaching their fullest extent, and evolution had expanded into behavioural, social and physical sciences, and thence to historical, linguistic, religious and other areas. A large and exultant celebration of the centenary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* at the University of Chicago in 1959 marked the cultural dominance of the evolutionary paradigm. During his keynote address entitled 'The Evolutionary Vision', leading evolutionist Sir Julian Huxley proclaimed that religion was subject to the laws of evolution, was fast becoming obsolete, and would soon evolve out of existence.

Biblical studies took directions that mirrored these scientific and

ideological developments. Sceptical literary analyses, using the methods of source criticism, redaction criticism and form criticism, emasculated the Old and New Testaments and

The 'new atheist' authors appear embittered, very angry and very intolerant. Richard Dawkins suggested that 'Christians should just shut up'!

relegated them to the status of inaccurate and unreliable folklore. Most miracles were rejected, the New Testament accounts of Jesus were asserted to be unhistorical, and, of course, a literal resurrection was denied. Under the onslaught of these political, scientific and theological developments, the most extreme forms of which were highly publicised and promoted by the media, interest in Christianity fell to such a degree that western culture was characterised as a 'post-Christian society'.

The inheritors' transparent clothes

In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the elaborate edifice of unbelief began to topple under the impact of modern enquiry. Brutally repressive measures by

communist regimes could no longer disguise the economic and cultural stagnation their nihilistic ideologies led to. In the behavioural sciences, Freud's inflation of his very limited

therapeutic successes and the pseudo-scientific nature of much of his psychiatry became widely recognised.

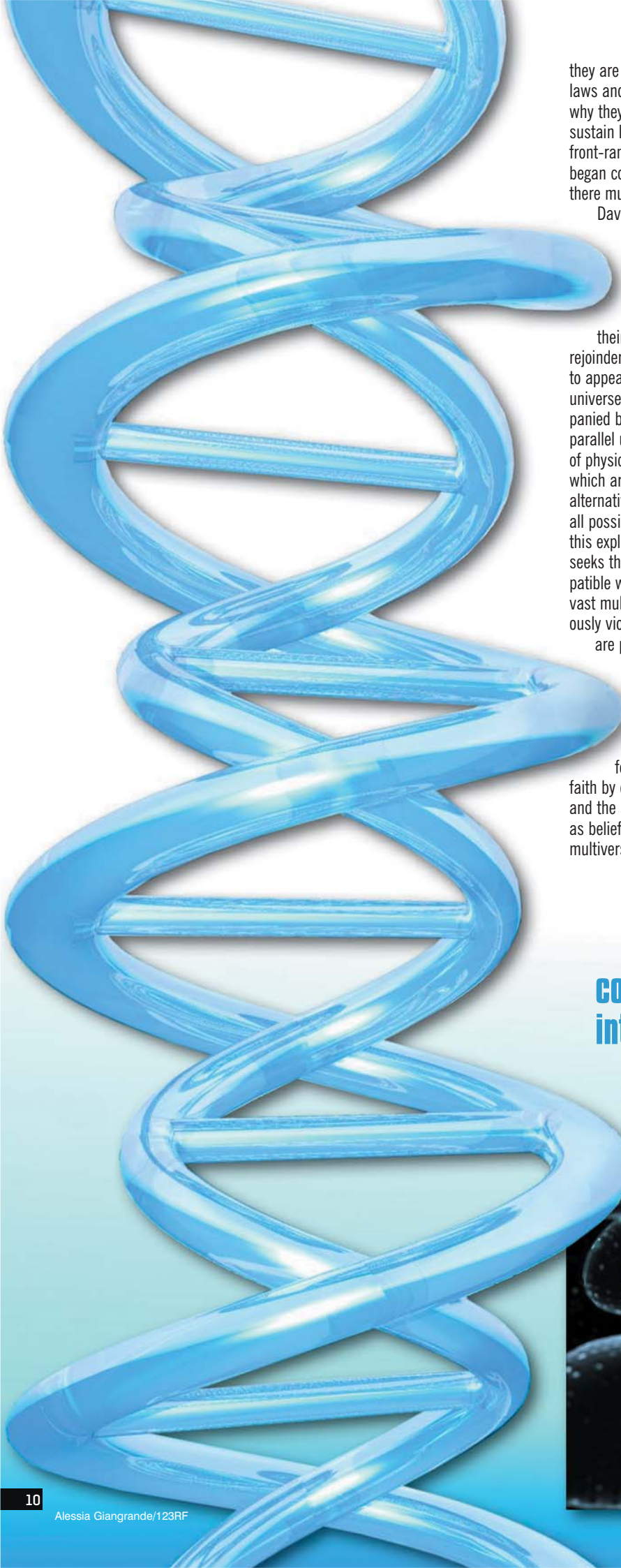
A series of new discoveries from the physical and biological sciences, unforeseen by evolutionary theory, also began to reshape the landscape. A remarkable picture of a universe created out of nothing, at a definite start date, emerged from modern physics and cosmology. Furthermore, evidence accumulated of deliberate prearrangement of our set of laws and universal constants, fine-tuned to support life with almost incredible precision. Among a host of examples of this fine-tuning, theoretical physicist Paul Davies mentions that if the ratio of the electromagnetic force to the nuclear strong force had been different by 1 part in 10^{16} , no stars could

