

NATURAL HISTORY IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

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Chapter 8. The Road Ahead

The first paper in this series (Chapter 2) began by stating the two primary goals of the creation movement with regard to natural history. These included (1) the refutation of the vision of natural history that demands evolution and uniformitarianism, and (2) its replacement by a biblical natural history. The preceding chapters have introduced and elaborated themes directed toward one of these two goals.

Themes directed towards the first goal include the following:

- 1.** Creationists must recognize that the battle over origins and natural history is being fought between integrated worldviews, not objective scientific or forensic historical models. Naturalism is the opposite of Christianity in all respects – it extends into all areas of faith, thought, and life. It is integrated in metaphysical (materialism), epistemological (positivism), and historiographic (uniformitarianism) facets, just as Christianity is between its mirror images of theism, revelation, and providence.
- 2.** Warfare between these matched opponents, Christianity and Naturalism, will occur on a variety of fronts. Empirical demonstration is only one possible battleground, and probably not that most suited to the strengths of Christianity. Fighting on theological and philosophical fronts have been largely abandoned because Christian theologians and philosophers has largely abandoned the field to Naturalist scientists. However, the centuries-long legacy of strength in these areas demands their vigorous application in the present conflict. One suggested mode of attack is the formal testing of the validity of Naturalism by evaluating consistency between its presuppositions and its conclusions. A determination of formal invalidity renders any empirical argument in support of Naturalism moot.
- 3.** Similarities between Christianity and Naturalism highlight presuppositions of Naturalism that are incompatible with its conclusions. This incompatibility arises when Naturalism purloins Christian presuppositions to advance anti-Christian conclusions. These presuppositions are present within Naturalism because science arose within the context of a Christian worldview, and Naturalism relies on science to define knowledge. Early Naturalists did not comprehensively examine their own presuppositions to eradicate those derived from their cultural context of Christianity.
- 4.** Formal errors between presuppositions and conclusions are illustrated in a careful evaluation of the principle of uniformitarianism – the primary historiographic presupposition of Naturalism. These errors reveal that Naturalism’s grasp on history is tenuous, but that philosophical weaknesses are ignored because Naturalists emphasize the empirical. These philosophical weaknesses

- demonstrate that Naturalism cannot justify uniformitarianism, and cannot even justify uniformity in a manner consistent with that worldview.
5. Natural history as currently practiced is improperly classified as a division of natural science. However, a careful appraisal demonstrates that it must be reclassified as history, not science. This recasting of natural history has profound consequences that force a choice between abandoning natural history altogether or rebuilding it within the biblical Worldview. The decision to rebuild must be accompanied by several radical changes in its foundation and method to make it consistent with its new home.

Themes are also directed towards the second goal of rebuilding natural history.

1. Although it may seem redundant to state that Christianity does not face the same flaws as Naturalism because the presuppositions that destroy Naturalism belong to Christianity, this formal strength must be asserted loud and often. Empirical weaknesses in modern creationism that are largely a problem of resources pale in comparison to the formal strength of the biblical worldview in all of its majesty. This foundation helps provide a proper perspective for performing natural history relative to other missions of the biblical worldview.
2. Because worldviews encompass all aspects of knowledge, developing geological models within a biblical natural history requires an introduction of distinctively Christian epistemological constraints. Two primary constraints include the affirmation of the unity of truth within the biblical worldview, and the recognition of multidisciplinary investigations – the “mixed question” approach.
3. The abandonment of positivism and its replacement by a hierarchy of knowledge united by truth rather than method demands the redefinition of the relationships between empirical models and parent worldviews. A failure of a given empirical model does not necessarily imply the corresponding failure of the parent worldview.
4. In geology, a rebuilding of natural history should be performed using a key for integrating stratigraphic observation other than time, and the uniformitarian geologic column which has absorbed many of the presuppositions of Naturalism should be abandoned.
5. Because the primary parameter of geological events of the past is the energy and scale of geological processes rather than time, any replacement of the geological column must abandon not only the column, but its underlying parameter of time. One potential replacement is a correlation key of geologic energy vs. time defined outside of science by the biblical historical record.

The history of ideas demonstrates that concepts popular at any point in time may or may not weather the test of the years. Forms of pagan Naturalism were prevalent throughout the ancient world. Ironically, these idolatries were destroyed largely by competing idols in the form of the philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle. These philosophical idolatries were eventually displaced by Christianity.

Modern Naturalism has been revived in recent centuries. Although Naturalism is an ancient form of idolatry, there are significant differences between ancient and modern

manifestations. Many of those differences reflect the milieu of Christianity within which modern Naturalism developed. Adherents of modern Naturalism seem blind to these building blocks of Christian doctrine that form large parts of the foundation of their edifice. Yet these same blocks sit as ticking time bombs of truth ready to explode the ancient pretension of modern man that he can live without reference to God or His works. All that is required of Christians is to the light the fuses. Hopefully this monograph will strike a match and light a fuse that will demolish the bastion of natural history of this anti-Christian worldview. More importantly, may it encourage other Christians to complete the task and eradicate all of the altars of modern Naturalism from our culture.