

The Villainous Confessions of a Young Earth Creationist:
 A response to the criticisms, comments, and positions of some
 evangelical Darwinists, especially those of Francis Collins as
 given in his book *The Language of God* and Mark Noll as
 given in his book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*

By Jim Owen

I

*Authors that undermine a scientific approach to the past
 are thus the poster villains of Noll's book. For those of us
 who are Christian anthropologists, they are "Exhibit A"
 of the "Scandal of the Evangelical Mind."
 --Dean E. Arnold--*

I am a villainous man. The reader of this lengthy essay needs to be aware of this. It was not my intent to become such when I became a born-again, evangelical Christian in late 1970. However, somehow, in some way, along the way (sometime in the 1990s, I believe), I became a villain. And in the minds of an increasing number of evangelicals—not to mention assorted other Protestants, Catholics from the pope on down, unnumbered Orthodox, and grim, unsmiling Rationalists (are not all rationalists grim and unsmiling?)—there is an imaginary wanted poster with my face firmly implanted on it.

What have I done, what is my crime, what shocking heresy have I embraced to earn such notoriety? I am—but wait—if I confess you must promise, good reader, to hear me out, to read every page that follows, and not turn away in intellectual incredulity at my crime. It is only fair. Not that I am ashamed, you understand, but if I am going to confess to villainy, the least the reader can do is indulge me, yield me an hour or two in order that I might be thorough and you well informed, even if reluctantly.

And please, rest assured, although I suppose it doesn't matter considering the nature of my villainy, I have not denied any of the great doctrines of biblical/historical Christianity. The Trinity and the two natures of Christ are still secure in my presence. The vicarious nature of the atonement is a non-negotiable. I still adhere to those great Reformation principles of *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*. With Paul, Augustine, Luther, and a host of others, I, too, believe that man is justified by faith alone apart from works. I am even old fashion enough to still believe that the Bible, from the first word until the last, is the Word of God, inerrant and infallible in the original autographs, although I will admit these terms have fallen on hard times among even evangelicals, especially among many evangelical academics, who no doubt frown impatiently at my anachronism.

I am villainous because I am a Young Earth Creationist. Yes, a Young Earth Creationist! I believe Genesis 1-11 is true, actual, factual history, that this is what the

author intended to convey and the reader to understand. I believe in six, 24 hour days of creation, the special, unique, direct creation of Adam and Eve by God, the garden, the fall, the introduction of death thereby, man's rapid decline into unmitigated wickedness, the ark, the universal flood, the dispersion of the nations—whatever is recorded in Genesis 1-11—I believe happened as recorded. When I became a Christian in 1970 I exchanged my humanism for Christ and with it evolution for creationism, a move I have never regretted. I also rejected day-age theories, gap theories, old earth-young creation theories, and those theories that tried to combine some evolution and some creation. They simply weren't convincing because they seemed disloyal to the text, that authorial intent was being deliberately ignored. To be honest, they seemed like desperately evasive maneuvers to avoid an impending doom, and reminded me of a cynical old adage that the truth is always to be found half-way between God and the Devil. Soon, though, I was mingling with the wrong crowd. I started reading the literature of the early Young Earth Creationists, those who organized the Creation Research Society and later the Institute for Creation Research. I began corresponding with some of them, attending their lectures, and even becoming friends with some of them. Obviously, over the years, I took on the mannerisms and appearance of a YEC villain, one who was a dangerous role model for calloused Christian youth.

Today, of course, there are considerably more Young Earth Creationists than there were in the 1970s, thousands more, yes, even tens of thousands more, including hundreds, perhaps even thousands of which are scientists, many outstanding in their field. This is a truth that causes Darwinians to get mucked down in the slough of *ad hominum* denial from which there is no exit. And it means the villainy is now widely distributed, 5th column like, throughout the Christian world, especially the evangelical community to the chagrin of the many Darwinists dwelling within it. On the other hand, depressingly (and taking Prozac won't help), far, far more Christians have embraced Darwinian evolution in some form or other, including evangelicals, especially evangelical academics. So great is the capitulation, that when it comes to origins it is often difficult at times to differentiate between the writings of a Christian and the writings of a Rationalist. It is a frightening situation from a biblical perspective.

And because they are more numerous than I and more influential than I, I am a villain, wanted poster and all. The extent of my villainous behavior, my ignominy if you will, my appalling ignorance when it comes to really understanding how to exegete Scripture, my obscurantist intellectualism, all will be unfolded in the pages to follow. The bill of indictment is not pleasant to read. Young Earth Creationists are on the same level as Bret Harte's famous "outcasts of Poker Flat." Oh, the shame—well, not really, and in the pages to follow is included the unrepentant justification of my "villainy." Were others writing about me, as will be obvious as one reads on, it is to be doubted such a courtesy would be extended to me. But as this is my confession, I thought it only proper and right that I express the reasons I am not ashamed of being a Young Earth Creationist even if it means exile into the darkest shades of an academic wasteland and an evangelical outback of sorts in the dead of winter. So be it. One of my heroes has always been the arch-curmudgeon, Roger Williams.

In a postmodern world, especially in the academic world, there is no difference in the minds of many between what is considered history in the traditional sense and that which is considered historical fiction. To such minds understanding authorial intent is not possible or wanted. Not only does the historian subjectively interpret the so-called primary document but the document itself is only a personal interpretation of an event. What really happened, then, is impossible to know. This being the situation, we are free to write all “history,” not to know what really happened in the past, because we cannot, but to meet our present need for a story. All this is nonsense, of course, but as history shows, nonsense is evenly distributed among the population as a whole, including the academic population. The problem, the danger even, is that this mind-set seems to be creeping into the evangelical community in part under the influence of Darwinism and is, then, in part, the reason for this essay. And in the pages to follow, examples of misinterpreted and misapplied history, misinterpreted and misapplied because its purpose is not to understand the past as best we can but to “embarrass” Young Earth Creationists, will be noted and critiqued. This too, will label me villainous. Yet it is necessary to do this for if those who condemn Young Earth Creationism are allowed to misinterpret and misapply history in an attempt to discredit the movement, rather than try to overcome it, if possible, by reasoned and persuasive argument based on sound evidence and sound exegesis of Scripture, then we have indeed fallen on hard and bleak times, and true biblical Christianity is the loser. In fact, I believe nothing less than the very heart and soul of evangelical Christianity, that is, true biblical Christianity, is at stake.

I have one last request of the reader, however, before immersing all of us in the grimy and existential reality of the Darwinian conquest of evangelicals. If postmodern evolutionists, Christian or otherwise, can write historical fiction, then I want to take a few pages to write futuristic fiction, a tongue in cheek fiction that will nonetheless set the mood and tempo of the reality that will follow. (I claim no gift of prophecy, but if any thing I write below comes true, remember, you read it here first.) Be that as it may, if today I am considered villainous for believing that Genesis 1-11 is true truth, as Francis Schaeffer would have put it, not fiction, not even sacred fiction, what will it be like, I wonder, for those students, likewise Young Earth Creationists, I teach today? What will it be like to be a Young Earth Creationist a decade from now or 15 years from now when, perhaps, I am no longer vertical and “Here lies a villainous man” is carved on my tombstone? Indulge me, then, patient reader, while I give free rein to my imagination in the section below. First the fiction then the truth, with the hope in Christ that there is a difference postmodern theories notwithstanding.

II

The last unincarcerated Young Earth Creation scientist, F. Orr Shure, also known by his *nom-de-plum*, “Moses II,” was found guilty of violating the federal law against the dissemination of Young Earth Creation literature and sent to a re-education camp on June 23, 2024, where, it is speculated, he will spend a great many years being “cleansed” of any loyalty to Young Earth Creationism and a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11. (The whole incident is almost too traumatic to write about.) With Dr. Shure’s internment it would seem the Young Earth Creation movement is all but over. At least one can

ferverently hope so. Optimism has proved premature to date. There are a few stray believers to hunt down but it is only a matter of time. “Free at last,” if I may be allowed a bit of enthusiasm. To celebrate the occasion, *Christianity Today*, published a lengthy essay detailing the harm the Young Earth Creation movement had done since its inception in the early 1960s, especially in misleading young Christians into believing evolution could be refuted and that Genesis 1-11 was true history not mythical allegory. The Pope, Darwin 1st, issued a letter expressing relief that the fires of such a notorious heresy was being extinguished so to speak, and asserting that there was no conflict between evolution and Scripture rightly interpreted. He also took the occasion to blame the Protestant Reformation, with its literal hermeneutic and belief that anyone could rightly understand the Bible, for making possible the rise of such a heresy as Young Earth Creationism in the first place. The Evangelical Theological Society, which had declared in 2015 that anyone believing that Genesis 1-11 was real history was a heretic and banished from the ETS, agreed with the Pope and published an open letter in the fall edition of its journal bemoaning the intellectual embarrassment that the Young Earth Creation movement had brought upon the evangelical academic community. Two months after Dr. Shure’s internment, IVP published Mork Nall’s widely praised, *An Evangelical Mind Scandalized No More*, which *Christianity Today* promptly declared the book of the decade and is now in its 15th edition. Noted atheist, Richard Dawkins grim and unsmiling (yes, amazingly he is still with us), also chimed in. In an essay in the October issue of *Time* magazine (yes it, too, is still with us), Dawkins praised the government for hunting down and prosecuting Dr. Shure, a true perpetuator of falsehood as Dawkins called him. Dawkins went on to point out that all religions, but especially Christianity, brought nothing but suffering and ignorance to humankind and ought to be abolished. Dawkins is consistent if nothing else.

Dr. F. Orr “Moses II” Shure is a perfect, if tragic, example of why creationist literature was banned by the U. S. Congress in 2018. Dr Shure had been hired by The Master’s College in 2017 to bring its Science department, and the college as a whole, into compliance with the California Department of Education, the United States Department of Education, the regional accrediting agency, WASC, and the Consortium of Christian Colleges and Universities, which had declared in 2015 that any Christian college teaching a literal, historical interpretation of Genesis 1-11 and Young Earth Creationism could no longer be a member of the Consortium. Such was necessary, its director intoned, “to protect the intellectual integrity and respectability of the Christian academic community before ‘other’ academics.”

Dr. Shure’s credentials had been impeccable. He was a card carrying member of the American Scientific Affiliation and a noted theistic evolutionists who went so far as to deny that one could see, or needed to see, any direct evidence of God’s hand in any aspect of evolution—he had only contempt for those who “preached” a God of the Gaps—quite often cryptically commenting that the regularity of randomness was ample evidence that there was a Creator. He had 10 books and 34 peer reviewed articles published, and three terminal degrees from prestigious universities: one in paleontology, one in molecular genetics, and one in Old Testament Languages and Literature. Few were more qualified than he to ferret out the last vestiges of Young Earth Creationism

from The Master's College and bring it in line with all other evangelical colleges and universities. The Master's College was the last evangelical college to banish even mentioning, let alone teaching, Young Earth Creationism. Other evangelical schools began "cleaning house" as it were as early as 2012 in order, they claimed, to take their rightful place at the table of the broader and more open academic community. Fundamentalism with its entrenched commitment to Young Earth Creation was a barrier to such participation. By 2011 house cleaning had become a juggernaut. First these evangelical schools "fired or retired" any Young Earth Creation professors. Next, they removed any professors who even presented Young Earth Creationism as an alternative possibility. Only professors who held to a theistic evolutionary position were retained or hired. Even professors who held to an "intrusive" form of Intelligent Design but were still evolutionists, were discharged or denied tenure, perhaps an unfair consequence of making sure any vestige of creationism as understood was eliminated.

Students proved a little more difficult. At first, professors forbid students bringing up the topic in any class. If they persisted, he or she was dismissed from that class. As this had only limited impact, the colleges next forbid students from bringing any creation material on campus or discussing the subject anywhere on college property. To make sure students' complied, listening devices were placed in the walls of dorm rooms, bathroom stalls, and booths in student centers. Any student found with Young Earth Creation material of any kind or overheard discussing Young Earth Creationism was immediately expelled. Libraries were culled of all Young Earth Creation materials of any sort and on-line Young Earth Creation internet sites were blocked. It was easier, some students noted sarcastically, for student hackers to hack through to a porn website than a Young Earth Creation one. (Those making such comments, if identified, were expelled.) Finally, and this became almost universal by 2016, incoming students had to, under oath, deny they believed in any kind of direct, noticeable, or obvious Intelligent Design in nature, especially though Young Earth Creation and a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11. Students who could not make such an oath but still wanted to attend the evangelical college of their choosing were offered an option. They could take a full semester of re-education classes and if they "passed" these they could be admitted to the college on probation. Any hint of backsliding though was cause for immediate expulsion. Thus evangelical colleges and universities had by and large cleansed themselves of this plague, this fundamentalist "separatist" irrationality and anti-intellectualism by the time enormous pressure both secular and Christian was brought to bear on The Master's College in 2017.

And it should be noted that the secular world was not lethargically standing by while evangelicals were cleaning house. The American Psychological Association, (true, it was following the lead of the Christian Councilors of America), declared Young Earth Creationism a mental disorder in 2014—"Divine Creation Delusion Syndrome"—and listed it as such in its diagnostic dictionary. *The Los Angeles Times* published an editorial in its March 11, 2014 edition declaring Young Earth Creationism a greater menace to American society than communism had been at the height of the Cold War in the last century. Gradually politicians got involved also, of course. Taking their cue from the European Union parliament, which declared creationism a danger to freedom and human

rights in 2011, various academic societies, political action groups, some state legislators, and even a handful of “Congresspersons” began condemning Young Earth Creationism as “hate speech” and demanding governmental action against it at all levels. The first to do so was the Southern California Air Quality Control Board imposing the strictest air quality standards it could legally enforce, especially regarding methane gas, upon on any organization that supported Young Earth Creationism. Next, various state legislators, beginning with California—pridefully always a leader in progressive legislation and embarrassed that the Air Quality Control Board had been first—began passing resolutions echoing almost word for word the EU document and declaring Young Earth Creationism a form of vile hate speech. In fact, every state legislature passed some such resolution by 2015 except three; Georgia, Kansas, and Idaho. But one could not expect any thing better from these three “fundamentalist” states.

It must be admitted in all fairness, though some would prefer I not bring this up, that these resolutions did contribute to the start of a “witch hunt” of sorts, and some excesses did occur and some did have their constitutional rights “overlooked.” Still, people were fearful and angry at these “fundamentalists,” these cultist—no—these “sickos” (as some radio talk show hosts called them) with their DCD syndrome threatening their children’s mental well-being and intellectual development. Patience and constitutional niceties were, perhaps with some but limited regret, ignored. Under increasing public pressure, a few state legislatures, from 2015 on, began passing various types of laws to curb if not abolish the spread of Young Earth Creationism. Home schooling was abolished and home-schooled students who had used any text that promoted direct intelligent design, let alone Young Earth Creation, were forbidden entrance into public colleges and universities. Young Earth Creation and Intelligent Design organizations were declared illegal and closed down, despite the protest of Intelligent Design organizations such as the Institute of Recently Discovered Design which declared that it abhorred Young Earth Creationism and believed in evolution. If the slightest “smell” of creationism was attached to a person or organization, it was all over for them and protests were in vain.

The hue and cry against Young Earth Creationism became so great that in 2017 Congress became involved. At first it applied “soft” measures such as revoking the tax exempt status of outright creationist organizations and churches, and outlawing home schooling that used such material. But this type of legislation did little to stamp-out the movement. So in 2018, Congress passed what a few hyper-sensitive civil-rights types, such as the ACLU, labeled a “draconian” law labeling Young Earth Creationism hate speech and dangerous to the intellectual well-being and psychological self-esteem of American citizens, especially the children. This meant all Young Earth Creation material of any sort—books, monographs, CDs, internet sites, public talks—were banned and anyone using such material or advocating such material, or even supporting the right of people to possess and read such material, was at first to be cited and if they persisted, arrested, tried, and if found guilty interned in a re-education camp until cured of their delusion. It was amazing how quickly support for a Young Earth Creation and a literal Genesis evaporated, particularly after a few dozen leading Young Earth Creation “scientists,” such as the notorious Dr. Joe Francis and Dr. Ross Anderson, and Old Testament scholars, such as the “wooden” literalist Dr. Stephen Boyd, were found guilty

and sent off to re-education camps. It must be admitted that most of those interred have refused to be re-educated and remain in the camps to this day. This is a most troublesome and unexpected development. (The fault for this must rest upon the Young Earth Creationists as they are obstinate and incorrigible.)

By 2020 Young Earth Creationism was becoming a forgotten bit of scandalous historical theology and a disgraced pseudo-science. Evolution was accepted and acknowledged and taught every place by everyone, every time. How sweet the victory. Even the Supreme Court in 2018, in a 7-2 decision, ruled that Congress had acted in accord with the Constitution, basing its ruling on the principle that just as a person did not have the freedom of speech to falsely cry “fire” in a dark and crowded theater, so no one had the right to voice hate speech in the name of God that could injure a person’s self-esteem or obstruct one from being able to think intelligently about origins, especially the children. Perhaps most ironic of all was that the Justice Department seized the popular Creation Museum near Cincinnati, Ohio. At first the Department wanted to close it down. Instead, however, it turned it over to the Smithsonian Museum to operate in such a way as to show how ridiculous and unscientific, and even unbiblical a Young Earth Creation, based on a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11, truly was. Now it is reported that many people, including many evangelical Christians, emerge from the “Creation” museum with tears of anger on their cheeks, frustrated that people with a mental disorder could have ever been allowed to teach and seduce so many trusting, naïve, unsuspecting Christians, especially our young children. If for no other reason these people say, “for the children’s sake” they are glad Young Earth Creation is outlawed.

Then Dr. F. Orr Shure turned traitor, became an enemy of sound academic learning, and a seducer of callow youth. It is hard to even mention his name without anger clouding one’s thoughts. We had made so much progress before Dr. Shure turned Young Earth Creationist and single-handedly seemed to almost undo it all. We didn’t know it at the time, of course, no one did, not even his wife and children. Oh, the shame of it all! When he was finally exposed as a “closet Creationist,” his family was exposed to ridicule and public shame, and FBI interrogation (possibly something Dr. Shure never considered in his obsession). The pressure was too much for Mrs. Shure (an outstanding biologist in her own right). She divorced him in early 2024 with her church’s support. His two sons and oldest daughter also denounced him. His youngest daughter, however, Shirley Victoria, age 25, Phd in cataclysmic geology, supported and defended her father and has disappeared without a trace. It is believed she has joined an underground Young Earth Creation cell for Young Earth Creationist literature has been surfacing signed, “Moses’ Daughter.” She has been placed on the FBI’s ten most wanted list. If any one believes exposure to Young Earth Creation material is harmless, let them consider the F. Orr Shure home.

How did it happen, how did a brilliant and well-respected theistic evolutionist, even, one might say, a theistic rationalist of Dr. Shure’s stature fall to such a low estate, falling further, if you will, than the mythical biblical Adam he now proclaimed as real and historical? According to pre-trial dispositions and court documents it started in the summer of 2021 when Dr. Shure, cleaning out a storage closet in the Chemistry

laboratory, came across a large, unmarked, sealed box. “This box belongs to Taylor Jones” was scribbled on the cover. Curious, he opened it and found it full of scientific and theological books, papers, and journals written by advocates of Young Earth Creationism. His first impulse was to junk the whole thing but yielding to a foolish temptation he began reading the top paper, a 73 page exegetical and theological defense of Genesis 1-11 as necessarily historical. Much to his surprise, Dr. Shure found himself agreeing with the author, an obscure creationist/pastor named John MacArthur. (As he admitted under cross-examination, he had never completely been convinced with attempts to interpret Genesis 1-11 allegorically or metaphorically, but convinced of evolution’s truthfulness, he had supported such an interpretation “to save the Bible from itself in light of modern science.”) Dr. Shure continued reading the Young Earth science papers. He was impressed with the consistently high quality of the material he was reading—works on geology, genetics, and biology. He admitted he had never bothered to read Creationists in the past, as he didn’t believe they could be true scientists. He was particularly impressed with Dr. Francis’s paper on earthworms, “Studying Creation One Earthy Segment at a Time.” Sometime during the reading process, Dr. Shure “converted” to fundamentalism and Young Earth Creationism. To quote Dr. Shure, “Jesus set me straight.” How quaint and anachronistic. A tragedy would have been avoided, however, if he had paid more attention to the law than to Jesus.