have formed. Likewise, if the ratio of the electromagnetic force constant to the gravitational force constant were varied by only 1 part in 10^{40} , the full range of stars could not

exist.¹ In a splendidly mind-broadening account, Oxford mathematician John Lennox recounts² that the observed galactic structures can only be accounted for if the expansion and contraction forces were balanced at the outset by as little as 1 part in 10^{25} . The fine-tuning required to explain the increasing entropy of the universe has to be even more spectacularly precise.² At the local level, on our planet, a host of similarly precise conditions must be met for life to exist. For example, the path and speed of the Earth's orbit around the sun must be extremely precise to permit surface water, an oxygenic atmosphere, and a benign climate.

The discovery of all this astounding fine-tuning triggered questions about where the laws of physics came from in the first place, why

Galactic structures can only be accounted for if the expansion and contraction forces were balanced at the outset



they are just this particular set of laws and not something else, and why they are so fine-tuned as to sustain life and intelligence. Many front-rank scholars and scientists began coming to the conclusion that there must be a designer. Paul

Davies' statement, 'It seems as though someone has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the universe. . . .

The impression of design is overwhelming,' typifies their reaction. The atheist rejoinder to this conclusion has been to appeal to the multiverse idea. Our universe is imagined to be accompanied by an unlimited number of parallel universes in which the laws of physics take different forms which are fine-tuned in alternative ways, thus leading to all possible outcomes. Few find this explanation satisfying. Science seeks the simplest rationale compatible with the facts, whereas this vast multiplication of universes seriously violates this principle. Not only are parallel universes undetectable, but the hypothesis is untestable and moves far into the realm of speculation.

Atheist writers are fond of ridiculing religious faith by declaring that belief in God and the supernatural is as rational as belief in fairies. However, the multiverse hypothesis turns this slur

back on its source, transferring the over-credulous label to its adherents. Consider the following scenario in a parallel universe with physical laws and conditions only slightly different from our own. Assuming evolution is capable of all the immense creativity claimed for it, life can plausibly be imagined as developing along slightly different lines, culminating in beings similar to us but with much smaller dimensions. In our own world, flying varieties of birds, reptiles and mammals are all well adapted, so it is perfectly credible to imagine the delightful little human look-alikes of the parallel universe developing wings and being able to fly. It seems inescapable that fairies inhabit the bottom of the multiverse garden!

The enigma of biological information

Biochemical discoveries had an even more important influence on scientific thinking about origins. Life is known to depend on a large biomolecule called DNA (and its sibling RNA) which stores the information for making all our cellular structures and passes it from one generation to another. The amazing double-helix structure of DNA was discovered in the 1950s and its far-reaching implications gradually emerged during subsequent decades. The crucial feature of the structure is that it resembles a very long string made

I suspect that writers such as Alister McGrath have derived a lot of wry amusement from pinpointing the lack of scientific objectivity, the wishful thinking, the baseless assertions, the selective use of evidence and the one-sided reporting displayed in the new atheist literature.

by coupling together, in a particular order, many units called nucleotides, chosen from a basic set of four. Our genes are sections of our DNA and it is the exact order of the nucleotides in these sections that determines the information they carry, and hence the proteins they enable an individual cell to build.

