

NATURAL HISTORY IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

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“Any history that is not contemporary is suspect...” In these words Pascal¹ concisely summarized the dilemma facing modern Naturalism. For how can any account of history be held reliable that spans billions of years absent a historian? And absent the historian, how can such a fragile account of history purport to replace the Bible, which supplies the contemporary historian in the person of the eternally unchanging Creator of the Universe? In keeping with Paul in *Romans 1*, a moral rather than intellectual diagnosis of truth suppression may serve best. Pascal² identifies this aspect of human nature as:

Imagination. It is the dominant faculty in man, master of error and falsehood... Those who are clever in imagination are far more pleased with themselves than prudent men could reasonably be. They look down on people with a lofty air; they are bold and confident in argument, where others are timid and unsure, and their cheerful demeanor often wins the verdict of their listeners, for those whose wisdom is imaginary enjoy the favor of judges similarly qualified.

This ‘imagination’ has manifested itself in these last two centuries in the rejection of biblical truth in the name of “reason.” Naturalism rejects any possibility of truth through revelation, theology, or speculative philosophy, attempting the task instead through science. In this way natural history has been transferred into the domain of science, and the scientific method supposedly resolves Pascal’s dilemma of history. Or has it? Can the assertions of materialism, positivism, and uniformitarianism – foundation stones of modern Naturalism provide a self-consistent framework for discovering truth in history?

The answer is no. This monograph describes many reasons that lead to this conclusion. Ironically, the style of apologetic employed here involves demonstrating hidden similarities between Naturalism and Christianity, and using the resulting tensions within Naturalism to explode its assertions from the inside out. The possibility of this style of attack would not have surprised Pascal.

One of the ways the damned will be confounded is that they will see themselves condemned by their own reason, by which they claimed to condemn the Christian religion.³

The modern creation movement has challenged evolution and uniformitarianism on their ‘home field’ of science. In spite of much success, a ‘Copernican Revolution’ has not yet occurred in the natural sciences. Why not? Are the scientific arguments too weak? Or are they incomplete? I believe the latter (combined of course with the human predisposition to reject God’s truth). Ken Ham⁴ has correctly described evolution as the

¹ Pascal, B. *Pensees*, translated by A.J. Krailsheimer. 1966. Penguin Books, New York, p. 166.

² Ref 1. pp. 38-39.

³ Ref 1. p. 84.

⁴ Ham, K.A. 1987. *The lie: evolution*. Master Books, El Cajon, CA.

foundation of many ills in our secular culture. This non-empirical analysis, commendable in its implicit rejection of the modern aberration of positivism (restricting truth to science), emphasizes the need to address evolution with a full Christian worldview. It is an approach that should be explored further. In addition to examining evolution as a foundation of social pathology, it is beneficial to evaluate the foundations of evolution itself. When that is done, it becomes clear that evolution and uniformitarianism are integrated by their underlying worldview of Naturalism. A successful critique of evolution will never be comprehensive unless it addresses that foundation.

The following chapters, originally published in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* (*CRSQ*), addresses natural history at this level. Though not comprehensive or complete from the point of view of the professional philosopher, I believe that they uncover weaknesses in Naturalism not commonly discussed in debates about origins and earth history. The purpose of this monograph is to describe formal (rather than empirical) deficiencies in evolution and uniformitarianism by demonstrating that their foundation of Naturalism is philosophical quicksand due to contradictions between its presuppositions and conclusions.

Another benefit of this style of analysis is the corollary demonstration that a proper foundation for natural history requires biblical truth at an axiomatic level. The activity of challenging assumptions is essential in critical thought, but is certainly not easy. Its importance is highlighted in our modern culture which has rejected the Christian consensus of the post-Reformation west. Because this consensus has been lost, it is necessary to define a biblical foundation as a prologue to the development of empirical models within natural history.

Chapters 2 through 7 each contain one article previously published in the *CRSQ*. Chapters 1 and 8 provide introductory and summary observations, and seek to provide links between the remaining chapters. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of this monograph to assist in understanding some of the less familiar terms. Several changes from the original publication have been made for the reader's convenience. Finally, I have provided some comments at the end of some of the chapters that reflect ongoing development of thought in regard to these subjects.

I acknowledge and thank those who have helped in the development of this project. Many helpful suggestions were provided by reviewers during the research and writing phases. Carl R. Froede, Jr. and Chris Bennett were co-authors of two of these chapters (as noted), and I appreciate their permission to consolidate their contributions in this monograph. I appreciate the guidance of Dr. Emmett Williams, and his desire to assemble this monograph. All science is done in the context of community. I appreciate and thank the members of the modern creationist community for their direct and indirect encouragement and support of this project through their own work and faith over the past decades. *Sola Dei Gloria.*