Realizing the political, economic, and psychological impact his conversion would have on his family and the college, and filled with a “deep longing” [his words] to make amends, Dr. Shure decided to keep his conversion a secret and outwardly keep things the same. Inwardly he became a secret Young Earth Creation conspirator. Aware that about a half dozen TMC students were secretly still Young Earth Creationists, he won their trust and established an underground Young Earth Creation cell at TMC that was soon contacting other underground Young Earth Creation cells in churches and colleges across the country. Dr. Shure, who adopted the *nom-de-plum*, “Moses II” after the so-called author of the book of Genesis, and his underground network began reprinting and distributing the Young Earth Creationist material Dr. Shure had discovered in the Chemistry Lab closet. But he attached to each one an extensive introduction signed by “Moses II.” It is estimated that by the time of his arrest, Dr. Shure’s creation material had surfaced on 1497 college and university campuses, and 13,718 churches. It was as if a deadly plague suddenly and unexpectedly surfaced in various parts of America with horrible consequences. Dr. Shure’s introductions were, in the words of one prosecution witness, “brilliantly written—misleading and wrong—but brilliantly written.” In fact, at his first trial, Dr. Shure, acting as his own attorney, used his cross-examination of the prosecution’s “expert” witnesses to show just how uncertain and tentative were the assertions of evolution. Dr. Shure was also able to demonstrate, given the proposition “Since Genesis 1-11 is true history,” that alternative interpretations of the data were, possible, alternatives which appeared to the untrained to be both coherent and persuasive. At least most of the jurors thought so, for despite the judge’s admonition to ignore Dr. Shure’s eloquence and confidence, the jury voted 8 to 4 to acquit him and a mistrial was declared! The jurors themselves were then subject to an immediate and intense interrogation (rumors of water-boarding are untrue) to determine if any of them were secret Young Earth Creationists. The conclusion was inconclusive. The prosecutor,

whom one suspects envisioned himself as a present day Clarence Darrow who was going to embarrass Dr. Shure as if he were a reincarnation of Williams Jennings Bryan had the whole thing blow up in his face. You can rest assured that Dr. Shure was not allowed to represent himself in the second trial nor the prosecutor of the first trial to prosecute the second. (I understand, in fact, that that prosecutor has been reassigned to Topeka, Kansas to prosecute three breakaway Assembly of God congregations that refuse to stop using YEC writings in their Sunday School material. Perhaps he will be more successful there.)

Nevertheless the damage had been done. When arrested by the special YEC Suppression Unit of the Kern County Sheriff's Department, Dr. Shure and eleven others were studying an old editorial (2006) from the banned *Bible and Spade* titled, "The Genesis Flood: An Interpretive Key to the Past." Everyone was arrested and all of Dr. Shure's files, computers, and whatever else that might provide information on the Young Earth Creation underground network, were seized. But it all was for naught. Evidently nothing is in writing—no electronic files, no paper trail, all is committed to memory for that very reason. So even though Dr. Shure and those with him were interrogated (they were forced to listen by the hour to tapes of Richard Dawkins reading the 9th revised edition of his book, *The God Delusion*) nothing was learned about the Young Earth Creation underground or how material is printed or distributed, or when or where various cells might meet or even how they identify each other, although the term "Genesis rocks" has surfaced as a possible identifying password. It is all very frustrating to the authorities. And no one is talking. Seven of those arrested denied they were Young Earth Creationist but had come only out of curiosity—they had never met a real life Young Earth Creation person before. Although their stories are to be doubted, they had no prior record of associating with or reading Young Earth Creationist material so they had to be released with a warning.

The shock of Dr. Shure's arrest and exposure as a closet Young Earth Creationist was felt nation-wide and denunciations of his betrayal were not slow in coming from both secular and evangelical sources. The president of the National Association of Evangelicals issued this statement last week: "It's not enough that we have global warming and coral reefs dying, now we have this again to contend with? We thought we had put that dark age, that intellectual scandal behind us once and for all. We must make every effort to suppress this new wave of neo-creationism least people get the impression that a literal Genesis 1-11 has something to do with Christianity." The Master's College, though protesting it knew nothing of Dr. Shure's nefarious and secret Young Earth Creationist activities, was nevertheless immediately closed down by the California Department of Education. So far the lower courts have refused the college's petition to force the state to allow the college to reopen. "It would be a tragedy for Cal-li-forn-nia, especially the children of Cal-li-forn-nia," ex-governor and now State Attorney General Schwarzenegger said, "if this seditious ins-ti-tu-tion were allowed to reopen."

III

Now obviously, none of the above tongue-in-cheek Young Earth Creation futuristic narrative is true. Well, that is not entirely true either. Federal courts have forbidden Young Earth Creationism from being taught in public schools. And, interestingly, a similar fate is now being imposed upon advocates of Intelligent Design most of whom probably are not Young Earth Creationists. It is rare to find a Young Earth Creationist teaching in the science department of a state university or college and it would be impossible for any of that opinion to be hired today. Again, even those only advocating Intelligent Design but not denying evolution are being discriminated against.¹ And sadly, evangelical colleges are beginning to avoid Young Earth Creationists when adding to their science faculty. One could compile “sorry” story after “sorry” story but the purpose of this essay is not to stack anecdote upon anecdote in order to build a wailing wall for anti-Darwinians. Victimization serves no useful end. Nevertheless, the dislike, even hostility, toward Young Earth Creationists is more than evident not only among grim, unsmiling rationalistic Darwinians but also among those evangelicals who embrace cosmic and Darwinian “deep time” evolution as God’s means of “creating” the universe as a whole, the earth, and all living forms that inhabit it, including man. One of the most recent example of this is found in Francis Collins’ highly regarded book, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, (2006).

Collins is a world famous geneticists and justly so for overseeing the Human Genome Project to its recent completion. He is also concurrently an evangelical Christian and a convinced Darwinian even to the point of believing that “once evolution got under way, no special supernatural intervention was required.”² It is not surprising then, that he is openly hostile to Young Earth Creationists, writing:

But the claims of Young Earth Creationism simply cannot be accommodated by tinkering around the edges of scientific knowledge. If these claims were actually true it would lead to a complete and irreversible collapse of the sciences of physics, chemistry, cosmology, geology, and biology. . . . the YEC perspective is the equivalent of insisting that two plus two is really not equal to four.³

Elsewhere in *The Language of God*, Collins accuses Young Earth Creationists of arguing that “the overwhelming body of scientific evidence” [for evolution], such as “radioactive decay clocks, all the fossils, and all of the genome sequences, is simply a ploy on God’s part “to mislead us, and therefore test our faith.”⁴ Collins considers this portrayal of God “as a cosmic trickster . . . to be the ultimate admission of defeat for the Creationist perspective.”⁵ Who, he asks, and rightly so , would want to worship such a deceiving God? “Thus,” Collins charges, “by any reasonable standard, Young Earth Creationism has reached a point of intellectual bankruptcy, both in science, and in its theology. It persistence is thus one of the great puzzles and great tragedies of our time.”⁶

The only problem I have with Collins criticism (other than his propensity for hyperbole--an incurably bad habit among evolutionists), is that if there are any Young Earth Creation scientists who hold to the view that God is a “cosmic trickster” along the

lines Collins outlines, they work in obscurity. I have consulted with two Young Earth Creation scientists who are very familiar with those in the movement and they know of no Young Earth Creation scientist promoting such a position.

Is Collins distorting the Young Earth Creation position? Yes, but not deliberately, I think. It is apparent Collins is so convinced that “deep time,” Darwinian evolution is undeniably true, and that God undeniably “used” this *random* (and yes, callously cruel) process to bring about all life as we know it, even mankind, that any who would question this position are simply guilty of denying the truth—deliberately so. And anyone proposing God used another method (i.e., direct, knowable, divine intervention of some type, whether Young Earth Creation or even sporadic divine intervention [ID]), would be making God appear to be a trickster. In other words, this is how Collins axiomatically interprets the Young Earth Creationists’ position even if they never actually teach it. This comes through in a number of places in his book (and I will return to this issue), especially when he negatively evaluates the possibility of Intelligent Design.⁷ Let the following quote suffice for the moment:

I do not believe that the God who created all the universe, and who communes with his people through prayer and spiritual insight, would expect us to deny the obvious truths of the natural world that science has *revealed* to us, in order to prove our love for him.⁸ (My italics.)

Collins’ intense rejection, even condemnation, of Young Earth Creationism, echo those of another theistic evolutionists who wrote over a decade earlier. In fact, I would not be surprised if Collins has not read and approved of Mark Noll’s highly praised (among Christian academics), *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1994). In his book, Noll expresses the belief that Young Earth Creationism results from an excessive “supernaturalism” (Manichaeism is his term) which at heart demonizes “the ordinary study of nature.”⁹ He also believes it has damaged evangelical thinking in three ways. First, it has done this “by making it much more difficult to think clearly about human origins, the age of the earth, and the mechanisms of geological or biological change.”¹⁰ Second, the noise created by Creationists in their confrontation with secular Darwinians “drowns out more patient, more careful voices,” the more “careful Christian thinkers” such as those in the American Scientific Affiliation (of which Collins is a member), or Phillip E. Johnson who helped father the Intelligent Design Movement (for which Collins has only disdain).¹¹ Third, and this is the most damaging of all in Noll’s eyes, is that “an odd combination of creationist profession and creation practice actually foster a stunted ability to perceive the world of nature.” In other words, Young Earth Creationists have abandoned true empiricism “with respect to nature.”¹² This is a strong, even harsh, charge, one that also must be revisited.

IV

Despite Noll’s intellectual frustration and Collins’ puzzlement and Shakespearian sense of tragedy, and despite warnings that belief in Young Earth Creationism is aiding and abetting the enemy,¹³ undermining the gospel with sloppy scholarship,¹⁴ turning

young people away from faith in Christ,¹⁵ and seriously hampering evangelical “thinking about God in relationship to the physical world,”¹⁶ Young Earth Creationism is very popular among what might be called rank and file evangelicals, in fact, probably more so today than when Noll wrote in 1994. Why is this so despite the almost constant barrage of negative writing that has issued forth from Rationalist, evangelical, and Catholic “deep-time” Darwinians over the last decade or so?

The evangelical theistic Darwinians under consideration apparently think it all comes down to two reasons, both based upon faulty thinking and/or faulty exegesis of Scripture. Young Earth Creationists accept Genesis 1-11 as real—though limited in scope—history of the world from its creation in seven literal days to Abraham’s calling out of Ur (Gen. 12:1). They do so because they are convinced 1) Scripture is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice, and 2) the best or only way to interpret Scripture is literally, that is, using the historical-grammatical hermeneutic which traces its roots back to the Antiochene school of exegesis of the 4th century. Christopher Hall, in his book, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (1998) makes the following comment in this regard:

Conservative biblical interpreters trained in grammatical-historical exegesis will likely take a close look at historical and cultural context, political and theological background, and lexical and grammatical considerations. They will work hard to hear what the text might have said to its original audience. But they will also, particularly because of their high view of the inspiration and authority of *all* of Scripture, fully expect the Old Testament text still to speak today.¹⁷ (My italics.)

This would certainly apply to Young Earth Creationists. Indeed, their high view of inspiration would include a belief that since Scripture is inerrant and infallible any time/space, historical assertions and statement of facts, such as Exodus 20:11, were and are true in their entirety.¹⁸

Both Noll and Collins challenge the validity of Young Earth Creationists on this point of interpretation. Collins, while commending the believer for wanting to defend Scripture and God from liberal interpretations,¹⁹ and noting “there are clearly parts of the Bible that are written as eye-witness accounts of historical events,” holds that other sections “such as the first few chapters of Genesis” must be understood allegorically. In fact, Collins claims that, “to Saint Augustine, and to most other interpreters throughout history, until Darwin put believers on the defensive, the first chapters of Genesis had much more the feel of a morality play than an eye-witness report on the evening news.”²⁰ Thus, Collins claims, the “narrow” and unilateral interpretation given by Young Earth Creationists to Genesis 1-11 is not only unnecessary, it also “is largely a creation of the last hundred years, arising in large consequence as a reaction to Darwinian evolution.”²¹

Noll, on the other hand, is less charitable than Collins. Young Earth Creationists are guilty of imposing a “preunderstanding” of how Scripture should be read that is both misguided and harmful intellectually. Although their approach persuades many evangelicals they are honoring the Scriptures they really are not. They are, as far as Noll

is concerned, “being unfaithful to the Bible....”²² “Evangelicals make much of their validity [ability?] to read the Bible,” Noll writes,

in a simple, “literal” or “natural” fashion—that is in a Baconian way. In actual fact, evangelical hermeneutics, as illustrated in creationism, is dictated by very specific assumptions that dominated Western intellectual life from roughly 1650 to 1850 (and in North America for a few decades more). Before and after that time, many Christians and other thinkers have recognized that no observations are “simple” and no texts yield to uncritical “literal” reading.²³

With this insight in place, Noll concludes that, though “millions of evangelicals *think* [my italics] they are defending the Bible by defending creation science” they are not. What they are doing is “giving ultimate authority to the merely temporal, situated, and contextualized interpretations of the Bible that arose from the mania for science of the early nineteenth century.”²⁴

In other words, evangelicals of the late nineteenth and a fair portion of the twentieth century, as well as present day Young Earth Creationists were and are more the children of Enlightenment science rather than the children of the Reformation, or any previous period of church history for that matter. This is supposedly reflected in their rejection of tradition and previous exegetes, their belief in the objectivity of observation and facts, their passion for evidentialism, their acceptance of the Bible as not only the ultimate authority but the only authority, and their handling of “the Bible as a scientific text to be inductively studied through renewed reason alone.”²⁵ However, this last “charge” reminds one of what Luther said before the assembled prelates and politicians at the Diet of Worms: “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by *evident reason* (for I trust neither in popes nor in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures that I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the word of God,” (italics mine)²⁶ It would not be difficult for Young Earth Creationists to identify closely with Luther’s position. Of course, Luther was a six-day creationist, himself. And like Luther, Young Earth Creationists face a powerful and influential establishment. Interestingly, there are evangelicals that look somewhat askance at Luther and the Reformation and point us back to the early church Fathers. Well and good, I say, for the vast majority of the early Church Fathers were also Young Earth Creationists.

V

Still, two very serious charges are being leveled against evangelicals of roughly the past one hundred and fifty years as well as any today who believe in Young Earth Creation and a literal, historical Genesis 1-11. One charge implies that our “literal” or plain interpretation of Genesis 1-11 as real history is an isolated one with only meager support, at best, from past periods of church history. The second charge implies that our so-called Enlightenment derived hermeneutic has caused us to consistently misread Scripture in a literal fashion which puts us at odds with past and present exegetes who

realized that such an approach to Scripture was and is naïve and simplistic thus misleading.

The latter accusation must be answered first. Was there something aberrant about conservative evangelical exegesis in the second half of the 19th century and most of the 20th century? Notice Noll's dates—1650 to sometime into the 1900s in North America. Using the earlier date, this would seem to deny that the hermeneutic of American evangelicals had little in common with the Reformation hermeneutic, and by implication, little in common with Reformation theological conclusions. If the Reformation cry was “Sola Scriptura” (literally interpreted), “Sola Gratia”, and “Sola Fide” was it the same for the fundamentalists/evangelicals of the period in question? Perhaps the best way to settle the issue is to look closely at two doctrinal statements put forth by groups known as fundamentalists. The first doctrinal statement is one issued in 1878 by the Niagara Bible Conference, the group that gave birth to the Premillennial Dispensational movement in the United States and Canada. It is one of the earliest doctrinal statements put out by a conservative evangelical group in response to the never-ending onslaught on the Bible by liberals in the post Civil War period. The document is fairly lengthy so I only briefly summarize each of its 14 points below. However, if one wishes to read the complete document, he or she may do so by going to Appendix A in Ernest R. Sandeen's, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930*. Though short compared to the elaborate catechisms of the Reformation Era, the theology therein is in harmony with the Reformation's—though they, themselves, would have said in harmony with New Testament teachings. The emphasis on being “born-again” stems from the first Great Awakening and the preaching of George Whitefield and his co-laborers such as Gilbert Tennent.

Section one affirms that all Scripture down “to the smallest word, and inflection of a word,” if found in the original autographs, was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Section two affirms the historical orthodox understanding of the Trinity. The third section affirms man's creation in the image and likeness of God, his subsequent fall into sin, and the consequences that befell him as a result, including “becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to the power of the devil.” Section four affirms the “total corruption of human nature...Christ Jesus alone excepted.” And not only is fallen man at “enmity with God” but is he incapable of obedience and “subjection to His law.” Section five affirms that, because of man's “universal depravity and death in sin, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless born again” from above.. All and every good work or religious practice avails for nothing. Section six affirms the substitutionary atonement of Christ and notes that no good work of any kind “can add in the very least to the value” of Christ's finished work “wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper divinity with perfect and sinless humanity.”

Section seven affirms justification by faith alone and declares from that moment on one becomes a dearly loved child of the Father. The eighth section affirms assurance of salvation based on the promise of God's word while the ninth section affirms “that all the Scriptures from first to last center about our Lord Jesus Christ, in His person and work, in His first and second coming....” The tenth section affirms the universal body of Christ

calling on all who belong to it to rise “above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry....” Section eleven affirms the indwelling presence and continuous assistance of the Holy Spirit in one who has Christ as his or her Savior. Section twelve stresses our call to a holy walk and the necessity to mortify the flesh in the power of the Spirit. The thirteenth section affirms the eternal destiny of the believer “when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory,” and the unbeliever, both soul and body, “shall be cast into the lake of fire....” Finally, section fourteen briefly affirms the premillennial dispensational understanding of the second coming and the millennium, though it does not mention the rapture. All in all, it would be hard to find a more orthodox, Protestant set of articles of faith from this period. If the Enlightenment shaped their hermeneutic the resulting theological conclusions are remarkably Reformation-like, and in sharp contrast to the Pelagian theology that most evangelicals embraced prior to the Civil War.

Next let us move forward 41 years to the week of May 25 through June 1, 1919. A conference was assembled in Philadelphia to establish the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals. Six thousand believers packed the auditorium each day. The Resolutions Committee issued the following brief 9-point doctrinal statement:

1. We believe in the Scriptures...as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. We believe man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all that believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
7. We believe in “that blessed hope,” the personal, premillennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost.

Once more one may ask, if the Enlightenment led the fundamentalists astray, in what way did it do so? This statement of faith, though brief, could not be more Protestant and finds its roots in the Reformation and even beyond, back to the Church Fathers. (The fundamentalists were not quite as anti-historical as their critics claim.) The 25 addresses delivered at the conference carried such titles as, “The Bible’s Testimony to Its Own

Inspiration,” “God—His personality, Character, and Attributes,” “The Son of God—His Humanity,” “The Son of God—His Deity,” “God—His Relations to Man in Creation and Regeneration,” “Atonement by the Blood,” “The Grace of God,” etc., etc., and not a one was lacking in sound biblical exposition.²⁷

The charge that post-Civil War American evangelicals used a different hermeneutic than their Reformation forebears under the influence of “the mania for science of the early nineteenth century” is simply not tenable. One does not doubt they were children of their times and spoke from that context. But it does not follow that in interpreting Scripture “literally” or “plainly,” including Genesis 1-11, they were radically breaking with previous periods of Church history.

If they highly honored Scripture they were but imitating those who came before them. William Tyndale (1494-1536) labored until martyred to give an English version of the Scriptures (translated from the original Hebrew and Greek) to the average Englishman and Englishwoman. He believed if they could just read the Bible (literally) they would soon know more sound Christian doctrine than all the Prelates that ruled over them but seldom if ever studied Scripture themselves. Zwingli once commented (and I broadly paraphrase), “they are always crying, ‘the Fathers, the Fathers.’ Better they had said, ‘the Scriptures, the Scriptures.’” Zwingli wasn’t rejecting the early Church Fathers or the first four ecumenical councils. Rather “His point,” as Timothy George makes clear in his *Theology of the Reformation* [1988] (and here Zwingli was one with Luther),

was that all these councils and documents had to be subjected to the testing of Scripture. If they display Christ, they were genuine, “of the Spirit of God.” In this case, however, there was no need to cry “Fathers,” “Councils,” “custom,” and “tradition”; these merely reflected the truth contained in the God-inspired Scriptures and made known by the Holy Spirit.²⁸

Zwingli gave the Scriptures supremacy over any and all human tradition and authority (how fundamentalist of him). “I understand Scripture,” he wrote, “only in the way that it interprets itself by the Spirit of God. It does not require any human opinion.”²⁹ And Calvin, who, were he to write this today might be accused of bibliolatry, wrote, “We owe to the Scripture the same reverence as we owe to God, since it has its source in Him and has nothing of human origin mixed with it.”³⁰ The fundamentalists may have used a Baconian vocabulary but their hermeneutic was still historical-grammatical with the same goal as that of Zwingli or Calvin—that of uncovering authorial intent. Only when they yielded to 19th century Darwinism did they fail to follow through in this regard.