It soon became apparent that naturalistic attempts to explain the origin of a complex sequence of this kind, loaded with information, faced immense problems. Before there were cells capable of reproducing themselves, the neo-Darwinian mechanism of natural selection and random mutations could not operate. The origin of a particular DNA nucleotide sequence, needed for the first living organism, would then have to proceed by a statistically random chemical assembly from a pool of the four nucleotides. Statisticians showed that the number of possible sequences rises astronomically as the length of the DNA strand increases. For instance, for a short DNA strand 77 nucleotides long there are actually 10^{46} different sequences that could form from random combinations of the four nucleotides! A strand of ribosomal RNA is about 30,000 nucleotides long, so the number of possible sequences reaches the stupefyingly large number of 10^{18100} , and any one of these could form! The smallest known bacterium, *carsonella rudii*, actually has 160,000 nucleotides in its genome, so the chances of it forming in a random process are many orders of magnitude less again! The incredibly large size of these numbers can be illustrated by comparison with the total number of atoms in the observable universe which is about 10^{80} . Even the number of moderately sized DNA molecules that could pack into the entire volume of the observable universe is 'only' about 10^{120} , i.e. negligible in comparison with 10^{18100} . It necessarily follows that the chance of a 'meaningful'

DNA sequence being obtained spontaneously is almost infinitesimally small. The only reasonable conclusion is that there isn't enough space, there isn't enough matter (particularly carbon) and there isn't enough time for spontaneous formation of a self-replicating system.³ Robert Shapiro's statement is most apt: 'The improbability involved in generating even one bacterium is so large that it reduces all considerations of time and space to nothingness. Given such odds, the time until the black holes evaporate, and the space to the ends of the universe, would make no difference at all. We would be waiting for a miracle.'⁴

Designer biological machines

Just as the impossible odds facing origin of life scenarios were beginning to be appreciated, biochemical studies started to reveal the remarkably complex nature of sub-cellular structures and organelles like cellular cilia, bacterial flagella, vision cascades and chloroplasts. The coordinated interplay of many specialised biomolecules displayed by these structures led to their being called 'biological machines'. In the 1990s Michael Behe pointed out that for biological machines to work, all (or most) of the components are needed together at once. Individual component proteins, or small selections of them, have no function, and hence the Darwinian mechanism cannot build the observed complexity by gradual selection of increasingly efficient precursors. He dubbed these structures 'irreducibly complex'. Analogous mechanical and electronic machines are known to be the products of intelligent minds taking advantage of natural laws. Consequently, Behe argued that biological machines are powerful evidence of intelligent design in biology.⁵

Mathematician William Dembski drew attention to the fact that detecting design is already a well-

established scientific activity in fields such as forensic science, archaeology and cryptology. He demonstrated that systems exhibiting high complexity combined with 'specification' are always produced by intelligent agents.⁶ To be 'specified', an object or event must correspond to an independent pattern or dynamic sequence. When something has the property of specified complexity, it is logical to conclude it was designed. Application of the specified complexity criterion to biological machines gave good agreement with Behe's conclusion that their existence implies intelligent design.

Alongside these discoveries, Berkeley law professor, Phillip Johnson, showed, from his forensic analysis of evolutionary biological literature, that the full diversity of Darwinian evolution is not supported by empirical data from biology or by compelling factual evidence from palaeontology.⁷ Many scientists and scholars were impressed by all this evidence and the Intelligent Design (ID) movement came into being, with the objective of establishing 'design' as a powerful explanatory tool in Nature.

Backlash of the atheist empire

The ID movement has drawn a massive response from evolutionary scientists and, prompted by them, from various public committees and learned societies. However, published rebuttals have been Sargasso science of the most stultifying kind. They are essentially restatements of standard evolutionary positions, laced with ideological prejudice, dogmatically insisting that evolution is fact, that the fossil record and biological science demonstrate evolution, and so on. Unsupported assertions that ID has been refuted, that ID is pseudo-science and that ID scientists are dishonest and/or ignorant have been widely circulat-

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ed. In fact, the real issues raised by ID have not been refuted; they remain intact and represent a major challenge to mainstream evolution.

Perhaps the recent spate of best-selling books advocating atheism and attacking religion constitutes the real backlash against ID. The 'new atheist' authors appear embittered, very angry and very intolerant. Richard Dawkins⁸ accused religion of being the 'root of all evil' and suggested Christians should 'just shut up'. Christopher Hitchens entitled his book *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*.⁹ The new atheists bitterly castigate religion as incredible, irrational and harmful. Their outrage is very palpable as they contemplate the growing numbers of intelligent thinkers who are coming to the conclusion that God is not dead after all.

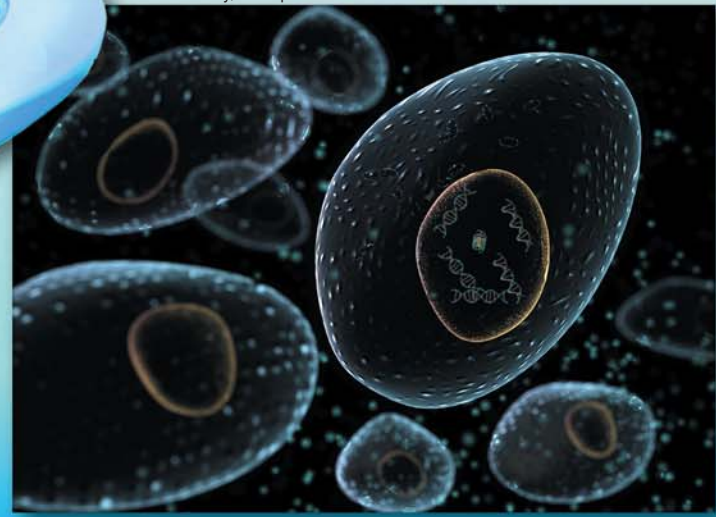
A new facet of the debate is that the standard technique of ruling religion out of court on the grounds that it is non-science, myth and superstition, has become untenable. The new atheists have had to break cover and provide their reasons for advocating atheism. A feature of new atheist writings is the interdependence they reveal between atheism and neo-Darwinian evolution. Inadvertently, they confirm Phillip Johnson's conclusion that the cultural dominance of evolution owes more to its ideological support of philosophic naturalism than to any compelling evidence from biology or palaeontology.

Flight from authoritarian atheism

The critical response to the 'new atheist' literature has been huge and highly polarised. Apart from the many smaller reviews, book-length assessments include those from biologist turned theologian Alister

The outrage of the 'new atheist' authors is very palpable as they contemplate the growing number of intelligent thinkers who are coming to the conclusion that God is not dead after all.

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McGrath,¹⁰ from theologian Thomas Crean,¹¹ from historian John Cornwell,¹² from Presbyterian minister David Robertson,¹³ and from mathematician John Lennox.² These critiques have been truly devastating. One suspects these writers derived a lot of wry amusement from pinpointing the lack of scientific objectivity, the wishful thinking, the baseless assertions, the selective use of evidence and the one-sided reporting displayed in new atheist literature.

A regular Dawkins' tactic

Dawkins straw man is his assertion that all faith is blind faith and that Christians consider it a virtue to believe unquestioningly irrational impossibilities. Anaesthetised by ideology, he is unconscious of man-centuries of careful theological debate, sorting the religiously rational and believable from the dross. It is very apparent that the new atheists major in propaganda, ridicule and coercion.

The announcement in 2004 by Anthony Flew, one of the world's most influential atheists, of his

natural selection does not positively produce anything; that it fails to explain where the immense amount of information contained in genomic DNA came from. He quotes approvingly Paul Davies' statement: 'The problem of how meaningful or semantic information can emerge spontaneously from a collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge.' Flew is persuaded that 'the laws of nature, life with its teleological organisation, and the existence of the universe –

Anthony Flew has moved from being one of the world's most influential atheists to belief in God. He now states that natural selection does not positively produce anything; that it fails to explain where the immense amount of information contained in genomic DNA came from.

involves presenting extreme, fringe behaviour as if it were the norm, approved by the religious orthodox. He fills pages, reporting abuses committed in the name of religion, but is blind to the brutalities of atheist regimes. Typically, he asserts: 'I do not believe there is an atheist in the world who would bulldoze Mecca – or Chartres, York Minster or Notre Dame,'¹⁴ blandly ignoring the officially sanctioned bulldozing and burning of thousands of churches (and mosques) in the former Soviet Union and in China under Communism. A typical

transformation into a deist, appeared like a comet on the skyline of public opinion. His renunciation of atheism is a striking portent of just how convincing the new evidence is. Flew's account of how philosophical and scientific discoveries changed his mind is a fascinating and remarkable read.¹⁵ He writes with an engaging openness and honesty, insisting that 'following the evidence wherever it leads' is his guiding principle. He now believes 'this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God'. He cites his realisation that

can only be explained in the light of an Intelligence that explains both its own existence and that of the world.' Flew joins a growing band of scholars turning to some form of belief in God.