VI

The above excursion was necessary before we could respond to the accusation that Young Earth Creationists are the odd-man out when it comes to their literal reading of Genesis 1-11. Collins considers their “narrow” interpretation one that came into existence within the “last hundred years...as a reaction to Darwinian evolution.”³¹ Noll puts-down their position as only the result of “giving ultimate authority to the merely

temporal, situated, and contextualized interpretation of the Bible that arose from the mania for science of the early nineteenth century.”³² Is this true? Is Noll right when he asserts that prior to 1650 and after 1850 (perhaps 1920 in America), “many Christian and other thinkers have recognized that no observations are ‘simple’ and no texts yield to uncritical ‘literal’ reading?”³³ He gives no names of any one prior to 1650 so it is impossible to know whom he might have in mind. Perhaps he has in mind some of the great allegorists of the past such as Philo or Origin or even Augustine, or perhaps the Dominican scholastics that Ulrich Von Hutton (an early supporter of Luther) mocked in his, *The Letters of Obscure Men*. Collins claims that Augustine as well as “most other interpreters throughout history” saw “the first chapters of Genesis” as some sort of morality play rather than real, space/time history.³⁴

One can only wonder why either man would make such an indefensible statement? Collins’ claim can easily be turned on its head and read “prior to the 19th century most Christian scholars would have accepted Genesis 1-11 as real history.” In *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, though Augustine seems to endlessly hem and haw around the meaning of the word “day” in Genesis one, his own position was that God created everything simultaneously and instantaneously, or, perhaps better, God created all six days at the same time but presented it as six consecutive days for the benefit of the slow-learner, that is, you and I:

Why, then, was there any need for six distinct days to be set forth in the narrative one after the other? The reason is that those who cannot understand the meaning of the text, *He created all things together*, cannot arrive at the meaning of Scripture unless the narrative proceeds slowly step by step.³⁵

Yet if one perseveres long enough in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (admittedly a trying task for Augustine loved to speculate) one will discover even Augustine accepted Genesis 1-3 as real history. He believed in the special creation of Adam and Eve, a literal, historical fall and expulsion from a real garden. In fact, I have no doubts that Augustine accepted all of Genesis 1-11 as real history. He divided history into six eras (Augustine was “hooked” on the number 6), the first two being Adam to Noah and Noah to Abraham.³⁶ Augustine, himself, lived in the final or 6th era. Along with the vast majority of the church fathers, Augustine believed the earth was less than 6,000 years old.

Basil of Caesarea (A.D. 329-379) was not in agreement with Augustine and in his *Hexaemeron* strongly advocated a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis. “I know the laws of allegory,” he wrote in his ninth homily, “though less by myself than from the works of others,” (and indeed he was quite familiar with Origin’s writings). There are a great many exegetes, he continued,

who do not admit the common sense of the Scripture, for whom water is not water... who see in a plant, in a fish, what their fancy wishes, who change the nature of reptiles and of wild beast to suit their allegories.... For me grass is

grass; plant, fish, wild beast, domestic animals, I take all in the literal sense.³⁷

Basil goes on to mention the “debate” among the scientist of his day over the shape of the earth and other natural phenomena such as the eclipse of the moon, but Moses, Basil notes, was not concerned with these things. “Shall I then prefer foolish wisdom to the oracles of the Holy Spirit?” Was not the purpose of Scripture, unlike these other “vanities,” the “edification and making perfect of our souls?” It is this, Basil thought, that those who “give themselves up to the distorted meaning of allegory” have failed to understand and thus “have undertaken to give a majesty of their own invention to Scripture. It is to believe themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and to bring forth their own ideas under a pretext of exegesis. *Let us hear Scripture as it has been written,*” (italics mine).³⁸ No Young Earth Creationists could have said this better. And is this not the crux of the issue—reading Scripture as it has been written? Nor would it be out of line to say that Basil had more in common with one of the founders of the modern Young Earth Creation movement, Henry Morris (1918-2005), than with either Noll or Collins.

In the fourth century, the Antiochene school of exegesis arose to counter the rampant allegorical exegesis coming out of Alexandria, Egypt. We are indebted to them for the Chalcedon Creed (A. D. 451) giving us a truly human Jesus. Antiochene exegesis is similar to the historical-grammatical method of interpretation, that is, literal, and takes biblical history seriously. It produced three of the finest exegetes of the early church: Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428), his disciple, Theodoret of Cyrhus (393-460), and John “Golden Mouth” Chrysostom (late 340s-407), John Calvin’s favorite exegete of the early church. (Calvin favored Augustine’s theology but could not abide his fanciful exegesis.) We don’t have a great deal of what Theodore of Mopsuestia wrote, but we do possess a commentary he wrote covering Galatians 4:22-31. In this little commentary, while discussing verses 22 and 23, Theodore makes some of the most cogent remarks on the folly of allegorical exegesis I have ever read, therefore they are well worth covering in full for they are germane to the discussion at hand.

Galatians 4:22-31 is Paul’s so-called famous allegory comparing Hagar with the law and those under its bondage, and Sarah with the free grace of God and those who live free under it. “There are those people,” Theodore wrote,

who take great pains to twist the senses of the divine Scriptures and make everything written therein serve their own ends. They dream up some silly fables in their own heads and give their folly the name of allegory. They (mis)use the apostle’s term as a blank authorization to abolish all meanings to divine Scripture.³⁹

But, Theodore pointed out, there is a significant difference between Paul and these allegorists and that is that Paul “never does away with history nor elaborates on events that happened long ago.” In fact, “Paul gives history priority over all other considerations,” even in this section of Galatians. The same doesn’t hold true for “those people” as Theodore called them. “Those people,” he wrote, “...turn it all into the contrary, as if the entire historical account of divine Scripture differed in no way from dreams in the night.” The end result is that “Adam is not Adam, paradise is not paradise, the serpent is

not the serpent.” If they are going to keep doing this, Theodore warned, “they will have no history left.” If that was the direction they wanted to go, Theodore mused, he had three questions for them: “Who created the first human being? How did his disobedience come about? How was our death sentence introduced?”⁴⁰

Theodore did not stop there, he had more questions to ask of “those people” because he knew that Christianity’s theological assertions depended on actual historical events in order to be true truth that all men must attend to. “If their assertions are true,” he wrote,

if the biblical writings do not preserve the narrative of actual events but point to something else, something profound which requires special understanding—something “spiritual” as they would like to say, which they have discovered because they are so spiritual themselves, then what is the source of their knowledge?⁴¹

Theodore’s question has relevancy even for our day because the history question is just as crucial in our day as it was in his. Theodore made this clear in the following quote:

...if they are correct, not even the reason for the events surrounding Christ’s coming will be clear. The Apostle says that Christ cancelled Adam’s disobedience and annulled the death sentence. What were those events in the distant past to which he refers, and where did they take place, if the historical account relating them does not signify real events but something else, as those people maintain? What room is left for the Apostle’s words, “but I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve” [2 Cor. 11:3], if there was no serpent, no Eve, nor any seduction elsewhere involving Adam?⁴²

I doubt that one could find an early Church Father (Origin excepted perhaps), if he commented on Genesis 1-11, who would deny the historicity of these chapters. As shown, even Augustine, who loved allegory, accepted the historicity of Genesis. And can any one name a Church Father who did not believe in a universal, Noahic flood? In an interesting article titled, “Mount Cudi—True Mountain of Noah’s Ark,” that appeared in the *Bible and Spade* (19.4, 2006) the authors list five Church Fathers that not only believed in the Noahic flood but also mention the hearsay that the remains of Noah’s ark still existed. The five Fathers are Theophilus of Antioch, Julius Africanus, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Chrysostom. Many ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian sources mention a universal flood and, of course, flood legends are world-wide, a topic we shall return to.⁴³

Let me mention two more from the Reformation period that would agree with the Young Earth Creationists interpretation of Genesis one—Martin Luther and the 1720 *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, a reprint of the 1689 *London Confession* put together by 100 calvinistic Baptist congregations in Wales, which in turn, is a “baptized” revision of the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession* of the mid-1600s.

Luther was a convinced though not always consistent literalist, who in his lectures on Genesis stated, “We know from Moses that the world was not in existence before 6,000

years ago,” though he admits one cannot convince philosophers such as Aristotle of this truth. Luther also admits that “great lights” such as Hillary and Augustine believed in an instantaneous creation, but he will have none of it. “Nor does it serve any useful purpose,” he wrote,

to make Moses at the outset so mystical and allegorical. His purpose is to teach us, not about allegorical creatures and an allegorical world but real creatures and a visible world apprehended by the senses. Therefore as the proverb has it, he calls “a spade a spade,” i.e., he employs the terms “day” and “evening” without allegory, just as we customarily do.”⁴⁴

And, Luther added, if we cannot grasp why God did it this way it is better to admit one’s ignorance “than distort the words, contrary to their context, into a foreign meaning.”⁴⁵ Thus Luther concluded:

...we assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorical or figuratively, i.e., that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

It is not difficult to have Luther stand up with the Young Earth Creationists of today.

Finally, a simple quote from the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* should do to close my response to the charge that Young Earth Creationists are at odds with the past in their literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11. Chapter iv of the *Confession* (On Creation), Section one, reads as follows:

In the beginning it pleased God the Father (John i.2,3; Heb. i.2; Job xxvi.13) Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory (Rom. i.20) of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein (Col. 1.16; Gen. 11.1,2) whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very Good.⁴⁷

Considering all of the above, (and many more names could be added) it would seem that Collins seriously “misspoke” when he claimed that practically no one prior to the rise of Darwinism really took Genesis one literally, that is, historically. And while before 1650 “many Christians and other thinkers” may “have recognized that no observations are ‘simple’ and no texts yield to uncritical ‘literal’ reading” as Noll claims, nevertheless a considerable number of outstanding Christian thinkers disagreed and did take Genesis 1-11 as real history. There is nothing new in what I have related above so it is surprising, even disturbing, that it would be denied.

VII

Since 1850 is another story, and one must agree with Noll that Genesis 1-11 has been interpreted as anything but history even by many evangelicals—it is myth but not myth,

theological history perhaps but not real, space-time history, or maybe allegory or metaphor or both, but whatever it is it is not meant to be taken literally. The reason for this is simple. Prior to 1850 (and this still holds true for Young Earth Creationists), “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture [was] the Scripture itself.” Thus the more clear sections of Scripture interpret the more obscure.⁴⁸ For example, if Genesis one is not clear enough for some that God created all things and everything in six twenty-four hour days, and very good at that, there is Exodus 20:11 to reinforce this truth.

Exodus 20:11 reads, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy,” (NIV). These are the concluding sentences to the fourth commandment in which the Israelites are to “remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” In other words, no one—man, woman, national or alien—was to do any work whatsoever within the boundaries of Israel on the seventh day, nor was any domestic animal to do any work. Failure to obey brought death.

It is difficult to believe that there can be any dispute over the length of days in Genesis one when one reads the fourth commandment (given by God to Moses) and notes how it was understood by the Israelites. Israel’s real time work week of six real 24 hour days of labor and one real 24 hour day of rest—“a Sabbath to the Lord your God”—was predicated on God’s six real days of creation work and his resting from the same on the seventh real day. Historical reality undergirded theological truth. God worked in real space-time (from man’s perspective), Israel worked in real space-time. God rested (ceased from creating and making) in real space-time, Israel was to do the same. This is what the fourth commandment demanded.

I suppose there is an alternative possibility. (Someone always has one.) One could claim that Israel’s leader(s) sought to rationalize their work week and made up the creation week story. But at that point one would be facing stark unbelief regarding Scripture for in essence one would be denying the Ten Commandments given by God to and through Moses. Also, as noted above, yet bears multiple reiteration, we cannot avoid the fact that historical acts always support theological truths throughout the Bible. The Passover was celebrated yearly to commemorate a historical, real space-time event—the exodus. Christians celebrate the Lord’s Table to commemorate “the Lord’s death until he comes”—a real space-time event—and because Jesus himself instituted it and commanded we keep it. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:15-17 that if there was no real space-time resurrection of Jesus with the same body, then there is no forgiveness of sin. Peter asserts the historical certainty of Jesus’ second coming based on the historical certainty of the Noahic flood in the third chapter of II Peter. If there is no historical reality then there is no theological truth. Not only is God sovereign over history but he acts within it. Christianity is not founded on a metaphor or an allegory nor is it Gnostic or mythical in its beginnings, and I am referring to Genesis 1-11.

Second, not only do Young Earth Creationists hold to “the infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is scripture itself,” but they also would agree with the *Philadelphia Confession* that,

the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which (Matt. xxii.29, 31, 32; Eph. ii.20; Acts xxviii.23) scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.⁴⁹

In other words, Scripture is the supreme authority not just one authority among many. Nor is any other so-called authority (such as deep-time evolution) outside of Scripture to be allowed to countermand a clear scriptural teaching or statement.

Let me give an interesting example; consider both Genesis 36:31 and I Chronicles 1:43. They read, “There were kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned” and then follows a list of their names. For decades liberals considered this a fiction in the Bible because no archeological evidence existed to support this claim by the author of either I Chronicles or Genesis 36:31. However, over the last decade archeological evidence has been discovered that vindicates these verses—an Edomite kingdom did exist before Israel had its first King.⁵⁰ Let me be clear here. I Chronicles 1:43 and Genesis 36:31 were/are historically true. The archeological evidence does not *prove* it true, it only *affirms* its truthfulness. If no archeological evidence had yet to emerge, it would still be historically accurate. That is what biblical infallibility means.

VIII

Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that such a hermeneutical approach, that is, that Scripture interprets Scripture and Scripture is the Supreme authority in all matters to which it addresses itself, is altered when origins is the subject by those who believe in “deep-time” evolution. At this point, general revelation intercedes and supercedes special revelation, and general revelation, itself, is reinterpreted to mean the “facts” of nature as uncovered by science, and the “facts” of nature when it comes to origins really mean “deep-time” evolution. This mega-shift of both the importance and content of general revelation is an interesting but deeply disturbing trend for it turns historic doctrine on its head. Traditionally, general revelation meant a limited but specific revelation from God of himself to mankind through or in creation (or nature) itself (cf. Acts 14:14-18). This means, for example, a cell biologist, as he studies the human cell and notes the complexity of its parts and the intricacy of its mechanisms, should come to realize without a doubt that a personal, all-powerful being—God—has created this marvel of irreducible complexity.

The classical text for this truth of general revelation is Romans 1:18-20 which reads:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is *plain* to them, because God has made it *plain* to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power

and divine nature—have been *clearly* seen, being understood from what has been made...(NIV). (Italics mine.)

Paul concludes this *clear* and *plain* passage of Scripture by stating that due to their denial that God is obvious in His creation, men are therefore “without excuse.” And it should go without saying that the creation in question is the creation described in Genesis one and two.

Four things are readily apparent from this set of verses. First, all men know a personal, all-powerful God exists and created this world—all men! Second, rather than acknowledge this truth by worshipping God, all men outside of Christ suppress this *obvious* truth either through embracing paganism or an agnostic rationalism. The tragic results are described in Romans 1:21-23: “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...”(NIV). Note first the intellectual devolution that took place. In the verses that follow, Paul goes on to describe ancient man’s descent into gross wickedness that resulted from this intellectual devolution.

Third, general revelation, or natural revelation as it is sometimes called, is a limited revelation. It reveals to me certain qualities about God but it does not tell me I am created in God’s image and likeness. It does not tell me that God is holy, just, and righteous on the one hand, but on the other hand that He is a loving, merciful, and forgiving God. Only special revelation, the Bible can reveal these things to me. It does not tell me why nature is the way it is—red in tooth and claw—or what caused it to become that way. To the natural man, nature is what it is. Only special revelation, the Bible, explains to me nature is in “bondage” (Romans 8:19) because of man’s sin in Adam. General revelation cannot tell me that mankind is given over to sin and that it needs to be saved from this “natural” condition. Only special revelation can tell me that God was in Christ, reconciling man to Himself, making “him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God,” (2 Cor. 5:19 & 20, NIV). In fact, special revelation—specifically the gospel—through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, must first make me a new creation in Christ before I will acknowledge and appreciate natural or general revelation. General revelation, in itself, cannot lead me to a true and right relation with God, or a true and adequate understanding of God as either Creator or Redeemer.

Fourth, man’s unwillingness to admit that the God of the Bible is plainly and clearly seen as the Creator through His creation, justly places man under judgment and thus justly places man under God’s wrath because men have no reason for denying the obvious. The consequence of this denial is that though they study the creation assiduously and minutely, knowing its most intricate “secrets,” men cannot and will not be able to acknowledge the ultimate truth right under their noses—there is a personal, omnipotent Creator. Now that is tragic!

Yet, as noted above, the content and purpose, or again, perhaps better, the meaning and authority of general revelation has changed under the influence of Darwinian evolution. Francis Collins, though he never addresses the issue head on, still makes it clear where he believes true authority lies. “I do not believe,” he writes, “that the God who created all the universe, and who communes with his people through prayer and spiritual insights, would expect us to deny truths of the natural world that science has *revealed* to us on order to prove our love for him,” (my italics).⁵¹ Elsewhere he writes, “Science *reveals* that the universe, our own planet, and life are engaged in an evolutionary process,” (my italics).⁵² Of course, it must be understood that Collins is using the word “created” in a special way—first the Big Bang and then cosmic and Darwinian evolution. “Seeking to populate this otherwise sterile universe with living creatures,” he writes, “God chose the elegant mechanism of evolution to create microbes, plants, and animals of all sorts. Most remarkably, God intentionally chose the same mechanism to give rise [to man].”⁵³ It is odd, perhaps even bizarre to hear one claim that evolution is an “elegant mechanism.” Collins’ theistic evolution seems similar to the absent god of old fashion Deism or better still what Calvin called the “‘lazy god’ (*deus otiosus*), a distant and aloof deity who created the world but who seldom, if ever, interfered with the goings-on in it,”⁵⁴ as he is completely opposed to the Intelligent Design Movement, treating those in it almost as harshly as he treats Young Earth Creationists.⁵⁵ He believes that “once evolution got under way, no special supernatural intervention was required.”⁵⁶ Collins does concede that God could “be completely and intimately involved in the creation of all species” but from our limited and finite perspective “this would appear a random and undirected process.”⁵⁷ It is difficult not to place Collins in direct contradiction to Romans 1:18-20.

Dean Arnold, professor of Anthropology at Wheaton and committed theistic evolutionist, is another who reforms and expands the meaning of general revelation. (He, too, by the way, has been influenced by Noll’s, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.) Christians need to follow the truth no matter where it leads, he believes, “...no matter how inconvenient or threatening it may seem...”⁵⁸ Not only is nature “God’s revelation,” he writes, “and humans come to know God by means of that revelation,” but natural revelation, which includes “the human mind and its unique behavioral manifestation” language, becomes “indispensable for understanding special revelation [the Bible].”⁵⁹ However, and this is important, natural or general revelation is deciphered by science and “scientific explanations...will always be naturalistic and materialistic...”⁶⁰

Nevertheless Arnold insists that there is “no conflict” between God’s “two great books, nature and the Bible...”:

Both reflect God’s character and both are necessary to know God and do his divine will. A mind, language and an *understanding of nature* are all part of general revelation that are needed to understand the Bible... One kind of revelation is necessary to more fully understand and give meaning to the other.⁶¹ (My italics.)

Let us clearly understand what is being said here as this is indeed a radical twist on the biblical understanding of general revelation and would seem to place general revelation above and prior to special revelation. General revelation is now the data or facts of nature which can be interpreted only by science (and science is done by specially trained people) whose explanations will always “be naturalistic and materialistic,” which means atheistic. (One must presume Arnold includes the study of origins in this statement.) Yet Arnold insists we come to know God by means of this revelation. In fact, he insists that we cannot know the God of special revelation until we first understand the God of general revelation. But we cannot know the God of general revelation except as the scientists reveal him to us through their understanding of nature. So—rather than Scripture revealing to us what general revelation reveals clearly and plainly to all about the Creator God—His divine nature and eternal power—but all men refuse to acknowledge, we now have scientists telling us what nature reveals (indirectly) about God, and until we accept this we cannot properly understand the God of special revelation. When one compares this with Romans 1:18-20 or Psalm 19:1-6 the contrast cannot be more glaring. In these verses all men everywhere, no matter what their level of understanding nature, are aware that the God of the Bible created the natural order within which they live and move. Are Young Earth Creationists the only ones to see that something is dangerously awry. Doesn’t this border on heresy, or is there such a thing among evangelicals today?

And as noted earlier, Arnold is, to say the least, anti-Young Earth Creation. Like Mark Noll, he implies that Young Earth Creationists are Manicheistic in their view of God and creation:

The God of the Bible is not an aloof deity of disembodied and immaterial spirit that bears little or no relationship to the integrity of the world (and its past) that is a product of divine creation. Authors that undermine a *scientific* approach to the past are thus the poster villains of Noll’s book [*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*].⁶² (Italics mine.)