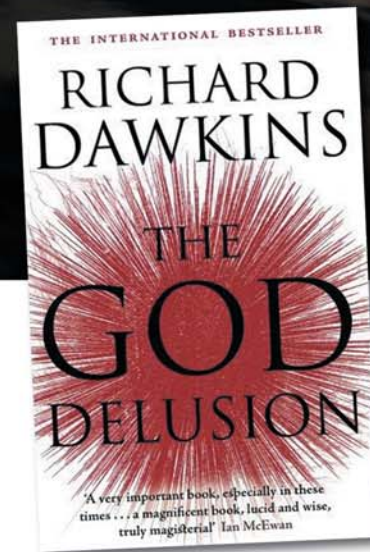
From humanism to inspiration

Although discoveries over the last half century point insistently towards the existence of a transcendent mind, it is still a giant leap to believing that this Designer has revealed himself in human history and should be identified with the personal God of Christianity. It is

worth noting, however, that the climate of opinion in Biblical Studies has moved to some extent in phase with that of modern science and well back from extreme sceptical positions. The historical reliability of the Old and New Testaments now receives substantial backing.¹⁶ Thanks to new archaeological discoveries, James Charlesworth was able to assert: 'Now, however, something new is appearing, and scholars are beginning again, after forty years perhaps, to include Jesus in historical research. In the twenty-first century, more and more scholars are taking the historical Jesus seriously. . . .'¹⁷ Richard Bauckham's literary analysis has persuasively shown that the four gospels are closely based on the eyewitness testimony of those who personally knew Jesus.¹⁸ Furthermore N. T. Wright has made a compelling case for the believability of the resurrection of Jesus.¹⁹ The trend of this re-evaluation produces faith in inspiration.

God is alive and well and can be found by all who are willing to follow the evidence from nature and inspiration where it leads.

¹Paul Davies, *The Mind of God*, Simon and Schuster, London 1992; see also: *The Goldilocks Enigma*, Penguin Books, London, 2007. ²John Lennox, *God's Undertaker, Has Science Buried God?*, Lion Books, Oxford, 2007. ³Note that the solution to this problem proposed by Richard Dawkins (and others) and embodied in his 'methinksitislikeaweasel' computer programme (see: Richard Dawkins, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, Norton, New York, 1996) is invalid circular reasoning, because it assumes what it sets out to produce, i.e. the string sequence. ⁴Robert Shapiro, *Origins, A Skeptic's Guide to The Creation of Life on Earth*, Bantam Books, Toronto, 1986, p. 128. ⁵Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, The Free Press, New York, 1996. ⁶William A. Dembski, *The Design Inference*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. ⁷Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1993. ⁸See for example: Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Bantam Books, London, 2006. ⁹Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, Atlantic Books, 2008. ¹⁰Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion*, SPCK, London, 2007. ¹¹Thomas Crean, *A Catholic Replies to Professor Dawkins*, Family Publications, Oxford, 2007. ¹²John Cornwell, *Darwin's Angel*, Profile Books, London, 2007. ¹³David Robertson, *The Dawkins Letters*, Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2007. ¹⁴Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 249. ¹⁵Anthony Flew with Roy A. Varghese, *There is a God*, HarperCollins, New York, 2007. ¹⁶See for example: Iain Provan, V. Philips Long and Tremper Longman II, *A Biblical History of Israel*, WJK, Louisville, 2003; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003. ¹⁷James H. Charlesworth, editor, *Jesus and Archaeology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2006, p. 24. ¹⁸Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2006. ¹⁹N. Thomas Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, SPCK, London, 2003.



The delusions of Dawkins

Dr Mart de Groot critiques Richard Dawkins

Dr Mart de Groot was for eighteen years Head of Armagh Observatory and one of the world's high-profile astronomers. He applauds Richard Dawkins as a readable, popular journalist, but doubts whether scholarship is what drives his agenda. In an argument-by-argument examination of Dawkins' *The God Delusion*, de Groot finds that Dawkins is, to a large extent, creating and then demolishing a caricature of Christianity. In presenting 'Christianity' as what is believed and preached by the main 'Christian' churches, Dawkins is providing proof of his ignorance of true biblical Christianity. Dawkins goes even further by selecting obvious caricatures of Christianity as examples of true Christian faith and practice. By doing this, he is either grossly dishonest or shockingly ignorant.