Although this is a jaundiced interpretation of how Young Earth Creationists’ view God, and Arnold, himself, seems to be stressing more the immanence of God rather than His transcendence, a vocabulary that lends itself to pantheism (and I am tempted to ask whose poster boy are those authors who undermine an historical approach to the past given in Genesis), what is critical is to note is the enormous importance attached to a revised general revelation in the theology of evangelical theistic, deep-time evolutionists. “A doctrine of creation that affirms the integrity of natural revelation as a reflection of the character of God is thus absolutely essential to be able to know about, and proclaim a God of Truth who can be known from the Bible.”⁶³

When one pauses to consider that Arnold’s “doctrine of creation” is deep-time “materialistic” Darwinism, one can only be amazed at what Arnold, at heart, is asking us to believe—that evolution gives us insight into the character of God, an insight that is essential to understanding God’s revelation of Himself in Scripture. The implications are

staggering for biblical Christianity. Toward the end of this essay I will explore these implications in depth.

Arnold's comments serve to highlight a comment by Noll—"By holding on so determinedly to our beliefs concerning how we conclude God had made nature, we evangelicals forfeited the opportunity to glorify God for the way he had made nature," (i.e., deep-time evolution). By over reacting to "zealous secularists" we have, Noll concludes, "gone back to thinking that we must shut up one of God's books if we want to read the other one."⁶⁴ Once more, Young Earth Creationists would point out that this, too, is a distortion of their position. Neither book is "shut up," however, and, in fact, the issue at hand has nothing to do with science per se and everything to do with history. Whose narrative of origins and man's early history is the true narrative—Genesis 1-11 or deep-time Darwinism? Darwinism is a materialistic historical interpretation of natural data, not a scientific interpretation as such because it cannot be subject to rigorous, repeatable experimentation.

Obviously, both Collins and Arnold would (and do) support Noll's contention that "the best theology should understand and incorporate the best science," and that such was the case among leading evangelical scholars of the latter part of the 19th century no matter what their position on Darwinism. They were, as Noll puts it, "united in believing that biblical interpretation needed a contribution from the day's best science, even as it exerted an influence on the application of scientific conclusions."⁶⁵ With the rise of what he labels "fundamentalist science," a.k.a., Young Earth Creationism, however, Noll believes this evangelical wisdom has been abandoned.

IX

Both Noll and Collins appeal to outstanding figures in history to buttress their argument—Augustine, Galileo, Warfield—with Noll additionally calling on Francis Bacon and Charles Hodge. It is worth looking closely at two or three of these historical figures to see to what extent they really support the contention that the best science should inform and interpret the best theology and what they might have meant by "best science" and whether they were wise in embracing it the way they did. From Noll's and Collins' perspective the best "science" on origins would mean deep-time evolution and the best theological interpretation of Genesis 1-11—informed by this best science—would mean anything but literal history.

The extensive quote from Augustine used by both Noll and Collins is lifted from Augustine's *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. In summary, because the quote is quite extensive, Augustine notes that even non-believers, through "reason and experience," know something about nature and how it functions. Thus it is terrible for an unbeliever to hear a Christian, "presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics...." Other Christians need to do all they can to prevent such a disaster before the Scriptures are laughed to scorn as "full of falsehoods" and their authors "criticized and rejected as unlearned men." If that happens no one will give serious attention to those books of the Bible that speak of salvation.⁶⁶ The message is obvious—

if Christians are going to ignore commonly understood conclusions about the natural world when they interpret Scripture, and offer fantasy instead, they do great harm to the cause of Christ.

Augustine, of course, through his love of allegory, could come up with some pretty far-fetched interpretations of Scripture, himself, such as seeing in the creation of Eve from Adam's side the birth of the church from Christ's body. Nonetheless, he and all the other early church Fathers had no qualms whatsoever about ignoring the "best science" of their day when it came to origins and creation. They had no hesitation in advocating creation *ex nihilo* over against the prevailing view that matter was eternal. Additionally, over against the overwhelming prevailing view that matter was inherently evil, the early Church Fathers taught that it was inherently good but had been damaged by Adam's sin. They also preached the resurrection of the same body in face of a universal rejection of such a "horrid" notion by the intellectual culture of their day. Likewise, based on Genesis, the Church Fathers advocated a linear view of history—that this present world of time/space/matter had a specific beginning and would have a specific end—over against the widely accepted view that history was eternally cyclical perhaps even down to the smallest detail. Finally, the early church Fathers, Augustine included, had no qualms about proclaiming that "from one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live," (Acts 17:26 NIV). This too flew in the face of common wisdom and myths of the age. In other words, when it came to creation, a clear statement of Scripture, such as Hebrews 11:3 ("By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible," NIV), was not interpreted in light of the "best science" based on "reason and experience" but rather was used to confront and challenge it. Why? Because Scripture was God's word and carried supreme authority.

Interestingly, when it came to Ptolemaic astronomy (and geocentrism) no protest were aroused because it did not impinge upon, or seem to contradict, Genesis 1-11 and God's sovereignty over all creation, both seen and unseen. In fact, Ptolemaic astronomy fit under Augustine's comment that even the unbeliever, through "reason and experience," knew something about nature and how it functions (i.e., the sun revolved around the earth). And evidently Augustine believed that Scripture taught the same. This does raise the interesting question that if a Christian had posited a heliocentric solar system in Augustine's time, would Augustine have accused him of going against Scripture as well as insulting non-believers who through "reason and experience" knew something about how nature functioned?

Now, let us turn to Galileo, a supposedly classic example of science-church conflict, and held up by both Collins and Noll as an example of science embarrassingly correcting, or we might even say forcing a literal interpretation of Scripture to be abandoned. To his credit, Collins gives a truncated but very straightforward account of the confrontation, pointing out that politics around the Pope also played a part (as did personal animosity) in Galileo's persecution. Of course, Galileo himself, it might be added, exacerbated the problem by not listening to sound advice from his friends and displaying an enormous

ego by the way he went about things. The real purpose, of course, of Collins' rehearsal of Galileo's persecution is to be seen in his conclusion:

So in this example, the scientific correctness of the heliocentric view won out despite strong theological objections. Today all faiths except perhaps a few primitive seem completely at home with this conclusion. The claims that heliocentricity contradict the Bible are now seen to have been overstated, and the insistence on a literal interpretation of those particular scripture verses seem wholly unwarranted.⁶⁷

Collins goes on to wonder if this "harmonious" solution might not work to solve the "conflict between faith and the theory of evolution?" One thing is clear to Collins—"the Galileo affair demonstrates that a contentious chapter did eventually get resolved on the basis of overwhelming scientific evidence."⁶⁸ The story, though, is not quite as "cut and dried" as Collins would have it. In fact, Collins leaves out those parts of history that might cause one to seriously doubt his interpretation of the issue. I will not.

In his use of the Galileo incident, Noll gives an extensive quote from Galileo in a more direct attempt to buttress his contention that the best science must in essence dictate the "proper" interpretation of Scripture. "To think one could interpret the Bible," Noll writes, thinking Galileo's thoughts after him, "on scientific questions [as the Young Earth Creationists are obviously doing] without employing a dialogue between natural and biblical observations was to guarantee *misunderstanding* of Scripture" (Noll's italics).⁶⁹ The gist of Galileo's comments run something along these lines: While the Scriptures don't lie their true meaning may be hard to discern because it may not be obvious from a literal interpretation. So in "disputes about natural phenomena" one doesn't start with the Bible but with "sensory experience and necessary demonstration," (i.e., empirical science). While God is revealed in both nature and Scripture, nature cannot violate "the terms of the Laws imposed on her..." whether we understand them or not. On the other hand, "not every scriptural assertion is bound to obligations as severe as every natural phenomena..." Therefore any natural thing that has been evaluated by "sensory experience or proved by necessary demonstration should not be called into question, let alone condemned, on account of scriptural passages whose words appear to have a different meaning." Galileo averred he had the highest regard for "Holy Scripture" and points out that "after becoming certain of some physical conclusions, we should use these as very appropriate aids to correct interpretation of Scripture...."⁷⁰ (Charles Hodge, in the late 19th century, would almost echo Galileo's words verbatim.)

Galileo, sounding almost Collins-like, ends his "soliloquy," as quoted by Noll, by asserting he did not think God would give us "senses, language, and intellect and then not use them to understand the natural world that surrounds us." Oh, Galileo made one other comment in the lengthy quote used by Noll that is worth noting: "to accommodate the understanding of the common people," Galileo wrote, "it is appropriate for Scripture to say many things that are different (in appearance and in regard to the literal meaning of words) from the absolute truth...."⁷¹ No doubt William Tyndale turned over in his martyr's grave when he heard those words. However, Galileo fancied himself a rather

astute exegete of Scripture and tended to hold the common folk in contempt. They were, he believed, incorrigible when it came to understanding the truth of heliocentricism. This, in turn, led him to believe that even though the biblical writers knew better themselves, they wrote as if the sun revolved around the earth so that the common folk would listen to them regarding more important issues.⁷² Galileo himself seemed to have favored an allegorical interpretation of those verses—such as Psalm 19:5, 6—that seem to teach that the sun revolved around the earth. He did, however, accept Joshua 10:12-14 (the episode of the sun standing still) as a real, historical event, believing that if understood properly it would support Copernicus’ view that the earth revolves around the sun rather than the Ptolemaic assertion to the contrary.⁷³

It might seem odd that the Roman Catholic Church, devoted as it was to the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, should insist on an absolutely literal interpretation regarding the texts in question. But the allegorical approach to Scripture does not exclude, and in fact accepts, the literal meaning of a passage. And as Cardinal Bellarmine (an extremely influential Cardinal within the Curia) noted in 1615, the Council of Trent “objected to an interpretation of Scripture that was contrary to the consensus of the Fathers all of whom took the passage of the sun’s motion literally.”⁷⁴ The issue was not, however, the literal interpretation of Scripture as is commonly thought. It would seem that the Roman Catholic Church in the 1600s believed (as did some Protestants), in conformity with the earlier Church Fathers, that the biblical writers, through the Holy Spirit, were making an *objective* statement of fact about nature rather than merely recording a personal observation when they noted that the sun appeared to move and the earth to stand still. Obviously this was reinforced by the universal acceptance of Ptolemaic astronomy—*the best science of the day*. The key issue, then, was whether the Bible was also a reliable *scientific* text on natural phenomena as well as God’s word regarding history and salvation. This meant the confrontation was not—in essence—between a literal interpretation of Scripture and science, as Collins claims, but between what was believed to be a long established scientific “fact” (geocentrism), supposedly supported by scientific statements imbedded in the Bible, and a new scientific theory (Copernican) which challenged this scientific “fact”.

We will return to the Galileo problem shortly, but for the moment I want to deal with the question of whether it is legitimate to use Galileo’s science and comments to show that Young Earth Creationists differ little from the 17th century Papal Curia that foolishly persecuted a man for supporting the truth? To come up with an adequate answer to this question we can begin with Galileo’s science. It was demonstrative, it was experimental, it was, if I can be so bold, Baconian-like. The experiment Galileo put together— assembling and looking through a telescope—could be mimicked by others with the same results. As Keith Windshuttle has written in his book, *The Killing of History*:

Consider the case of Galileo’s observation through a telescope of the planet Jupiter and its moons in 1609. At the time Galileo was a convert to the theory of Copernicus that the planets orbited the Sun and that moons orbited planets. This might have influenced the fact that, when he saw Jupiter’s moons for first time, they appeared to him to be orbiting the planet. However, would

anyone imagine that if a supporter of the old Ptolemaic theory of astronomy had looked through the telescope at the same time he would have seen anything different? Would we expect the Ptolemaic theorist to see the moons not in orbit but roaming the skies *above* Jupiter as his own theory might have expected them to be doing? If you look at Jupiter today...you will still see the moons orbiting the planet, exactly as Galileo saw them.⁷⁵

I emphasize this distinction because Noll, Collins and Arnold, in essence, are accusing the Young Earth Creationists of ignoring the sound criteria that the best science should inform the best theology when it comes to origins, something their evangelical predecessors of the latter half of the 19th century did not do. In support of this contention, Noll quotes Charles Hodge insisting, “we only interpret the Word of God by the Word of God when we interpret the Bible by science,” obliquely referencing the Galileo affair in the process. “Shall we,” He wrote, “go on to interpret the Bible so as to make it teach the falsehood that the sun moves around the earth, or shall we interpret by science, and make the two harmonize?”⁷⁶ As we will see, it appears Hodge had over-reacted and over-simplified. But what is not mentioned is that the science he is referring to is also experimental science, “hard” science if you will. Hodge considered evolution the equivalent to atheism and not a science. Others, of course, such as Benjamin Warfield, did not agree with him. But Warfield had problems of his own as can be seen in his efforts to make Calvin a Darwinian evolutionist.⁷⁷

Perhaps Hodge was on to something, though, because evolution is not an experimental or empirical science but rather an imaginary “science.” In fact, the central pillar of biological, deep-time, Darwinian evolution—that over vast, incomprehensible measures of time, random, minute mutations and natural selection bring about whole new more complex species from previously wholly other, less complex species—is neither testable in the laboratory nor presently observable in nature.⁷⁸ The historian John Lewis Gaddis put it most succinctly when he wrote:

But not all sciences work this way [i.e., by repeatable experimentation]. In fields like astronomy, geology, paleontology, or evolutionary biology, phenomena rarely fit within laboratories, and time required to see results can exceed the life span of those who seek them. These disciplines instead depend on *thought experiments*.... They then look for evidence suggesting which of these mental exercises come closest to explaining their physical observations. Reproducibility means building a consensus that such correspondence seems plausible. The only way these scientists can rerun *history* is to *imagine* it.⁷⁹ (Italics mine.)

Gaddis’ last sentence reinforces what was said above, that the issue isn’t science but history and whose narrative of origins and man’s early years is correct. And Gaddis fails to mention that an imaginary science/history is open to a tremendous amount of subjective interpretation guided by one’s world-view (or “pre-understanding” to use Noll’s term). Most important, it would seem comparing an experimental, demonstrable science with an imaginary science of origins (even one built on consensus), as if they were one in the same, and acting like questioning the accuracy one of them is questioning

the accuracy of both, is *extremely misleading*. I know of no Young Earth Creation scientist who rejects experimental, empirical science. At times, those evangelicals embracing Darwinism come across as propagandists rather than as reasoning scholars.

This brings me back—briefly—to Noll’s comment that “to think one could interpret the Bible on scientific questions without employing a dialogue between natural and biblical observations was to guarantee *misunderstanding* of Scripture” (Noll’s italics).⁸⁰ The point Noll wished to make and/or imply is that while Galileo, Francis Bacon, and even Augustine would never do such a thing, this is exactly what Young Earth Creationists are doing—not giving the natural observations of the best science of the day its due when it comes to the origins of all things and allowing it to help us understand the proper interpretation of Scripture. Noll’s point is misleading, though, because, as mentioned above, the issue surrounding Copernican astronomy was not one of science versus a particular scriptural interpretation but rather of one well established scientific hypothesis which was accepted as fact—a fact confirmed by Scripture—versus another new scientific hypothesis. Corollary to that was the question of whether or not the Bible was meant to be a scientific text on natural phenomena.

It should also be pointed out—again and again—that Young Earth Creationists see the issue not as one of science versus Scripture or even of science versus science but of historical interpretation versus historical interpretation, one given by divine inspiration the other the product of an agnostic rationalism. Young Earth Creationists accept Genesis 1-11 as a straight forward, divinely revealed, historical narrative (though truncated) of the origins of nature and man’s early history from the creation of Adam to the calling of Abraham. It is as simple as that. In one sense then, there are no valid scientific observations of nature to consult or dialogue with when it comes to origins because there is no way to observe it or test it. In addition, the observations of a “science” of origins based upon the interpretation of the data of nature filtered through the lens of uniformitarianism and Darwinian evolution are not the same as the debate over geocentrism versus heliocentrism of the early 1600s. So to use Galileo’s appeal that rational observations of demonstrable natural phenomena should be used in interpreting some scriptural verses which if taken literally would put science and Scripture at odds, not only misunderstands what the Galileo affair was really about, but it also misconstrues what is really at stake. For the issue between Young Earth Creations and Darwinians is not which science is the correct one but which history is the correct one. There are only two choices, the Bible’s version given in Genesis 1-11 or a rationalistic one based on naturalism that interprets all history in such a way as to exclude, even forbid if you will, the possibility of seeing or allowing any evidence of divine creation or intervention in nature.

X

Now let us return to Galileo and consider his historical context. Broadly speaking, Ptolemy’s theory of geocentric astronomy devised in the second century A. D. was considered the “best science” of its day, and it ruled as such until the end of the 16th century. It was not the product of the church but it fit in well with practically everyone

for it complimented common sense experience.⁸¹ Given the limited ability to observe the heavens and the limits of mathematics at that time, it was, all in all, a theory that seem to best fit the facts although there were an insightful few that believed in heliocentrism. The Church as a whole found nothing in the Ptolemaic system that contradicted Scripture or its theology and mid-set, and, in fact, easily found ample “proof-text” to support it, though in doing so it practiced an undetected form of eisegesis. So then, if the best science is to inform and interpret the best theology, we have a perfect historical example of this in the early church which was then carried forward by some early Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church—for all of them, with few exceptions, embraced the Ptolemaic system up through the 16th century. By the 17th century this was no longer the case among Protestants. Galileo himself records a conversation he had with Cardinal Zollern in 1624. “ ‘Zollern left yesterday for Germany,’ Galileo wrote, ‘and he told me that he had spoken with His Holiness about Copernicus, and mentioned that the heretics are all of this opinion and hold it as most certain, and that we should therefore proceed very circumspectly in coming to any determination.’ ”⁸² And it would seem that Galileo wrote his *Reply to Ingoli* (Ingoli was a Jesuit who had written an anti-Copernican work in 1616) in late 1624 in part to make the point that “as a good son of the church, he wanted Protestants to know that Catholics were not all ignoramuses like Ingoli.”⁸³

Keeping the above in mind, I want to consider something that Noll has written:

The testimony of Augustine, Bacon, Galileo, and Warfield can be summarized by focusing on a concrete example: if the consensus of modern scientists, who devote their lives to looking at the data of the physical world, is that humans have existed on the planet for a very long time, it is foolish for biblical interpreters to say that “the Bible teaches” the recent creation of human beings. This does not mean that at some future time, the procedures of science may shift in such a way as to alter contemporary consensus.⁸⁴

Now, one might want to question the idea of pinning the interpretation of Scripture to the latest consensus of scientists. That seems like a deadly trajectory for the Bible exegete or for any one asserting the Bible as a special revelation from God. It begs a response. And later I will give a response but for the moment let me simply note Noll’s attempt to equate evolutionary science with the empirical sciences. The main reason for using Noll’s quote at this time is to point out that the consensus of ancient philosophers (scientists) was that Ptolemaic astronomy was true and the church noted in the Scriptures an affirmation of the same. In other words, the church was doing exactly what Noll is advocating. With the rise of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, a new theory emerged (not without problems of its own at first), which was able to gradually change the consensus of the day based on advances in mathematics and *repeatable* experimental data such as telescopic observation. On the surface this seemed to create a major conflict with the Bible. Such, though, was not the case. The conflict was not one, as Collins claims, between science and a literal interpretation of Scripture, but rather one between a new scientific hypothesis and an older one that had taken on the aura of fact. It is perhaps worth pointing out that while Galileo was forced to adjure his Copernican view by the Papal Curia, neither Kepler or any other Copernican Protestant was forced to do so by

any Protestant state or church body. (Kepler was excommunicated by the Lutheran church for refusing to accept cosubstantiation, but not for believing in a heliocentric solar system.)

One must also keep in mind that when Galileo was forced to adjure and detest his own work in 1633 the thirty years war was on full throttle (and not going well for the Catholics at this point). Nor did the Catholic counter-reformation “encourage discussions or debates about doctrinal matters. The theological pendulum that the Reformers had pushed too far in one direction was now made to swing to the other extreme...”⁸⁵ Over the previous hundred years the Pope had lost large swaths of Northern Europe and England to the Protestants. One can’t help but think this made the Papal Curia particularly testy on its home turf to any challenges to its authority, especially its authority and infallibility in interpreting Scripture or understanding the purpose of the Bible. Galileo was a handy object lesson in part because he was arrogant in challenging those in authority and in part because his orthodoxy could be challenged because he “belonged to an academy that was in touch with Germans (meaning heretics).”⁸⁶ It is to be doubted that had Galileo been in Holland or England, or any Protestant principality in Germany, he would have been persecuted as a heretic and forced into silence for by this time the Protestants were in full and open debate over the Copernican question. In other words, Galileo’s persecution by the Papal Curia did not represent the position of all of Christendom in 1633, a point neither Collins nor Noll bother to mention.

XI

What about those Scriptures “literally” interpreted to refute Galileo’s heliocentrism? Is Collins right in claiming “the insistence on a literal interpretation of these particular verses seem wholly unwarranted”?⁸⁷ Certainly when one reads Charles Hodge’s statement about “interpreting” the Bible “by science and [thus] make[ing] the two harmonize” one is reading a very “gun-shy” 19th century evangelical. But did Hodge and Warfield, and other 19th century evangelicals over-react and ultimately undermine what they hoped to protect—not only the ancient principle that Scripture interprets Scripture but also the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*? They, too, seemed to have misunderstood the real problem that was being wrestled with by the early 1600s. The problem was not over whether or not certain verses should be interpreted literally. Both those for and those against the Copernican hypothesis accepted a literal interpretation of the verses in question. The problem was over authorial intent and, of course, behind the author, the Holy Spirit’s intent. Did the author intend only to make and/or use a personal observation (e.g., the sun moves from east to west) for, say, doxological purposes, or did the Holy Spirit, through the author also intend to make an absolute scientific declaration about the nature of the solar system—that is, that the sun revolves around a motionless earth. The Papal Curia in the 1600s concluded that the various biblical authors intended to record not only personal observations but also make statements of fact regarding the validity of geocentrism. In other words, the Papal Curia was claiming that the Bible was a scientific treatise on these matters, the *final* scientific word as it were, and as such supported or confirmed Ptolemaic astronomy. And the Papal Curia, of course, had the final word within the Roman Catholic Church when it came to the true meaning of any

verse or set of verses. Luther or Calvin may have agreed with the Papal Curia on this particular issue but what Luther or Calvin thought would not be the final word in a Protestantism committed to the historical-grammatical hermeneutic open for all to apply, and a belief that Scripture alone was the supreme authority to which councils, popes, and even the Church Fathers' commentaries must submit to.

The time, then, has come to take a close look at those verses used by the Papal curia against Galileo. This was no casual matter as far as the Papacy was concerned. It had already suffered challenges in this area of scriptural interpretation as well as scriptural neglect from Protestants. If it proved wrong in this specific area, it would suffer further erosion not only to Papal authority but to the authority of the Scriptures as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church. Interestingly, had the influence of Aristotle not been so great on the ancient and medieval Western mind, and especially the Roman Catholic Church through Thomas Aquinas, the Ptolemaic system might have been challenged sooner. There were ancient scholars, such as Aristarchus of Samos (3rd century B. C.) and Seleucus of Babylon (2nd century B. C.) who did believe in a heliocentric solar system, and Copernicus knew of them and considered them right.⁸⁸

Apparently most of the early Church Fathers were conversant with the “science” of their day and except, as noted, in the areas of creation, matter, and history, appeared indifferent or accepting of its conclusions. Basil of Caesarea had an interesting comment along these lines, writing:

Those who have written about nature of the universe have discussed at length the shape of the earth. If it be spherical or cylindrical, if it resemble a disc and is equally rounded in all parts, or if it has the form of a winnowing basket and is hollow in the middle; all these conjectures have been suggested by cosmographers, each one upsetting that of his predecessor. It will not lead me to give less importance to the creation of the universe, that the servant of God, Moses, is silent as to shapes; he has not said that the earth is a hundred and eighty thousand furlongs in circumference; he has not measured into what extent of air its shadow projects itself whilst the sun revolves around it [note the acceptance of Ptolemy], nor stated how this shadow, casting itself upon the moon, produces eclipses. He has passed over in silence, as useless, all that is unimportant for us.⁸⁹

What was important to know, Basil argued, was not the various scientific theories about the nature of the physical universe, but that Moses tells how God *historically* created the heavens, the earth, and everything therein, in six literal, 24 hour days.

XII

In *The Language of God*, Collins lists three verses that the Papal Curia used against Galileo—Psalm 93:1, Psalm 104:5, and Ecclesiastes 1:5.⁹⁰ There were other, similar verses in the Curia's arsenal but we will only evaluate these three. Galileo was aware of them all. Literally read, were these verses meant to objectively assert the *scientific* principle that the sun revolved around the earth or that the earth was the center of the

physical universe? Or, literally read, were they simply personal observations (even if believed to be true) used for another purpose such as a doxological poem? A word from William Tyndale in this regard, written in 1528, might be appropriate before answering this question:

Thou shalt understand therefore that the scripture hath but one sense which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth whereunto if thou cleave thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense thou canst not but go out of the way. Neverthelater the scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories as all other speeches do, but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth is ever the literal sense which thou must seek out diligently.⁹¹

In other words, authorial intent and context will help us understand what the writer intended to literally convey—a figure of speech or poetic expression, a statement of fact, a metaphor, or a historical narrative. Tyndale’s understanding in this regard would become Kepler’s.

And as we will be interpreting these verses along the same lines that Johann Kepler (1571-1630) used, it is only proper we give some background on his approach to these Scriptures that seemed to refute Copernicus. Historian Kenneth Howell speaks highly of Kepler the scientist, writing:

His achievements were so numerous and revolutionary that those developments usually summarized under the term “Copernican revolution” can, with considerable justification, be properly called Keplerian. Although Galileo springs up in the popular mind as the greatest of early modern astronomers, his actual astronomical achievement was meager compared to that of Kepler.⁹²

And Kepler was a deeply pious astronomer at that, considering the “exegeting” of the heavens “analogous to exegeting the Bible” and he offered it “to God as an act of worship.”⁹³

In addition, not only was Kepler a better astronomer than Galileo, he was also a better exegete of Scripture. Kepler had desired to be a theologian before switching over to astronomy, and had actually studied theology for a year and a half at Tübingen University. Being Lutheran, he also had the advantage over Galileo when it came to biblical exegesis. At this time Protestants debated the pros and cons of Copernican astronomy and Scripture as vigorously, and certainly more openly, than did the Catholics. The difference was that Protestants believed in *Sola Scriptura* (the supremacy of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice), literally interpreted, that is, using the historical-grammatical hermeneutic. This meant that close attention would be paid to authorial intent, how the original audience would have understood it, the language and grammar used, and the context or genre. It also meant that the Protestant exegete did not have to yield authority to an inquisition, an index, a Papal Curia, an overbearing pope, a sacred tradition, a Council of Trent, or what the Church Fathers believed about a

particular portion of Scripture. They might respect the latter but they were not bound to it. Thus the decrees of popes, councils, and the comments of the Church Fathers were to be all submitted to authoritative Scripture. As Zwingli noted, if they agreed with Scripture (literally interpreted), well and good. If not, they were to be ignored.

Kepler was no different than other Protestants in regard to the above. Scripture alone was authoritative. In the introduction to his, *Astronomia Nova* (1609), we are introduced to Kepler's exegesis of those controversial Scriptures that seemed to nix Copernican astronomy. Kepler took three chapters (Ps. 19, Eccles. 1, Josh. 10) that contained verses that seemed to assert that the sun moved and the earth stayed motionless, and showed that the intentions "of the biblical writers was not astronomical, and therefore there is no reason to think they intended their words to be taken in an excessively literal [i.e., scientific] fashion."⁹⁴ If they had really intended to be scientific, Kepler believed, their language would have been more technical. But as they had no intention of teaching "astronomical lessons unknown to common people," they wrote in common language, the purpose of which was to recall "the obvious though forgotten lessons to be learned from nature, lessons of God's dealings with human beings."⁹⁵

Even Genesis one, Kepler wrote to a friend, which was "an indisputable natural passage that could bear on science," was not to be "read as a natural-philosophical (i.e., scientific) treatise." The Bible is God's word so it is not to be construed as "faulty or deficient" simply because it is not scientific. Rather "properly understood, the author simply adopted the common views of his audience in order to communicate more sublime truths."⁹⁶ Kepler also did an analysis of Psalm 104, a favored document for those advocating geocentrism. I will discuss it below when I discuss Psalm 104:5.

It was Kepler's conviction that the "characteristic mode of discourse" in Scripture "was ordinary human language" which was, by its very nature, "imprecise and indirect." Nevertheless, "God in his wisdom had adopted a mode of discourse in the Bible that would not serve the purposes of astronomy but that admirably served the purpose of proclaiming the truths of salvation."⁹⁷ Again, it should be noted that neither Kepler, or other Protestants who adopted the accommodation language approach, denied or abandoned the literal interpretation of the Scriptures in question. What they denied was that the literal was intended (by the Holy Spirit) to be taken as a statement of scientific fact affirming geocentrism. This was reading too much into the Bible. This, then, was eisegesis. Likewise, neither Kepler, nor other Protestants were being novel in using accommodation for such a reading of Scripture "was a well-embedded tradition of hermeneutics in Christian history." (Indeed, one could easily trace it back to Augustine and the Antiochean school of literal exegesis.) Interestingly, Kepler saw all of God's "dealing with the universe [as] colored by accommodation because the cosmos was to be an instrument (sacrament) of celebration and adoration." It was only natural then, that God had "chosen deliberately to form the sacred writings according to human linguistic capacity," that is, in "ordinary language." That being the case, one should not "discard" it "in favor of some technical language of astronomy...."⁹⁸

Now let us look at the three verses that Collins' mentions beginning with Psalm 93:1, which reads as follows:

The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty;
 the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength.
 The world is firmly established;
 it cannot be moved. (NIV)

Psalm 93 is a short poem of 5 verses extolling the majesty and power of Yahweh, a majesty and power no one can thwart. Considering, then, the purpose of the poem, and the fact that the author used commonplace descriptive language, it is difficult to believe the author deliberately intended to make a declarative statement of scientific fact: "the earth is the center of the universe and the sun revolves around it." Rather is not the poet simply saying, when he wrote, "the world is firmly established; it cannot be moved," that this is a perfect example of what I mean when I speak of God's majesty and strength? It seems a clear poetic reference to Genesis 1:1. It is going beyond a literally reading of the verse, therefore, if Tyndale and Kepler are right, to make it also say scientifically the solar system is geocentric not heliocentric. This is eisegesis, perhaps an unreflective eisegesis due to the universal acceptance of Ptolemaic astronomy, but eisegesis nonetheless. Based on the common sense understanding of nature in the poet's day, the author may have believed the earth was immobile and that it rested on pillars. Those reading the poem would have been in agreement with the poet and thus appreciated his use of this common knowledge to glorify the majesty of the Creator. And though we know better today, we can still appreciate the poet's purpose, theme, and poetic skills, and say amen. The problem Galileo faced was not a clearly demonstrated natural phenomena over against a Scripture that "literally" contradicted it. What he faced was an eisegetical interpretation of a Scriptural verse that could not be corrected because it carried the imprimatur of the Papal Curia through the Council of Trent based upon the conclusion of the Church Fathers reinforced by Ptolemaic astronomy. The best science of the day harmonized with the best theology of the day. Being Catholic, himself, Galileo lacked the Protestant freedom to challenge this, and thus came to some strange conclusions of his own.

If the above is true for Psalm 93:1, it holds doubly true for both Psalm 104:5 and Ecclesiastes 1:5. Psalm 104:5 reads very much like Psalm 93:1: "He set the earth on its foundations: it can never be moved" (NIV). Once more we have a poem extolling the majesty and greatness of God over His creation. Beginning with verse five through verse nine, we have a poetic description either of the third day of creation when God separated the earth from the sea, or the time of the conclusion of the Noachic flood when the waters receded to their assigned place, when God "set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will the sea cover the earth," (vs 9, NIV). Whatever the case, it would seem to be impossible that the author was intending to claim in Psalm 104 a scientific statement that the earth was indeed the center of the universe in accord with the Ptolemaic system. The poet's whole purpose in this Psalm is to give praise and glory to God as the creator and sustainer of the earth and all life therein. Still, many favoring geocentrism did consider Psalm 104 a "disputation on *physica*," so Kepler gave it special attention. He came to the

conclusion, after noting the lack of technical language, and “following the Augustine dictum—stressed by Lutherans—of comparing Scripture with Scripture,” that this particular Psalm “was in fact a commentary on the hexaemeron of Genesis chapter 1.” This being the case, *physica* was the “furthest thing from the Psalmist’s mind.” Instead, what the psalmist wrote was a “hymn to God the Creator.” As far as Kepler was concerned, “The very fabric of the text and its genre indicated a doxological, laudatory intention.”⁹⁹ Again then, it is an example of eisegesis, even for the seventeenth century, to claim the author’s purpose in verse five was to make a “scientific” statement that validated geocentrism according to Ptolemy. Old habits, however, are hard to break. One can say though, in response to Collins’ comment that today we know these verses were not meant to be taken literally, is that, yes, they are to be taken literally as Tyndale and Kepler well understood. In fact, there was no reason not to take them literally.

What has been written above also applies to Ecclesiastes 1:5, “The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises” (NIV). It is the first verse of a descriptive poem—descriptive of repetitive natural processes we experience everyday—to reinforce the author’s central thesis in verse 2b, that all is “Utterly meaningless: Everything is meaningless” and verse 8a, “all things are wearisome, more than one can say,” (NIV). Neither the context nor the author’s intent lend support that the purpose of verse 5, even in a secondary sense, was to make a scientific declaration that geocentrism is true. The author may have believed in geocentrism, most ancients probably did, but his intent was to use common experiences and observations to reinforce his rather nihilistic take on life. If we were to update the author’s intent in Ecclesiastes, one could take the counter cultural sound bite from a few decades ago, “life is a bitch and then you die,” and one would capture the meaning of these opening verses of Ecclesiastes exactly. Wedded as it was to Ptolemaic astronomy and the Church Fathers, the Papal Curia read these verses as absolute statements of fact and not just personal observation from a limited perspective used for doxological or philosophic purposes. Galileo, on the other hand, turned to allegory in an attempt to extract himself from the Papal straightjacket.

XIII

In a long letter to a friend in 1615, Galileo attempted to interpret Psalm 19:6-8 metaphorically based on his understanding of the sun’s function and purpose. He did this in response (indirectly at Cardinal Bellarmine’s urging) to the popular claim that these verses discredited or “stood in the way of Copernican doctrine...”¹⁰⁰ Galileo’s discourse would be worth quoting in full were it not so lengthy, but for anyone interested, it is quoted in full in Stillman Drake’s, *Galileo At Work: His Scientific Biography* (1978). But I do want to include a key sample so one might understand how Galileo hoped to show that those Scriptures, which supposedly worked against heliocentrism, could actually be interpreted to support it. He took Psalm 19:5—“the sun proceedeth as a bridegroom from his chamber and exalt as a giant in running his course”—and wrote the following:

I would understand this to be said of the radiant sun, that is of the light and of the above-mentioned calorific spirit fertilizing all corporal substances, which, leaving from the solar body, is swiftly diffused throughout the entire world, to

which meaning all the words are punctually fitted. And first, in the word “bridegroom” we have the fertilizing and prolific power; “exalted” applies to that emanation of those solar rays, made in a certain ways by jumps, as the sense clearly shows us; “as a giant” or “as a strong man” denotes the efficacious activity and power penetrating through all the bodies, and also the high speed moving through immense spaces, the emanation of this light being as if instantaneous. The words “goeth forth from his chamber” confirm that this emanation and movement must refer to that solar light, and not to the body of the sun itself, since the body and globe of the sun is the recipient....¹⁰¹

And on and on he goes. (He certainly seems to agree with Noll that “no text yields to uncritical ‘literal’ reading.”) It is no wonder he might irritate theologians within the Papal Curia. What is surprising is that both Galileo and so many within the Curia struggled over the possibility that the authors of these verses in dispute were simply using a common observation (i.e., the sun moves across the sky from east to west) to glorify God or highlight His majesty and sovereignty over His creation and meant nothing more—and knew nothing more. For many Roman Catholic leaders, such as Cardinal Bellarmine, the Holy Spirit, through the authors, was making a statement of [Baconian] fact about the place of the earth in relation to the rest of the universe. Galileo, on the other hand, believed the biblical authors knew better (they were closet heliocentrist as it were) but had to patronize the incorrigible ignorance of the “common folk,” a position Bellarmine cautioned Galileo, that would only infuriate his opponents.¹⁰²

Interestingly, there were a few theologians—not very many—within the Roman Catholic Church willing to accept the idea that the Scriptures used common everyday language with no intent of making scientific statements. One of the most notable was Paolo Antonio Foscarini, a Carmelite priest. Early in 1615, he published *A Letter on the Opinion of the Pythagaeans and Copernicus Regarding the Motion of the Earth*, which was “a forceful but serene plea for the compatibility of the Copernicus hypothesis with Scripture.” It was Foscarini’s position that the Scriptures were “written to be understood” by one and all thus they “employed popular rather than scientific language. “God,” Foscarini opined, “chose to reveal only what could not be discovered by the light of reason; the rest he left to human disputation....”¹⁰³ This was close to the developing Protestant position.

Surprisingly, in April of the same year, Foscarini received a “thoughtful and considerate” reply from Cardinal Bellarmine (aimed also at Galileo) which put a lid on the further acceptance of Foscarini’s position. Bellarmine’s opposition was three-fold. First, Copernicus’ hypothesis was just that, a hypothesis for which there was no real-life proof. Second, the Council of Trent opposed any interpretation of Scripture that was contrary to the consensus of the Church Fathers. Third, referencing Eccl 5:4, the Cardinal claimed Soloman was “the most learned man in the human sciences and in the knowledge of all created things.” It was a wisdom from God and such being the case, it was “not likely that he [Soloman] would affirm something that went against some truth that was already demonstrated or was likely to be.”¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, it is known that Galileo could have helped his campaign if he could have given more solid proof for his heliocentricism. But here his own limitations hindered his cause. First, his theory that the tides were caused by the earth's motion was being proven wrong, though he wouldn't admit it, and second, because he believed the earth moved around the sun in a perfect circle, he rejected Kepler's finding that planets moved in elliptical orbits around the sun—a discovery that would have been very helpful in his advocacy for Copernicus's hypothesis. In a sense, Galileo shot himself in the foot because of his own scientific ego.¹⁰⁵

XIV

All of the above verses, and others similar to them, use descriptions of one's everyday observations or experiences, for poetic purposes. If Kepler's interpretive approach is correct (and who questions it today?), none of them were written to validate, as such, Ptolemaic astronomy. In fact, one could not find such a passage in Scripture except by means of eisegesis. Now in all fairness, there is no verse that contradicts the theory that the sun and stars revolve around the earth either. The purpose of Scripture though is not to validate scientific theories or principles as 17th century Protestants, under the tutelage of the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, and *Sola Scriptura* came to understand. "Aha!", says the alert deep-time evolutionist, that is exactly our point about Genesis 1 and 2." In fact, Collins has made this point in *The Language of God*, writing:

Still other believers see the language of Genesis 1 and 2 as intended to instruct readers of Moses' time about God's character, and not attempt to teach scientific facts about the specifics of creation that would have been confusing at that time.¹⁰⁶

This is partially true but misleading. I have no problem conceding along with Kepler that Genesis 1-11 does not teach science though that doesn't mean it doesn't contain factual material. On the other hand, the purpose of Genesis 1 and 2 is much more than to reveal the character of God. This is a conclusion as faulty as the 16th century Papal conclusion that the Bible was a scientific treaty on the earth's immobility. The purpose of Genesis 1-11 is to teach that God created the heavens and the earth and all that dwells therein *as well as how he specifically did it*—He spoke them into existence over a period of six, 24 hour days which means there will not be a great many scientific facts about the "specifics of creation" to learn to begin with. Just as important, however, Genesis 1-11 is an historical narrative. Thus I do have a problem with those who deny that Genesis 1-11 is history, a record of real space-time events, and that this comes through loud and clear when one reads it. This is somewhat analogous to Windshuttle's comment about how everyone will see the moons of Jupiter revolving around that planet. One may claim that Genesis 1-11 is an allegory or metaphor, but to deny that it was written to be understood as a historical narrative is to deny the obvious, it is to repeat the mistakes of the Papal Curia and others who accepted Ptolemaic astronomy without question, based on the eisegesis of selected verses. In doing so they failed to note the difference between an everyday observation/conclusion based on limited data and the purpose for which that data was being used, and the more detailed conclusions concerning the same natural

phenomena in order to understand that phenomena in and of itself, based on a thorough inductive investigation by more sophisticated methods and means. In other words, they read too much into the Bible.

In retrospect, it is clear that both Collins and Noll have misunderstood as well as misapplied the Galileo fiasco. Both basically present it as a problem between a demonstrable, provable interpretation of a natural phenomenon and a literal interpretation of certain verses that address that phenomenon. Such, as we have proven, is not quite the case. I do not believe either man deliberately set out to misunderstand or misapply the Galileo incident. Both are simply repeating a cliché that has taken on the status of truth, without really bothering to investigate it for themselves. And both wanted to use Galileo as a club to beat Young Earth Creationists into silence by showing that when science and a literal interpretation of Scripture conflict, science should prevail, it should be the interpretive hermeneutic. One could wish they had done a better job of checking out their historical facts before writing what they did.