Because Richard Dawkins is attacking a caricature of Christianity rather than Christianity as most Christians understand it, Dr de Groot finds some of his points valid. Among the aspects of *The God Delusion* with which Dr de Groot resonates are the tirades against the use of an eternally-burning Hell as a means of scaring children and the gullible into

moral behaviour. He also applauds the point that prayers to the deceased King of Belgium and 'earnest investigations' by the Vatican into claims that he was a saint are clearly ridiculous. But de Groot's grasp of Christianity is essentially *post* (as opposed to *pre*) Reformation and hence he discards these as valid points against the existence of God and the power of prayer.

Dr de Groot shares Dawkins' astonishment at 'those theists who . . . seem to rejoice in natural selection as "God's way of achieving creation"'. They are evidently being inconsistent. But de Groot does not allow Dawkins to dismiss Intelligent Design on the basis of a representation in a Jehovah's Witness publication that clearly has not grasped what it is about.

'Dawkins attacks' – and rightly so, adds de Groot – 'the fallacy of the "god of the gaps" arguments'. But he adds that 'to say that the "truly bad effect of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding" [*The God Delusion*, page 152] does not reflect majority thinking. Thoughtful Christians have rational bases for their beliefs.'

Dawkins writes, 'Resorting to "irreducible complexity" represents a failure of the imagination.' (*GD*, page

154.) De Groot responds with 'So does the "God does not exist" idea.'

De Groot gives credence to Dawkins' point that morality based on avoiding God's wrath is little more than 'fire insurance' (*GD*, page 259), but responds to the argument that 'to argue that you will be moral even in the absence of God undermines the notion that we need God to be good' with 'Nonsense! Goodness – God's image – is hardwired into our being.'

Pages 284-287 of *The God Delusion* represent the most appalling misrepresentation of Christianity Dr de Groot has ever read. Among the more painful statements Dawkins makes are 'Atonement . . . is vicious, sadomasochistic and repellent' (*GD*, page 287), and 'Jesus would have turned over in his grave [!] if he had known Paul would be taking his plan to the pigs [the Gentiles]'. (*GD*, page 282.) De Groot asks, 'To what extent can one misunderstand (the charitable version) and misrepresent (the reality) the Bible's message?'

'Richard Dawkins tars all Christians with the "fundamentalist" brush,' says de Groot, 'and gives plenty of evidence of not knowing the difference between religious faith and quasi-religious madness. Religious extremism is routinely equated [by Dawkins] with Christianity itself, not seen as a

perversion of real, authentic faith.'

'Dawkins holds culpable for child abuse not just the Catholic priesthood or hierarchy, but the whole Catholic Church – indeed the whole Christian world' (*GD*, pages 351 *et seq*) writes Dr de Groot. Any appeal for tolerant debate – such as Tony Blair's appeal for the teaching of alternatives to evolution in the interests of diversity [*GD*, pages 372 *et seq*] – comes in for ridicule.

Dr de Groot concludes, 'RD obtained his knowledge of the Christian faith from stories he heard, and from the childhood experiences with the Anglican Church. Throughout the book he shows his complete ignorance of biblical interpretation. . . . RD makes many statements that show shallowness, bad logic, and ignorance – whether on purpose or unwittingly – of the theological spokespersons of majority churches.'

'RD could be taken to task for doing exactly what he condemns Christians for doing: believing certain dictums without proper evidence. His hatred of all things Christian has blinded him to the faults in his own methodology. . . . His reasoning is deficient, even abominable for one wishing to be taken seriously as a scientist.'

De Groot concludes his critique with 'Dawkins is a fundamentally dishonest and/or ignorant atheist.'

Angles on origins

Who made it?

Sir Isaac Newton made an exact replica of our solar system in miniature. At its centre was a large golden ball representing the sun. Revolving around it were smaller spheres attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths. They represented Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars and other planets. These were all geared together by cogs and belts to make them move around the 'sun' in perfect harmony.

One day as Newton was studying the model, a friend came by. Newton's friend had been exposed to much of the same scientific data as had Newton. Nevertheless, he had chosen to believe that natural law determined the movement of the planets and that God did not come into it at all. Newton knew of his friend's beliefs. Hence when his friend, on a visit, marvelled at the device he had created and watched as Newton made the heavenly bodies move in their orbits, he exclaimed, 'Why, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?'

Without looking up, Sir Isaac said, 'Nobody.'

'Nobody?'

'That's right,' replied Newton. 'I said nobody. All these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance, they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing!'

Newton could be a master of sarcasm.

Dawkins the fundamentalist

In *The Dawkins Delusion?* Alister McGrath and Joanna Cullicott McGrath point out that in *The God Delusion* 'there is surprisingly little scientific analysis' and 'a lot of pseudoscientific speculation'. They ask, 'Why are the natural sciences being so abused in an attempt to advance atheist fundamentalism?' They assert that 'the total dogmatic conviction of correctness . . . aligns it [*The God Delusion*] with a religious fundamentalism that refuses to allow its ideas to be examined and challenged.'

The McGraths argue that 'there can be no question of scientific "proof" of ultimate questions' and that there is a widely accepted belief among scientists that 'nature can be interpreted in a theistic or atheistic way – but [that] it demands neither of these'.

'Atheist fundamentalism' is, they conclude, a fair description of the Dawkins agenda. His conviction that science has wrecked faith in God is contradicted by the existence of 'a lot of scientists who do believe in God'. Between 1916 and 1997 the percentage of scientists who said they believed in God 'remained constant at 40%', say the McGraths.

Bram Janssens/123RF

Darwin's Black Box

'Can all of life be fitted into Darwin's theory of evolution? . . . If you search the scientific literature on evolution, and if you focus your search on the question of how molecular machines (the basis of life) developed, you find an eerie and complete silence. The complexity of life's foundation has paralysed science's attempt to account for it . . . I do not think [Darwin's mechanism] explains molecular life.' Michael Behe, professor of Biochemistry, Lehigh University, in *Darwin's Black Box*, p. 5.

'What I have learned in the past ten years of review of recent scientific knowledge of cellular morphology and physiology, the code of life (DNA), and the lack of supporting evidence for evolution in the light of recent scientific evidence is a shocking rebuttal to the theory of evolution.' Dr Isaac Manly of Harvard Medical School, quoted by Ankerberg and Weldon in *Darwin's Leap of Faith*, p. 77.

Intelligent Design

Gerald R. Bergman in *The Wonders of the Natural World: God's Design* is at pains to show how advanced God's creation is over human invention:

- Before we ever discovered and harnessed electricity, electric eels have generated their own electricity at will, up to 700 volts.
- Before we ever invented electric lights, fireflies were flashing their signals to one another, and certain fish in the ocean depths produced light to guide their travel.
- Long before we learned to navigate the seven seas, birds travelled from the Arctic to the Antarctic, landing at the same nesting sites year after year.
- We take pride in our jets, but octopuses used jet propulsion long before us. In its bulbous body is a muscular 'sac' with a small opening. When an octopus expands the sac, water is sucked in and when it vigorously contracts it, the water spurts out in a jet. By alternative expansion and contraction of this muscular sac, the octopus can jet-propel its way through the water.
- Before we ever designed and built suspension bridges, spiders demonstrated engineering feats of amazing brilliance.
- Birds' nests display a high level of engineering skill in masonry, weaving, tunnelling and structural strength necessary to build them.
- Bees, with their wings, 'air-condition' their hives.
- Beavers build large dams out of trees and mud.
- Wasps manufacture a type of paper.
- Man has developed radar and sonar systems, and this development is seen as a miracle of science. Yet bats can do the same thing. Scientists have blindfolded bats and set them loose in a room which has been strung with many thin threads. Scientists found that the bats can dart around the room without striking a single thread, because in flight they emit super-sonic sound pulses. These hit objects and bounce back to the bats' ears. Bergman concludes, 'Why is it we attribute to blind chance that which we have accomplished only by intelligent design?'

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Evolution judged by results

'Some ideas are so bad that it may be argued they should be rejected on the basis of their implications alone.' John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Darwin's Leap of Faith*, p. 18.

One reason for accepting divine Creation/Intelligent Design is its results: human dignity and happiness.

The results of the evolutionary hypothesis are deeply troubling, indeed sinister.

Scientists gather evidence for their theories by conducting experiments and finding out what 'works' and what doesn't. Can evolution be said to 'work'? Does it result in psychological and sociological health and happiness?