XV

Fascinatingly, neither Collins nor Noll seem immune from a somewhat eisegetical approach to Scripture, themselves. Both seem to succumb to the same exegetical malaise that plagued the Papal Curia. Collins, at one point in his book, writes, “But other parts of the Bible, such as the first few chapters of Genesis, the book of Job, the Song of Solomon, and the Psalms, have a more lyrical and allegorical *flavor*, and do not generally seem to carry the marks of pure historical narrative,” (italics mine).¹⁰⁷ In another place in his book he asserts, “Many sacred texts do indeed carry the clear marks of eyewitness history, and as believers we must hold fast to those truths. Others, such as the story of Job and Jonah, and Adam and Eve, frankly, do not carry the same *historical ring*,” (italics mine).¹⁰⁸

One can't help but notice the company Collins forces the “first few chapters of Genesis,” and Adam and Eve, to associate with. One suspects that Collins is trying to establish some kind of guilt by association. The Psalms are indeed poetry as is the Song of Solomon. Job does not pretend to be an historical narrative but that doesn't exclude it from being an historical event. And as far as Jonah is concerned, we must presume Collins agrees with the liberal commentators that it is a work of historical fiction meant to convey a theological truth. This is a questionable decision on Collins' part, as we shall see, and one Jesus did not agree with. All of the above lack the “marks of pure historical narrative,” Collins claims, though he doesn't explain what such marks ought to be. It is highly doubtful that any fair minded reader, who would read the Song of Solomon and then the first eleven chapters of Genesis, would conclude they are of the same *genre* or that the first eleven chapters of Genesis have the same “lyrical and allegorical flavor” (whatever the flavor of allegory is) as the Song of Solomon. As for Collins statement that the first few chapters of Genesis “frankly do not carry the same historical ring,” as presumably the gospel accounts do, well, one can only throw up one's hands in amazement. First, Collins believed wholeheartedly in evolution before becoming a Christian. In becoming a Christian he never once questioned the truthfulness of

evolution, and didn't believe he had to, thanks to the writings of C. S. Lewis. Second, I have taught history for over thirty years. I teach students to search out primary documents and write an historical narrative from the same. I have written a book on fundamentalism during the Great Depression era which required the reading of, and shifting through, over a thousand primary documents. I have not the least idea what it means to say a document has or has not the proper "historical ring." Is it some kind of subjective feeling that allows one to know he or she is reading the real thing? If so, I have never experienced it. This is nonsense—and one must presume Collin's editors failed him at this point.

However, for the moment let the question be not whether Genesis is, in fact, true history but whether it was written as an historical narrative, supposedly truly portraying man's early history. Posed this way it has to be said, I believe, the book of Genesis was written as a seamless historical narrative from the opening words, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," until the closing words, "So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt." In other words, there is nothing within the text itself that would warrant the separation of the first few chapters of Genesis from the rest of the book and declaring them non-historical. Clearly the intent of the author was to write a particular historical account that would inform the reader about what had happened from the very beginning of man's history until Joseph's death. Again, if one wishes to consider the first eleven chapters of Genesis as allegory one is free to do so but one should not patronize the text by claiming this is what the author intended to write. If one is reluctant to do this we must do something similar to what Theodore of Mopsuestia did, ask questions of the allegorist. If this is not real history, why do we have such careful chronological genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 that are deliberately given to tie Abraham to Adam? Or why do we have the elaborate detailing of the tribes and clans in Genesis 10, known to Moses, which issued from Noah's three sons? And if there was no real Adam, directly and specifically created by God, who really disobeyed God and thus brought himself and his progeny into bondage to a sinful nature, how do we explain the present condition of the human race? Do we cast aside Moses, the man of God, and consider ourselves his superior and write our own Genesis? Will it be a revelation from the Holy Spirit superior to the one He gave to Moses? One could continue to multiply questions but let it suffice to say that an imaginary, rationalistically based science of origins does not automatically trump actual, recorded historical events. If Collins can make Genesis 1-11 read in a manner it was not intended to be read in order to force it to conform to the "best science" of the day, in what way does his eisegesis differ from the Papal Curia of 1633?

Noll, too, cannot be excluded from the above criteria for it would seem he has done what Collins has done. He also accepts Darwinian evolution and asserts that this best science should interpret Scripture when it comes to origins. Thus he has written:

...if the consensus of modern scientists, who devote their lives to looking at the data of the physical world, is that humans have existed on the planet for a very long time, it is foolish for biblical interpreters to say that "the Bible teaches" the recent creation of human beings.¹⁰⁹

But isn't that exactly what Genesis 1-11 teaches? When one ignores outside dictates and reads Genesis 1-11 as an historical narrative, which is how it was written and how it was meant to be read, the Bible does teach "the recent creation of human beings" Noll notwithstanding. Now, Genesis 1-11 may be wrong, it may be so much ancient mythological hokum so to speak, but we are not at liberty to claim it says something it doesn't say. That is intellectually dishonest and smacks of the postmodern dictum that "all is interpretation." One may be foolish to believe it, but one is not "foolish" to say that "the Bible teaches the recent creation of human beings" because it does. Like so many evangelicals today who want to have their cake and eat it too, who want the "truth" of evolution and a Bible that can be rewritten and reinterpreted to allow this and still be called "God's word," Noll's (not surprising) answer to my assertion is as follows:

It means that, for people today to say they are being loyal to the Bible and demand belief in a recent creation of humanity as a sign of obedience to Scripture is in fact being unfaithful to the Bible, which, in Psalm 19 and elsewhere, calls upon the followers of God to listen to the speech that God has caused the natural world to speak. It is the same for the age of the earth and for all other questions involving the constitution of the human race.¹¹⁰

This is quite a charge on Noll's part for he not only condemns most of church history but he also condemns the historical understanding of general revelation. He mimics Arnold at this point. The traditional interpretation of Psalm 19 is that the heavens/skies, in essence, proclaim that an all-powerful divine Creator has created all the starry hosts that populate the night sky. They proclaim His glory (i. e., His creative attributes) no matter what culture or language or tribe sees them. Noll, on the other hand, seems to be implying, I believe, that this Psalm is instructing us to investigate the details of the natural world, and if we do we will find that Darwinian evolution is true—at least as far as the general consensus of scientists are concerned. If that is the case, two things will follow. First, we will no longer forfeit "the opportunity to glorify God for the way he has made nature (though it is almost impossible to glorify the God of evolution), nor think "we must shut up one of God's books if we want to read the other." Second, we will not be "unfaithful to the Bible." Knowing evolution is true, we will realize how foolish it is to insist on a young creation and a literal, historical Genesis 1-11 (even if that is what it teaches). And, in fact, a third thing may result; we may come to agree with Noll "that no observations are 'simple' and no texts yield to uncritical 'literal' reading—except, of course, Noll's text."¹¹¹

At this point one must pause and ask, is Noll (and those theistic evolutionists that agree with him) putting Young Earth Creationists in the same position as the Papal Curia put Galileo? Consider the following comparison. Collins notes that Galileo was accused of promoting atheism, of undermining God's plan of salvation and of casting doubt on the incarnation.¹¹² He was forced to denounce his heliocentrism as contrary to the clear "scientific" teachings of Scripture. Today, the situation is reversed. We have an imaginary scientific theory of origins possessing many serious difficulties but widely embraced by the Christian community as a whole as a settled fact, thus Scripture is to be

interpreted so as not to contradict this “settled fact” even though it seems to contradict it. A small group has arisen which does take the contradiction seriously and gives the authority to Scripture rather than to an imagined scientific theory of origins, and has the audacity to point out that the “settled fact” is not so settled after all. They are attacked mercilessly, they are accused of endangering the faith of young people, of being intellectually and theologically bankrupt, of misrepresenting God, of undermining the gospel, of sloppy scholarship, of being unfaithful to the Bible, of shutting up one of God’s two revelatory books, and of obstructing “a scientific approach to the past.” They are, indeed, it appears, what Arnold has labeled them, the villainous poster-boys of Noll’s, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.¹¹³ Perhaps one should nudge Galileo to move over in his grave for a greater enemy of the Church than he has now emerged. What a fascinating turn of events—I am considered a danger to the cross because I consider historically necessary those events that necessitated the cross. Perhaps the “sci-fi” introduction to this extended essay is not as unimaginable and far-fetched as originally intended.

XVI

It is true, though surprising in retrospect, that many if not most late 19th century evangelical theologians/scholars were deeply impacted by both Lyell’s uniformitarian geology and Darwin’s *The Origins of the Species*, one could even say intimidated if not panicked. This is the real price they paid for their inordinate “mania for science” that Noll speaks of. Liberal Christians and humanists, such as Andrew Dickson White, who wrote an anti-Christian tome titled, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1898), were doing all they could to discredit historic-biblical Christianity and pose the church as an enemy of scientific progress. The Galileo incident was distortedly played up along with the blatant untruth that the Roman Catholic Church had opposed Columbus’ voyage because the Bible taught that the earth was flat. American evangelical scholars, more than ready to believe the absolute worst about the Papacy, seemed to have accepted at face value these accusations and had no intention of being tarred with the same anti-science, obscurantist brush. It is at this time that numerous if not most, evangelicals began embracing a day-age theory of some sort or even a previous creation theory as proposed by G. H. Pemper in his book *Earth’s Earliest Ages* (1884), accepting and harmonizing some aspects of evolution and uniformitarian geology with Genesis 1 and 2, and interpreting Genesis 6-8 as a local flood rather than a universal one. From this Young Earth Creationist’s perspective it is an embarrassing episode of capitulation without even the pretence of a fight, and of unwarranted eisegesis—inexplicably so regarding the Noahic flood. It is almost as if evangelicals were frantically trying to save the Bible from itself. What is ironic about the whole thing is that these evangelicals were now doing what they condemned the Roman Catholic Church for doing, that is, under the influence of the best science of the day, forcing Scripture to read in a way it was not intended to be read when written by the author. It would seem that when it came to modern science—which through Darwinism gave us a racist anthropology and the eugenics movement in America—most 19th century evangelical shelved most of their critical faculties.

This, I think, is reflected in Hodge's comments (though he was more reticent than most)—quoted by Noll—that do not seem based on a careful investigation of the issues in the 1600s either historically or hermeneutically. Let me quote a section from it to illustrate my point:

When the Bible speaks of the foundations, or the pillars of the earth, or of the solid heavens, or of the motion of the sun, do not you and every other sane man, interpret the language by the facts of science? For five thousand years the Church understood the Bible to teach that the earth stood still in space, and that the sun and stars revolved around it. Science has demonstrated that this is not true. Shall we go on to interpret the Bible so as to make it teach the falsehood that the sun moves around the earth, or shall we interpret it by science, and make the two harmonize?¹¹⁴

It is true, of course, that we recognize a figure of speech because we understand the nature of nature. We also recognize a common figure of speech or observation is not necessarily scientific but still accurate from the observer's viewpoint. Thus we too still speak of the sun rising and setting. And, as noted above, Hodge is using the word "science" in an old-fashioned way to mean careful investigation of the natural phenomena around us vis-a-vie rigorous inductive reasoning that leads to conclusions all can agree on because all have access to this same method of investigation. Such an inductive (Baconian) method was even applied to theological studies and theology was dubbed "Queen of the Sciences." Still, Hodge is open to criticism for what he leaves out or better, should have added to the above paragraph which, had it been included, would have given a better perspective on the issue at hand. First, he fails to differentiate between observable natural phenomena and history in Scripture. Next, he makes no mention of the Bible being viewed as a scientific text by many Christians prior to the 1600s. Third, Hodge makes no mention (but should have) of the prevailing acceptance of Ptolemaic astronomy and that the Roman Catholic Church of the 1600s was doing exactly what Hodge was doing in the late 1900s—harmonizing the best science of their day with what they thought Scripture was saying. Had he done so he could have pointed out that at any given time the best science of the day may mislead as well as inform. And it is obvious he has the Galileo incident on his mind. By a little historical investigation, if he did not already know this, he could have made known the fact that even within the Roman Catholic Church there was support for interpreting verses like Psalm 19: 6 as simply descriptions of personal observation written in everyday language rather than as scientific assertion.

He might also have noted that Kepler, though an open advocate of heliocentrism, was not persecuted for his position by his church (Lutheran) or by the Catholic King of Prague in whose palace he served as court mathematician until forced out by counter-reformation politics. He might also have pointed out the hermeneutical insight Kepler and other Protestants were developing, especially regarding Scripture being considered a text on *physica*. There was no conflict between science and Scripture for Protestants like Kepler. When confronted with verses such as Psalm 104:5, "He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved," (NIV), Kepler "argued that Psalm 104 was not a

philosophical [i.e., scientific] treatise [on astronomy], but a doxological commentary to the creation story in Genesis 1.”¹¹⁵ Exactly! In other words, Kepler, raised the question of authorial intent or purpose and the possibility of eisegesis when we ignore it and/or ignore context/genre. Had Hodge, and other less cautious evangelicals such as Warfield (when it came to Darwinism) taken the trouble to investigate the issue historically and hermeneutically, Hodge (and others) could have indeed said the Roman Catholic Church of Galileo’s day taught that the Bible taught a geocentric universe, but he (and they) could have added, that was because the Roman Catholic Church was guilty of eisegesis, guilty of making verses say something the author was not saying given the context. And it did this because it rejected *Sola Scriptura* and instead canonized the opinions of the early Church Fathers through the reactionary edicts of the Council of Trent. On the other hand, they could not have said the Roman Catholic Church was going against the best science of its day.

What the heliocentric controversy did do was make theologians and exegetes go back and look more closely at Scripture. Did the authors really intend to “scientifically” teach a geocentric universe? Was that the purpose for which the verses in question were originally composed? If one embraces *Sola Scriptura*, and one is consistently and carefully using the historical-grammatical method of interpretation (as Tyndale advocated and both he and Kepler did) the answer is no. The controversy did not force people to reinterpret Scripture, say from the literal to the allegorical (as Collins implies), as the literal meaning of the Scriptures in question remained and remain unchanged. But the controversy did force them to look more closely at the central questions of context, genre, audience understanding, and authorial intent, that is, what did the author really want to say when he wrote what he did, not what do we want the author to be saying or think the author is saying because we have been influenced by an outside factor. The Ptolemaic system gave confidence to the Church that what it was mistakenly reading into these verses is what the verses were originally written to convey. A poetic statement, then, using a common observation written to praise God became an absolute scientific statement on the structure of the Solar System.

Had Hodge approached the issue in this fashion, he might have given a more balanced and thorough and thoughtful treatment of the relation of science to Scripture, and some vital insights on the danger of eisegesis, even inadvertent or unreflective eisegesis. Collins and Noll also could have done the same thing but they didn’t because they wanted to use the Galileo incident for evolution’s advantage. And Kepler is conveniently ignored. Rather than saying the prevailing scientific consensus should interpret the Bible, it might be wiser to say it can advise or inform the exegete but not dictate his ultimate interpretation. Ultimately Scripture must interpret Scripture and the possibility of eisegesis must always be an acknowledged possibility. And the hermeneutical approach must be historical-grammatical as it is the best hermeneutical method for taking authorial intent and context seriously.

This brings us back to Genesis 1-11. A statement in Scripture must stand or fall on its own merits given authorial intent, genre, and context. If Genesis 1-11 is written as an historical narrative (and it is), and in the process claims there was a historical universal

flood, or the recent creation of man, we are not at liberty to reinterpret these verses to save Scripture from an imaginary history based on an imaginary science of origins that denies this fact. It is better to admit we have a conflict between history as recorded in the Bible and history as understood and explained by Darwinians and go from there. This will, of course, create enormous faith issues and conflicts. So be it! This is to be preferred over modern evangelicals believing they have been appointed by God to apologize for God for His seeming lack of foresight in this regard. When evangelicals allegorize Genesis 1-11 or seek to reinterpret a day into a geological era or try to turn the Genesis flood into a local flood, this is exactly what they are doing. We don't say it that way, of course. Like any good assistant covering for the Boss's gaff, we blame those who came before—they were the ones who misunderstood—we throw them under the bus and spare the Boss any embarrassment. And in the process, to our credit, rescue Christianity from irrelevancy.

XVII

Let me return one more time to Noll's interesting comment that,

if the consensus of modern scientists, who devote their lives to looking at the data of the physical world, is that humans have existed on the planet for a very long time, it is *foolish* for biblical interpreters to say that "the Bible teaches" the recent creation of human beings.¹¹⁶ (Italics mine.)

Collins, in his own way, agrees:

... studies of human variation, together with the fossil record, all point to an origin of modern humans approximately a hundred thousand years ago, most likely in East Africa. Genetic analysis suggest that approximately ten thousand ancestors gave rise to the entire population of 6 billion humans on the planet. How, then, does one blend these *scientific observations* with the story of Adam and Eve?¹¹⁷ (Italics mine.)

It is his conviction that "the study of genomes leads inexorably to the conclusion that we humans share a common ancestor with other living things."¹¹⁸ What does this mean for Christians? It means that Genesis 2 "is a poetic and powerful allegory of God's plan for the entrance of the Spiritual nature (the soul) and the moral law into humanity."¹¹⁹ (Collins seems oblivious to the theological problems his own interpretation creates.)

Obviously, then, the best science, or consensus of the vast majority of scientists (is this one in the same thing?), must compel us to interpret Genesis 1-11 allegorically. Let us grant this for the moment for the sake of the argument to follow. And let me introduce it by altering slightly Noll's statement given above and consider the outcome. "If the consensus of modern scientists, who devote their lives looking at the data" of the biological and medical disciplines, is that when living things die, including and especially human beings, they do not come back to life but decompose, "it is foolish for biblical interpreters to say that 'the Bible teaches'" that Jesus literally, physically resurrected

from the dead on the third day with the same body even though Matthew chapter 28, Luke chapter 24, and John chapter 20 claim this. But then, again, it is Noll who has said that “no observations are ‘simple’ and no text yields to uncritical ‘literal’ reading” which means we can’t really be sure what these chapters mean. I am sure that Noll, Collins, and Arnold would balk at what I have just written. They would do so because the physical resurrection of Jesus in the same body is the heart of the gospel. It is to this that we initially appeal when we say Christianity is an historical religion, and these men and I believe this. Still, it is not an unfair proposition to raise. If science is our ultimate hermeneutic then shouldn’t it be applied equally across the Scriptures? And certainly the sciences of medicine and biology in general are far more empirical and far more demonstrable than Darwinian evolution, and should, then, be considered a more reliable and authoritative hermeneutic.

Most, if not all, liberal Christians and humanists, I would surmise, would agree with me, and from Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) to Hugh Schonfield (1901-1988) to the present moment have sought to prove (unsuccessfully) there has been no real, factual resurrection of Jesus. I remember to this day an article I read back in the late 1960s that appeared in the *Christian Century* in which the author claimed one did not have to believe in an actual historical resurrection of Jesus to be a Christian. And, in fact, having conceded Genesis to the uniformitarians and Darwinians, late 19th century and early 20th century evangelical scholars expended their energies trying to defend the historicity of the gospel accounts (and are still trying to do so) from the liberal/science onslaught with only limited success. In 1910, the Northern Presbyterians, at their general assembly, put forward their famous five fundamentals one must believe to be a true Christian. They were 1) that the Scriptures in the original autographs were inerrant and infallible, 2) the virgin birth of Jesus, 3) the miracles of Jesus as recorded in the gospel accounts, 4) the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the same body, and 5) the substitutionary theory of the atonement. Whether intended or not, Christianity was being reduced to an existential gospel divorced from any historical, primary foundation or root. Fourteen years later came the (very liberal) Auburn Affirmation which declared one had a right to hold alternate interpretations to the five fundamentals and still be a Presbyterian in good standing. There followed the inexorable collapse into liberalism of that bastion of conservative Presbyterianism, the academic home of Hodge and Warfield, Princeton University.

Collins, devoted evolutionary scientist that he is, however, strongly appeals to the historic eyewitness accounts and relates how they affected him:

But the more I read of biblical and non-biblical accounts of events in the first century Palestine, the more amazed I was at the historical evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ. First of all, the gospels... were put down just a few decades after Christ’s death. Their style and content suggests strongly that they are intended to be the record of eyewitnesses . . . Thus, the evidence for authenticity of the four gospels turns out to be quite strong.¹²⁰

Now, I will not fault Collins on this matter, rather I will praise him. It is obvious the Holy Spirit was drawing him to the cross. Deeply influenced by the evidentialism of C. S. Lewis, which accepted evolution and an allegorized Genesis, Collins became convinced of the historicity of Jesus Christ, His miracles, His death on the cross for his sins, and His resurrection. Collins, in fact, comes close to echoing words Benjamin Warfield wrote in 1893: “The truth of the Church’s doctrine is based upon the [great mass of] evidence for the trustworthiness of the biblical writers as teachers of doctrine.”¹²¹ These—the New Testament gospel accounts—carry the “clear marks of eyewitness history,” Collins writes, and therefore “we must hold fast to these truths.”¹²² As an historian I concur. Leaving aside for the moment the necessary regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, one could compile a very credible historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, one could probably construct a better historical argument for the truthfulness or factualness of the resurrection of Jesus than Collins can for historicity of deep-time evolution.