Darwin's survival-of-the-fittest, materialist evolutionary conjectures have been shown by David Breese in *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave* to have provided the foundation for both Hitler's holocaust and Stalin's genocide.

In a country like ours Darwin's influence has been more subtle. Most of us from primary school on are exposed to an uncritical exposition of orthodox Darwinism. Typically, we are not encouraged to question this orthodoxy unless and until we become postgraduate science students. So Darwinism is absolute truth for upwards of 95% of the population. Its absolutism is reinforced by those such as David Attenborough and Alan Titchmarsh who present the popular science programmes on TV.

Hence, for upwards of 95% of the population, Darwin got it right. We are nothing but accidental by-products of evolutionary dust on an insignificant world lost somewhere in the vastness of a hostile universe and doomed to perish in a short period of time. We are nothing more than a match that blazes for a moment, then is extinguished forever. We are

without any divine guidance, without any moral absolutes. We have no spirit, and so become obsessed with our bodies, obsessed with pleasure.

What does such a belief do to notions like optimism and hope? To moral values? To the sanctity of life? To human dignity? To the sacredness of home and family? To law and order?

Dostoevsky wrote, 'If God is dead, then everything is justifiable.' Ravi Zacharias in *Can Man Live Without God?* (Word) wrote, 'There is nothing in history to match the dire ends to which humanity can be led by following a political and social philosophy that consciously and absolutely excludes God.'

If, by contrast, either fiat Creation or Intelligent Design are true, then we are formed by a loving God in his own image, the crown of his Creation. If, like many believers in Creation and Intelligent Design, we are also Christians, we are also free to see ourselves as heirs of eternal life through God's Son, Jesus Christ. We are people of dignity and worth, surrounded by a fantastic universe that he made for our enjoyment. We are guided by sound moral principles leading to human health and happiness, and we are comforted by all the promises in the Book he has given.

If you want to see the results of survival-of-the-fittest, take a peek at life in a south London housing estate, or, for that matter, at life post 8pm on the high streets of even our more peaceful market towns.

Survival-of-the-fittest appears to have produced in our descendants the condition that it attributed to our predecessors. It's true; 'Some ideas are so bad that it may be argued that they should be rejected on the basis of their implications alone.'

Evidence to hand

Paul Gentuso was an atheist and an evolutionist until, as a mature student, he went to medical school and studied the human hand.

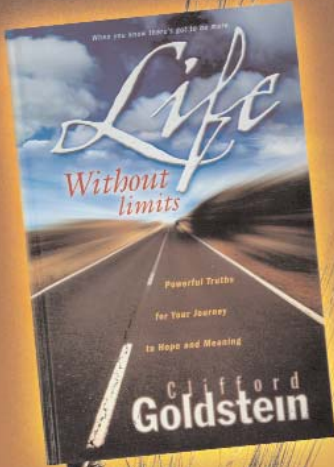
'In anatomy class,' he said, 'we dissected a human hand. In investigating the hand, I removed the skin, then isolated the individual tendons and muscles as I worked my way to the bones. The tendons of the hand are aligned in tendon sheaths, like self-lubricating pulleys, allowing the hand to work in a tireless, noiseless, almost effortless fashion. It was perfectly designed to carry out all the work it was called to do, everything from lifting a small object to lugging a tree trunk.'

Gentuso was deeply affected. He decided that, since there was design, there must be a Designer. 'In seeing how each tendon was perfectly aligned along the axis of each finger and how each finger moved in a coordinated fashion when tugged by individual tendons,' he said, 'it became obvious to me that there was a Creator who had intelligently designed and created the human hand. This was the first time in my adult life that I could say with assurance that a Creator existed. It was really a spiritual experience for me. I went from doubt to certainty based on seeing God's creation.'

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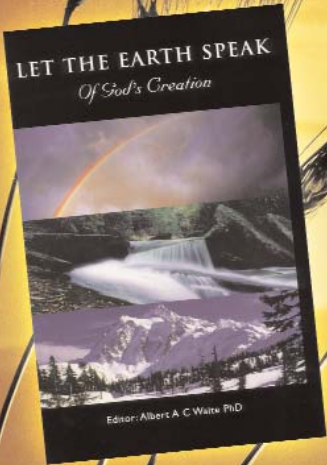


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