But all historical arguments are limited as the events historians investigate are not repeatable as are events in the experimental sciences. Therefore, without the Holy Spirit’s testimony and my faith response, I cannot prove beyond a shadow of a doubt the claims of the gospel accounts are absolutely historical, i.e., they actually happened as described. At some point both Collins and I must believe in their testimony despite the overwhelming scientific evidence that people who die stay that way. Nor can we point to anyone—and haven’t been able to in centuries—giving sight to someone born blind or commanding a dead man to come forth from his tomb and he comes forth. The best science, then, doesn’t always influence the best theology nor does the consensus of scientists always determine how one interprets Scripture—not even for Collins or Noll or Arnold. Rather, through the power of the Holy Spirit the truthfulness of the eyewitness, historical testimony is impressed upon us and we believe. What we believe are real events, things that actually happened in the past and witnessed by those present. They were not myths, not metaphors, not allegorical interpretations, but real events witnessed by and recorded by real people.

But if the gospel accounts are trustworthy eyewitness accounts worthy of holding fast to, if they truly have the right “historical ring,” then it must follow that whatever is spoken or done by our Lord in these documents is also trustworthy. Thus, when as recorded in Luke 11:17, Jesus said to the dead son of the widow of Nain, “Young man, *I* say to you, get up!” (Italics mine), that is exactly what happened. “The dead man sat up [wonderful ironic humor on Luke’s part] and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.” Yet if everything Jesus said and did is trustworthy, Collins, as well as those theistic evolutionists who agree with him, have a dilemma. Collins does not believe the book of Jonah is historically true.¹²³ Jesus did. In Luke 11: 29, 30, 32, Jesus addresses a growing crowd and charges:

This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation . . . The men of Ninevah will stand up at the last judgment with this generation and condemn it: for they repented at the preach-

ing of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here (NIV).

Matthew 12: 38-41 has a slightly different format and emphasis but the message is the same:

He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here (NIV).

Jesus’ comparison of Jonah with His own ministry requires an historical Jonah. And the fact that Jesus insist that those converted in Nineveh under Jonah’s preaching will be at the last judgment as a witness against the unbelieving Jews who heard and saw Jesus but refused to believe Him, removes His comparison from the realm of fiction, hyperbole, metaphor or allegory. Jesus affirmed Jonah was an historic person.

Nor does the problem end with Jonah. In both Luke 17: 26, 27 and Matthew 24: 36-39, Jesus references the Noachic flood in such a way as to verify its historicity. Luke 17: 26, 27 reads as follows:

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. (NIV)

Matthew’s account (24: 36-39) is almost identical:

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. (NIV)

What will it be like when Jesus returns? Look at the terrible, world-wide judgment of Noah’s flood upon a rebellious human race for a comparable example. Jesus grounds the reality of his second coming, and its judgmental consequences, on the *historical* reality of Noah’s flood. Peter does the same in II Peter 3: 3-7. There is no honest “wobble room” here. Jesus asserts the Noachic flood was an actual world-wide, historical event (as does Peter in his second epistle). God does not rest His great and compelling doctrines, such as His Son’s second coming, on myths or metaphors or allegories. They are always grounded in real, historical events.

And while Collins considers the account of the creation of Adam and Eve an allegory, “a poetic and powerful allegory of God’s plan for the entrance of the spiritual nature (the soul) and moral law into humanity,” because he cannot “blend...scientific observations with the [biblical] story of Adam and Eve,” it is clear Jesus did/does not. Again, in both

Mark 10:5-7 and Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus affirms the special creation of Adam and Eve, and by association, the first two chapters of Genesis. The issue was one of divorce—was it lawful. Once more, Jesus answers on the basis of God’s acts in history. Mark 10:6-9 reads:

Jesus replied, “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one.’ So they no longer are two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. (NIV)

Matthew’s wording and order is only minimally different so it isn’t necessary to repeat it here. In the above set of verses Jesus references Genesis one and two. And in so doing confirms the historicity of these chapters. He also asserts the direct, specific, creation of Adam and Eve by God. Once again, doctrine rests upon history. The fundamental Christian doctrine on marriage and divorce rests on a concrete act of God in time-space.

Jesus also asserted that Abel was a real person and the first prophet of God to be martyred (Gen. 4:8):

Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary (Luke 11: 50, 51 [NIV]).

Once more an early chapter of Genesis—the fourth—is confirmed as real history, not myth. It seems odd that we would consider the gospel accounts trustworthy, eyewitness documents, turning our backs as it were on the best science of our day in affirming this, but refusing at the same time to find trustworthy, at least in the historical, literal sense in which he spoke them, the words of Jesus affirming the early chapters of Genesis as real history. Clearly there is a conflict between Noll, who insists it is foolish to interpret the Bible as saying man was recently created, and Jesus if we take Jesus’ words at face value. “But at the *beginning* of creation God made them male and female” [italics mine], obviously referring to Genesis one. Is Jesus foolish in saying this? Collins says that the account of the creation of Adam and Eve is a “poetic and powerful metaphor,” Jesus says it is real history—“God made them male and female”—a direct, specific creation. Arnold, to his credit, admits the necessity of a real Adam if New Testament comparison between Adam and Christ is to be meaningful. And he raises some pertinent theological question about God simply choosing advanced primates and giving them an immortal soul. However, because of his commitment to evolution he doesn’t really offer a solution apart from evolution, so he, too, is in conflict with Mark 10:6.¹²⁴

It does seem the theistic evolutionist has an insurmountable dilemma. Either Jesus did not know these events were not really historical, which raises questions about His God-man status, or He knew they were not historically true but the people he was speaking to did so believe, so he patronized them as it were, pretending they were real events so he could make his point without side issues obstructing His message. Either way God

becomes a trickster of sorts, doesn't He, leading generation after generation of people to believe that the early chapters of Genesis were historical only to be exposed by Lyell and Darwin as a fiction? I don't see how it can be put any other way. The Jews who heard Jesus would have taken Jesus literally. Now, in light of the "revelation" of deep-time evolution, we must save Jesus from Himself so to speak. One supposes scholars who recognize that no text is simple or uncritically literal can now teach us to interpret the text in such a way as to have Jesus not really affirming what he appears to be affirming. For the theistic evolutionists there can be no other alternative but to patronize the text so that Jesus can patronize those he is speaking to. But to what purpose? Doesn't it seem strained and strange that they must do so? Is this really the God of the Bible? Is this really the way He intended His word to be understood? What we take away from such an endeavor is uncertainty, confusion, and a faith that resembles a blindfolded man walking erratically along the edge of a deep abyss. A word purported to be from God that is not trustworthy when it makes a plain, clear, literal statement is not the word of God

Let me close this section by visiting once more Theodore Mopsuestia's comments on allegorists: "What room is left for the Apostle's words, 'but I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve,' if there was no serpent, no Eve, nor any seduction elsewhere involving Adam?"¹²⁵ To paraphrase that commendable exegete, "What room is left" for Jesus' words, "Just as in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man," if there was no Noah, no ark, no God-sent, world wide flood that swept away a rebellious, god-defying generation? Or, "what room is left" for Jesus' words (on marriage and divorce), "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate," if there was no creation week culminating in the creation of man and woman directly by God, if Eve were not taken from Adam's side, made especially for Adam to be his companion and brought to him by God himself, or if Adam never exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man," (Genesis 2:23, NIV). As the Mopsuestian has noted, if "these people" are going to keep doing this, "they will have no history left." But it goes even beyond this. They will have no special revelation from God any of us can collectively trust. We are left with a form of Gnostic Christianity. The wonder and puzzlement isn't that there are any Young Earth Creationists, but that Collins and Noll and Arnold, and those of a like mind, cannot understand why?

XVIII

I want to take this claim of the importance of historical eyewitnesses and look at the Noahic flood. I believe the historicity of the Noahic flood is at the heart of the conflict between Young Earth Creationists and Darwinian evolutionists. If there was no universal, Noahic flood then Darwinian evolution is probably true. (I say probably true because Darwinian evolution has some serious problems in and of itself which evolutionists, like Collins, have trouble admitting.) And if there was no universal, Noahic flood, the Bible, hence Christianity, has some serious credibility problems. There is simply no exegetically legitimate way the Noahic flood can be allegorized or even localized. On the other hand, if there was a universal, Noahic flood, uniformitarian geology is false, Darwinian evolution is false, the age-dating of rocks and carbon matter

is radically skewed, and the claim that man shares a common evolutionary genetic ancestor with chimpanzees is nonsense. And other historical claims in Genesis 1-11 are reinforced. I could go on and on. The historical necessity of the Noahic flood is imperative.¹²⁶

Noll quotes Davis Young, an evangelical geologist who embraces Darwinian evolution to the effect that ““Geology provides no evidence whatever for a universal flood,”” but denies this in any way violates “the essence of Christianity.”¹²⁷ (Such a dichotomizing of reality is always intriguing and puzzling.) Francis Collins claims, as quoted previously, that “the first few chapters of Genesis” seem to have a “more lyrical and allegorical flavor” rather than the “marks of pure historical narrative.” On the same page he writes: “The intention of the Bible was (and is) to reveal the nature of God to humankind. Would it have served God’s purpose thirty-four hundred years ago to lecture his people about radioactive decay, geologic strata, and DNA?”¹²⁸ I agree with Collins, it would have served no purpose whatever. And Basil of Caesarea and Augustine would have probably agreed. Nor would it serve any purpose today. But what has any of that to do with the purpose of Genesis 1-11? Genesis 1-11 is an historical—not a scientific—account of origins and subsequent events that followed the creation week. Let me change Collins’ question slightly. What purpose would it have served for God to give us an historical account of the origins of the earth until the calling of Abraham but none of it is really true, it is, in fact, all a fiction?

And it is impossible for me to imagine what criteria Collins would require for, say Genesis 6-8, the Noahic flood, to possess before it could be said to bear the “marks of pure historical narrative,” that it does not already possess. That the author intended the narrative of Noah and the flood to be history is indicated by his opening words in Genesis 6:9: “This is the account of Noah.” The same introduction is used by Moses in Genesis 11:27: “This is the account of Terah,” which largely covers the Abraham narrative, Genesis 25:12: “This is the account of Abraham’s son Ishmael...,” and there follows a very brief list of Ishmael’s sons and where they lived, Genesis 25:19: “This is the account of Abraham’s son Isaac,” followed by a narrative that covers Isaac and his son Jacob, Genesis 36:1: “This is the account of Esau (that is Edom),” followed by a lengthy list of his sons and their descendents, and Genesis 37:1: “This is the account of Jacob” which is really the narrative of his youngest son, Joseph and carries us through to the end of Genesis. Thus it is safe to say that if the “account of Noah” is fictional/allegory, the rest of Genesis must be of the same genre also. Once more it has to be asserted, then, that Genesis, from first to last, is meant to be an historical narrative.

The narrative that follows “This is the account of Noah,” is a very straight-forward third person (which can easily be turned into a first person) account of God’s call of Noah and the command to build the ark with specifics as to its very large size and construction, Noah’s obedience, the universal flood, and the aftermath including the chronological genealogy of Shem up to Abraham. Nothing needs to be nuanced, it is not overly elaborate, mythical, pagan, fanciful, filled with hidden meanings or laced with innuendo. Whatever the flavor of allegory is, it is absent from this narrative. It was intended to be and reads accordingly, an historical account of a real event.

Perhaps the reason Genesis 6:9-9:29 (the flood episode proper) reads as history is because it was witnessed by eight trustworthy people; Noah and his wife, and Noah's three sons and their wives. If the gospel accounts are considered trustworthy eyewitness accounts, on what basis can we discount the trustworthiness of these eight eyewitnesses? Is it because evolution is considered true? Biology is even more true, if I may be excused for putting it this way, yet we ignore it when it comes to the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We choose historical witnesses over the universal experiential reality that death is irreversible. Could it be that the eyewitness testimony of our Lord's life and resurrection, because it in no way impinges or contradicts deep-time Darwinism, can be believed? If it did contradict deep-time evolution, would the eyewitnesses still be believable? Of course, as extensively noted above, the words of Jesus confirming the flood, the creation of Adam and Eve, and the murder of Abel, do contradict Darwinism and therefore must be explained away somehow. It seems evangelical evolutionists are selective about which science they will believe (in this case an imaginary one over a demonstrable one) and what history they will reject (a witnessed one for an imaginary one). It is obvious the witness of Noah and family contradict both uniformitarian geology and Darwinism, hence they must be silenced, their historical testimony must be denied.

But this is not possible. The witness of these eight people—keeping in mind the confusion of languages and the scattering of mankind by the Lord from Babel “over the face of the whole earth,” (Genesis 11:9, [NIV]), and also keeping in mind how quickly the scattered human race descended into a gross and blinding paganism (Romans 1:21-28)—is the common source of the over 500 universal flood legends common to the various cultures around the globe. The web site, www.nwcreation.net, has a chart comparing 35 of these legends with the Genesis account. The similarities are noteworthy.¹²⁹ That these various legends are only describing similar great river floods is a bit too self-serving on the critics behalf and is simply inadequate in explaining the common claim of total destruction by water and the saving of a few people and animals by a large vessel. As a historian, I would be derelict to ignore such an overwhelming body of ancient evidence supportive of Genesis 6:9-9:29. It is clear that ancient man shared a common memory of an ancient worldwide flood similar to that described in Genesis. The belief was so widespread and the accounts so similar that it is difficult to simply label it fiction because it doesn't agree with uniformitarian geology. As for those scholarly skeptics who would discount the possibility that these legends could be based on historical reality, let them recall this was the same attitude scholar's had toward Homer's Troy until the amateur archeologist Heinrich Schliemann unearthed it in 1871. Arnold reminds us we are to follow the truth wherever it leads and no matter how threatening it might be.¹³⁰ Yet in this instance it seems, theistic evolutionists are not willing to follow their own advise. We have a clear, lucid historical narrative in Genesis 6:9-9:29 of a universal flood. (Its writing, I might add, inspired by the Holy Spirit through God's chosen prophet, Moses.) It is affirmed by our Lord in the gospel accounts and by Peter in both of his epistles (all inspired by the Holy Spirit) and supported by a worldwide collective memory, yet it is simply dismissed by evolutionists because if such a flood really happened, Darwinian evolutionary history cannot be true.

Nor, it appears, are appeals on the part of Darwinians to uniformitarian geology as authoritative as they once might have been. The old concept that present natural processes are the key to our geological past has been seriously challenged by the rise of cataclysmic geology over the last 3 or 4 decades. Like Darwinism, Lyell's uniformitarian geology has been opened to serious question. It is now recognized that the earth's geological history is far from uniform or gradual. Rather it has been both traumatic and dramatic in formation. Riding this wave of cataclysmic geology (because it compliments so well a universal flood and post-flood interpretations), and contributing to it is a growing number of Creationist/Noahic flood geologists. Due to their continuing activities over the last 40 years or so, there now exist a growing library of geological literature interpreting the earth's strata in light of the Noahic flood and the traumatic post-flood aftermath. These Young Earth Creationist geologists who have been doing the field-work and writing the treatises are highly educated, qualified, trained, competent, and adhere to all the necessary methodological procedures of their discipline.¹³¹

It is no surprise, of course, that even evangelical Darwinians are horrified and try to, or seek to, or wish to ignore or downgrade them.¹³² These deep-time evolutionists have difficulty in even admitting there can be trained scientists who believe in a young earth and/or that Genesis 1-11 is real history. Recall Collins' opinion of Young Earth Creationists—they are bankrupt both scientifically and theologically. And Mark Noll has written the following:

Given such a disparity of conviction—between, on the one side, professionally trained scientists, who spend most of their working days looking at the physical world, and a vast evangelical populace, on the other side, with deeply settled convictions about what the Bible means—it is little wonder that thinking about God in relationship to the physical world can only creep along slowly (if at all) among evangelicals. Neither is it surprising that scientists like Young are discouraged about the apparent unwillingness of evangelicals at large (in contradistinction to many evangelical scientists) to take seriously the task of looking at the world.¹³³

I will pass over Noll's elitism and simply note that he refuses to acknowledge that there are any scientists "who spend their working days looking at the physical world" that believe in Young Earth Creationism, yet there are hundreds. This is, to be frank, intellectual denial on Noll's part, an unbecoming form of censorship. Arnold is no better, labeling Young Earth Creationists villains. Yet a refusal to acknowledge that there are highly qualified Young Earth Creation scientists, in this instance, geologists, does not refute their work nor cause them to disappear. It does demonstrate a "dark side" of deep-time evolutionists, an irrational, almost visceral reaction to any one challenging or criticizing their "science" of origins and its "historical" conclusions. Why such a passion to defend atheism? And as noted, while it used to be only Young Earth Creationists who experienced this "wrath" now it is also encompassing Intelligent Design advocates as well.¹³⁴

Darwinians may refuse to acknowledge, down-grade, label as sloppy scholarship their studies, or even resort to *ad hominem* attack (as Collins and Arnold do), but unless they can prove the work of Young Earth Creation geologists absolutely wrong, incompetent, or false, it stands as just as legitimate an interpretation of the geological data as does the uniformitarian interpretation, and, in fact, calls into question the validity of the uniformitarian geologic column and the Darwinian interpretation of the fossil record used to support deep-time evolution. Just asserting evolution is true over and over hardly qualifies as solid, demonstrable science nor does it refute the work of creationist geologists. One cannot help but be reminded that this is the type of evasive rhetoric the Papal Curia practiced with Copernican astronomy. The work of these highly qualified Creation geologists is not going to go away and it will keep growing. David Young may claim there is no geological evidence for a universal flood but Andrew Snelling, a creationist geologist with a Ph D in geology from Sydney University, and head of the research division of Answers in Genesis, disagrees. If [one] “looks at the evidence through the lens of the Bible” [as a Christian ought to do], he writes, “. . .the evidence is overwhelming.”¹³⁵ Young asserts there is no evidence for a universal flood. Young Earth Creationists beg to differ—there is a surprising amount of evidence both historic and geologic. Creationists are no longer “tinkering around the edges of scientific knowledge.” Again, one can only wonder at the puzzlement of theistic evolutionists like Noll and Collins and Arnold as to why Young Earth Creationism is so popular and why those believing it are so numerous. The answer is obvious. The answer, as Bob Dylan use to sing (in what I considered off-key) when I was much younger, the answer “is blowing in the wind.”

XIX

Before leaving Noah’s testimony, let me repeat a sentence I wrote above for this is a good time to discuss in somewhat greater detail the issue of Genesis 1-11 being mythical rather than real history. “What purpose,” I wrote, “would it have served for God to give us an historical account of the origins of the earth until the calling of Abraham but none of it is true, it is, in fact, fiction?” We have spoken again and again on Collins’ understanding of Genesis 1-11 as allegorical. Let us briefly look at the work of an Old Testament scholar who would agree with Collins in principle if not in detail. Peter Enns, author of the controversial book, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (2006), and who was professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary when the book was published, also believes Genesis 1-11 is myth. However, he gives a special definition to the word “myth” to avoid the common understanding of the word as a fanciful, non-historical, made-up story. There are “biblically educated people” who do believe this of Genesis 1-11, but Enns is not one of them. When he uses the term “myth” he is “trying to get at something deeper.”

A more generous way of defining myth is that it is *an ancient, premodern, prescientific way of addressing questions of ultimate origins and meaning in the form of stories: who are we? Where do we come from?*¹³⁶
(Italics in the original.)

Ancient people, Enns explains, did not have the methods of modern, “Scientific investigation” at their “disposal,” and, in fact, “the scientific world in which we live and that we take so much for granted was inconceivable to ancient Mesopotamia.”¹³⁷ Instead these ancients made up “lengthy stories” to answer “ultimate meaning” questions—such as their creation stories—“and attributed them to the gods.”¹³⁸

For Enns, this would include the Genesis account of creation and the universal flood. Interestingly, Enns rejects any direct borrowing from more, in his thinking, “ancient” flood accounts such as the Babylonian *Gilgamesh* epic or *Atarhasis*, or creation accounts such as *Enuma Elish*, or even earlier Sumerian versions.¹³⁹ He does, however, believe there is a “conceptual similarity.” “The biblical worldview described in Genesis is an ancient Near East one.”¹⁴⁰

For example, in referencing Abraham, Enns writes the following:

The Mesopotamian world from which Abraham came was one whose own stories of origins had been expressed in mythic categories for a considerable length of time. Moreover, the land Abraham was going to enter, the land of the Cannanites, was likewise rich in its own myths.¹⁴¹

Thus when God called Abraham out of Ur He also met him in place as it were—“An ancient Mesopotamian man who breathed the air of the ancient Near East.”¹⁴² In other words, Abraham probably “shared the worldview” of the surrounding world “and not a modern, scientific one.” This means that when “God adopted Abraham...he also adopted the mythic categories within which Abraham—and everyone else—thought.”¹⁴³ Of course, Enns assures us, God didn’t “leave Abraham in his [pagan] mythic world.” Instead, He changed, “the ancient myths so that Israel’s story would come to focus on its God, the real one” who brought the world into existence by simply speaking.¹⁴⁴ It is still a myth as far as Enns is concerned, but it is a monotheistic myth.

Enns isn’t especially friendly to the either/or categories often applied to Genesis 1-11, that is, Genesis 1-11 is either real history or only a fanciful myth. This is the creation of modern thinking, one that “presupposes...that what is historical, in a modern sense of the word, is more real, of more value, more like something God would do than myth.”¹⁴⁵ Enns doesn’t agree. Why, he argues, can’t God “use the category *we* call ‘myth’ to speak to ancient Israelites?” Enns believes He did just that and criticizes conservative evangelicals for thinking “of myth as something ancient people thought up because they didn’t want to listen to what God said, and so at the outset of the discussion the Bible is already set up in *full contrast* to the ancient Near Eastern literature.”¹⁴⁶ This is a major mistake because over the last century and a half of archeological discovery we have come to realize “as perhaps never before in the history of the church...how truly provisional and incomplete certain dimensions of our understanding of Scripture can be.”¹⁴⁷

Nor does Enns give much credence to the idea that the Genesis accounts might be the original account handed down from one true believing generation to the next, leaving the pagan myths only “parodies and perversions of the Israelite original.” This flies in the

face of “the available evidence,” and would make it next to impossible “for someone holding to such a view to have a meaningful conversation with linguists and historians of the ancient world.”¹⁴⁸ Enns does concede that “the biblical account along with its ancient Near Eastern counterparts, assumes the factual nature of what it reports.” In other words, those who told these stories and those who heard them, believed they were historical, that things actually happened as described, dysfunctional gods and all. Of course, we know better, as Enns makes clear in an extended summary statement of sorts. I quote it in full so the reader may understand the magnitude of Enns assertions:

Therefore, the question is not the degree to which Genesis conforms to what we think is a pagan description of origins. It is a fundamental misunderstanding of Genesis to expect it to answer questions generated by a modern world, such as whether the days were literal or figurative, or whether the days of creation can be lined up with modern science, or whether the flood was local or universal. The question that Genesis is prepared to answer is whether Yahweh, the God of Israel, is worthy of worship. And that point is made not by allowing ancient Israelites to catch a glimpse of a spherical earth or a heliocentric universe. It is wholly incomprehensible to think that thousands of years ago God would have felt constrained to speak in a way that would be meaningful only to Westerners several thousand years later. To do so borders on modern, Western arrogance. Rather Genesis makes its case in a way that ancient men and women would have readily understood—indeed the only way.¹⁴⁹

XX

In a sense, there is nothing new in Enns’ take on Genesis 1-11. It has been around for quite some time. What is interesting is the way he puts together his argument including the politically correct statement that it is Western arrogance to think God had only us in mind when he revealed Genesis 1-11. Hopefully, of course, He did have us in mind as well as the ancients when he addressed them. Scripture seems to support this view (Rom. 15:4). And behind Enns’ archeological evidence, though he never brings it up, is an acceptance of deep-time evolution and uniformitarian geology. This is the modern science the ancients did not have and could not understand. Enns’ argument parallels Collins’ at this point. The modern science argument, however, is a straw-man argument of sorts because as I have noted over and over, the issue isn’t about science. Genesis 1-11 is deliberately written as an historical narrative anchored by the chronological genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 that in essence deliberately ties Abraham to a real, historical Adam. Knowing modern science or modern historical methodology plays no part in grasping this. If it is not true history, the Bible collapses theologically and all attempts to save it are so much self-serving folly. Jesus cannot be the second Adam come to redeem us if there was no historical first Adam who brought us under the judgment of death in the first place. There is simply no escaping this historical necessity.

The Enns’ type scenario always raises a host of questions. Who, I ask myself, made up these elaborate creation myths to begin with—what were *they* smoking?—and how

did they get anyone to believe them in the first place? And why attribute creation to the “gods,” often petty, hostile, dysfunctional gods at that? If man evolved, why would he even imagine gods and fanciful, elaborate stories in the first place? Oh, I know we have our 21st century answers, such as Enns’ or as some have suggested, we have a god gene, but they are just that, 21st century answers imposed upon ancient man by those who accept Darwin and Lyell. Indeed, history, as far back as we can take it, shows man is religious.¹⁵⁰ The Bible does teach there is a spiritual dimension to creation and Paul reminds us that behind the idols are demons (I Cor. 10: 18-21). (Yes, real demons.) The Bible also teaches that man was monotheistic before he became polytheistic. If that is true, does it not follow that the creation “myths” would first be monotheistic? Enns either ignores this or doesn’t believe it. It is also of interest to note that like flood myths only more numerous, creation stories are found among every tongue and tribe. Why? Why would evolving man believe he was uniquely created no matter where he was located geographically? Was there one common source or did each tribe create its own creation story?

Enns seems to reject the thrust of Romans one when he criticized conservative evangelicals for thinking “of myths as something ancient people thought up because they didn’t want to listen to what God said, and so at the outset of the discussion the Bible is already set up in full contrast to the ancient Near East literature.”¹⁵¹ However that is just the point isn’t it—it can’t help but be if Romans one is true. Romans 1: 18-25 teaches that fallen mankind, from the earliest days “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” and become foolish idolaters. We cannot have it both ways, that is, that Romans one is true but on the other hand ancient man made up creations myths out of whole cloth peopled with dysfunctional gods and goddesses to answer ultimate meaning questions. One cannot help but think that Enns, like Collins, is at odds with these verses in Romans.

In addition, even if we concede Enns position for the sake of argument, a creation story is one thing, but why a story of a universal flood if it never happened? Nor, when one considers from a pagan perspective why mankind was to be destroyed—the chief god, Enlil, could get no sleep because men were too noisy 24/7—can one say that any ultimate meaning questions were being answered by inventing such a myth? We are left, then, with a bit of a conundrum. A pagan myth invented to answer ultimate meaning questions that doesn’t answer any ultimate meaning questions. Or maybe it was only a great river flood exaggerated into a universal, earth destroying flood. But why, to what end?

Enns also denies the possibility that Genesis 1-11 represents a pure version of beginnings passed down through a faithful remnant because there is no paper trail archeologically so to speak. Nor does he believe it is a true history of beginnings revealed by God to Abraham. (That would be impossible because Abraham would not have comprehended modern science.) Enns seems to imply that prior to his calling by God, Abraham was probably a pagan, “an ancient Mesopotamian who breathed the air of the ancient world” like his father Terah.¹⁵² Abraham shared the world view of those around him not a “modern scientific one.” Therefore when “God adopted Abraham,” as Enns puts it, “...he also adopted the mythic categories” that shaped Abraham’s mind-

set.¹⁵³ One must assume, then Abraham believed, before being called out by God, the *Gilgamish* epic, including the flood story therein with Utnapishtim as its hero as well as the creation of man as described in the grossly pagan myth, *Enuma Elish*. But God, in calling Abraham out of pagan Ur, also changed the pagan myths into monotheistic myths. He changed, Enns writes, “The ancient myths so that Israel’s story would come to focus on its God, the real one who brought the world into existence by simply speaking.” Only, of course, as we moderns know, he really didn’t do it that way, at least not as described in Genesis 1-11.

If the above is true, if Enns is right, one is tempted to say that at heart God lied to Abraham. Enns would vigorously and vehemently deny this. God spoke to Abraham in the only terms Abraham could understand. It is unfair to impose modern questions (i.e., were the 6 days literal—though ancient Israel believed they were literal) upon ancient mankind or ask it to have known about modern science. Enns concedes that “the biblical account... assumes the factual nature of what it reports,” meaning it would be safe to assume Abraham came to believe Genesis 1-11 was true history (including the fact that Shem, Noah’s son, was his not too distant progenitor)—that this is the way things began and unfolded. Evidently so did Moses, the Israelites, Jesus, the Apostles, the church from post-Apostolic times to the nineteenth century when evangelicals, confronted by evolution and uniformitarianism, began to vacillate and equivocate. The blame for the church left dangling in the wind confused and looking foolish because it trusted in a straight forward historical narrative, chronological genealogies included, must be placed at God’s doorstep. There is no other way to understand it. And he added insult to injury by allowing unbelievers to discover what really happened regarding “creation” and man’s earliest beginnings. This hardly fits in with the biblical teachings of how God relates to his people. This is not a difficulty that can be brushed lightly aside by claiming ancient man simply could not grasp modern science. The question becomes one of reliability. Is God’s revelation in regard to history trustworthy in and of itself, apart from modern science? Is it understandable apart from modern science?

In fact, the argument that Abraham didn’t have a modern scientific worldview simply is not a valid one. Abraham would not need to grasp that the earth revolves around the sun or the DNA helix for God to give him a creation story devoid of falsehoods. Why was it necessary to go into the “how” in such detail if it never happened—any of it? If Abraham was God’s friend, if he trusted God and left Ur and then Haran, if he believed God would give him a son and that his descendents would be as numerous as the stars in heaven, if as Jesus said in John 8:56, “Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my [Jesus’] day; he saw it and was glad,” am I to believe that Abraham lacked the intellectual ability, or the faith to understand if God only gave a general creation account that left out “hows” that had never happened in the first place? Surely it would have answered Abraham’s ultimate meaning questions and God would not have misled future generations of believers.

The problem of a universal flood as described in Genesis chapters 6-8 is even more difficult to understand if Enns’ interpretation is the correct one. Why would God tell Abraham He destroyed the world by a universal flood—a judgment brought upon the

world because of its great wickedness—with the exception of righteous Noah and family, and go into specific and rational details if it never happened? Are we to believe that if God had told Abraham that there had never been a universal flood, that it truly was a pagan myth, Abraham would not have been able to intellectually handle this truth because he was too steeped in mythological categories to accept a rational statement by God? Is this the impression one gets in reading Abraham’s story in Genesis? (There suddenly and irreverently comes into my mind a scene from the movie *A Few Good Men* where Jack Nicholas [God?] is shouting at Tom Cruise [Abraham], “You can’t handle the truth!”) Be that as it may, to use Enns own words, this is indeed “modern western arrogance,” only this time a modern academic arrogance, patronizing the past and its people under the influence of modern science. It is noteworthy that ancient man has two memories he enshrined in his most important myths, stories, or legends. One is that man was specifically created by the gods/goddesses, or God. The other is that a universal flood—brought on by the gods or God—destroyed all but a few humans and some animals, and these usually survived in a great boat of some kind. According to Enns and all who hold to Darwinism, these are the silly fancies of emerging, evolving man, and an inept God who had to go along because He could not convince anyone, including Abraham (and maybe even Jesus), otherwise. I think the time has come for evangelicals to take stock of the direction they are drifting in their desire to be relevant and up to date.

XXI

It may seem strange that any one would claim Jesus as their savior and that God “communes with his people through prayer and spiritual insight”¹⁵⁴ yet at the same time deny there is any evidence of God’s direct intervention in, and direct sustaining of, his creation. To put it simply, there is no evidence of Intelligent Design in nature. Nevertheless, this is Collins’ position.¹⁵⁵ In some ways, despite his faith, Collins differs little from Richard Dawkins when it comes to explaining origins. From the rationalists’ perspective, it is all caused by random mutation (chance) and the forces of natural selection which somehow translate into better survival qualities which in turn bring on new species. As far as Collins is concerned, “Evolution, as a mechanism, can be and must be true.”¹⁵⁶ And, according to Collins, “Once evolution got underway, no special supernatural intervention was required.”¹⁵⁷

As noted earlier, the above puts Collins and those of a like mind at clear odds with Romans 1:18-20. It goes even deeper. For all intents and purposes, God is “absent” from the natural world that has evolved and continues to evolve. For example Collins writes:

Science *reveals* that the universe, our own planet, and life are engaged in an evolutionary [Darwinian] process. The consequences of that can include the unpredictability of the weather, the slippage of a tectonic plate, or the *misspelling of a cancer gene* in the normal process of cell division. If at the beginning of time God chose to use these forces to create human beings, then the inevitability of these other painful consequences was also assured. Frequent miraculous interventions would be at least as chaotic in the physical realm as they would be in interfering with human acts of free will.¹⁵⁸ (Italics added.)

The last sentence in the above quote doesn't really make much sense. "Frequent miracles" occurred daily around Jesus caused by Jesus and no chaos ensued and human free will was ignored or overridden. And over against Collins "chance" world which God only set in motion is, for example, Exodus 4:11 which reads, "The Lord said to him [Moses], 'Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?'" (NIV). Would not this seem to contradict the notion of random mutation causing cancer? If people are born deaf or blind, evidently God has so ordained it as another set of verses—John 9:1-3—also make clear. From a Scriptural perspective, there are, then, no accidental, random mutations. Such a mighty, sovereign God may make us uneasy but we don't have to guess if God is somehow involved in this world—Scripture makes it clear that He is. And if Romans 1:18-20 is true, so does nature.

Collins, due to his commitment to accept a rationalistically conceived Darwinism, seems unwilling to accept this most biblical of proclamations. Thus, though we may believe "that the glorious beauty of a flower or the flight of an eagle" are the result "of a supernatural" being intervening, it really is the result, we now know, of "molecular mechanisms, genetic pathways, and natural selection..." presumably coming about by accident.¹⁵⁹ It is not that Collins does not believe God is behind it all, because he does. "The eloquence behind life's complexity is indeed reason for awe and for belief in God..." But there is a caveat to this confession—"but not in the simple, straight forward way that many found so compelling before Darwin came along."¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Collins confesses that "The Big Bang cries out for a divine explanation," and writes: "It forces the conclusion that nature had a defined beginning. I cannot see how nature could have created itself. Only a supernatural force that is outside of space and time could have done that."¹⁶¹

Collins believes this not because of biblical revelation to that effect, nor, now that the blinders have been removed from his eyes through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and the truth of Romans 1:18-20 is now obvious, but rather, apparently, by a leap of faith alone that would have pleased Soren Kierkegaard no end. Collins sees no unsolvable conflict between "a rigorous scientists" and one who believes in a personal God because,

Science's domain is to explain nature. God's domain is in the spiritual world, a realm not possible to explore with the tools and language of science. It must be examined with the heart, the mind, and the soul—and the mind must find a way to embrace both realms.¹⁶²

Toward the latter portion of *The Language of God*, Collins proposes renaming theistic evolution "BioLogos," to start afresh as it were, and writes: "Unlike Intelligent Design, BioLogos is not intended as a scientific theory. Its truth can be tested only by the spiritual logic of the heart, the mind, and the soul."¹⁶³

With such a mind-set, obviously the Intelligent Design Movement does not fare well under Collins' scrutiny. He claims that "as a geneticist, a biologist, and a believer in

God” he takes the movement with all seriousness but this is difficult to confirm when one considers his objections.¹⁶⁴ If Intelligent Design “had merit on scientific grounds,” he writes (forgetting Copernicus), there ought to be more support for it among “rank and file working biologists...,” especially among the many believing biologists. “This has not happened, however, and Intelligent Design remains a fringe activity with little credibility within the mainstream scientific community.”¹⁶⁵

Collins is unimpressed with the arguments of the Intelligent Design advocates (which would include Young Earth Creationists). He considers the emphasis between macroevolution and microevolution an arbitrary one because “larger changes that result in new species are a result of a succession of smaller incremental steps.”¹⁶⁶ (Collins has never seen this occur, of course, but still fervently believes this to be true.) Collins also cautions against appealing to the “God of the Gaps” in suggesting God intervened to create DNA or RNA simply because scientists have not yet figured out how these came about “naturally”. Eventually they will, he confidently asserts, so this is not a good “place for a thoughtful person to wager his faith.”¹⁶⁷

The same holds true for the “Cambrian explosion.” Supposedly about 550 million years ago there suddenly appeared “a great number of diverse” invertebrates “in the fossil record.” Even many secular Darwinians, such as the late Stephen Jay Gould, have “questioned how evolution could account for” such an explosion of invertebrate species. Collins, however, is not one of these. It is quite possible he believes (showing not a smidgen of doubt about deep-time, random evolution), that the “so-called Cambrian explosion might...reflect a change in conditions that allowed fossilization of a large number of species that had actually been in existence millions of years.”¹⁶⁸

With this defense in place, Collins once more warns believers to eschew the ever-failing God of the Gaps:

While attempts have been made by certain theists to argue that the Cambrian explosion is evidence of the intervention of some supernatural force, a careful examination of the facts does not seem to warrant this. This is another “God of the Gaps” argument, and once again believers would be unwise to hang their faith upon such a hypothesis.¹⁶⁹

Collins expends most of his effort refuting the idea of irreducible complexity, an important component of the Intelligent Design argument. Irreducible complexity is a concept that asserts that certain biological structure in nature are so complex and intricate—with interdependent parts such as those found in bacterial flagellum (which Collins admits “is a nanotechnology engineering marvel”)—that Darwinian evolution as understood is simply unable to explain or create them. And if Darwinian evolution cannot explain or create them then the only alternative must be an Intelligent Designer.

Personally, I find the term irreducible complexity a marvelous term to use when referencing Genesis one and user friendly for Young Earth Creationists. God created every living thing to reproduce after its own kind. Therefore every living thing (“Kind”)

God created is irreducibly complex—it cannot change into some other “Kind.” However, as a great many Intelligent Design Movement advocates accept deep-time evolution (and these are the ones Collins is addressing), one must look at it from their perspective and they basically understand irreducible complexity as evidence that there is a creator God overseeing and occasionally intervening in the evolutionary process. Collins, of course, will have none of it.

He gives three reasons why rationalistic Darwinian scientists reject irreducible complexity and therefore Intelligent Design. First, any good science theory must a) offer experimental ways for verification and b) predict “other findings.” Intelligent Design, as Collins puts it, “falls profoundly short in this regard.” Why? Because there is no way for science to verify a supernatural intervention. Accordingly, the Intelligent Design “proposal of the intervention of supernatural forces to account for complex multicomponent biological entities is a scientific dead end....”¹⁷⁰ This is true, of course, except for the finished product. The blind man of John 9 received his sight through Jesus’ action but had any modern scientists been present would they have denied he could see because they could not offer a scientific, that is, a naturalist explanation? Perhaps they would have argued, like Collins, that this isn’t good science. Science, then, is limited in offering possible answers to every phenomena that occurs in nature. It may offer an explanation but that doesn’t mean it is a convincing explanation to one who questions Darwinism (and even, perhaps, to other Darwinists), especially in the area of origins. This raises the interesting possibility that in offering an explanation science is offering pure fiction. Second, Collins claims Intelligent Design advocates can offer “no [rationalistic] mechanism by which the postulated supernatural interventions would give rise to complexity.”¹⁷¹ (God speaking is simply not sufficiently scientific as far as Collins is concerned. Poor God, so out of touch with modern “scientific” man. Being all-powerful does seem to have its drawbacks.)

Third, Collins believes recent “research” shows that examples of irreducible complexity touted by the Intelligent Design people are not irreducibly complex after all. Deep-time, random evolutionary explanations can be offered that are sufficient to refute irreducibility. In fact, to prove his point, Collins takes on three prized example of irreducible complexity—the human blood-clotting cascade, the human eye, and the bacterial flagellum—and offers counter, deep-time, Darwinian explanations showing “how *they could have* been assembled by evolution in a gradual step-by-step process,” (italics mine).¹⁷² In the section to follow, I’ll take a close look at Collins’ critique of Intelligent Design’s understanding of the bacterium flagellum, but for now let us consider his conclusion. “So, scientifically,” Collins writes, “ID fails to hold-up, providing neither an opportunity for experimental validation nor a robust foundation for its primary claim of irreducible complexity.”¹⁷³ However, its greater failure is theological. Intelligent Design is a “God of the Gaps” theology—that is, where we cannot rationalize nature’s workings, we appeal to God as an explanation. Such theological appeals, Collins claims, have been made before only to fail. “But these theories,” he notes, “have a dismal history:”

Advances in science ultimately fill in these gaps to the dismay of those who

had attached their faith to them. Ultimately a “God of the Gaps” religion runs a huge risk of simply discrediting faith. . . . Intelligent Design fits into this discouraging tradition, and faces the same ultimate demise.¹⁷⁴

As far as Collins is concerned, then, the Intelligent Design Movement is not only not good science but it threatens to undermine faith in God not strengthen it. He himself, of course, leaves us, from a human perspective, with a random, accidental universe tumbling erratically, like a drunken acrobat, through endless eons.

XXII

Collins is convinced a rationalistic, deep-time Darwinism can explain complexity in nature. While he admits that biological structures can be complex he denies they are irreducibly complex as Intelligent Design advocates claim. Well, actually, they are in the modern era, but in the past all things are possible for the Darwinist—and they easily convince one another. As mentioned above, Collins takes three examples of irreducible complexity proposed by Intelligent Design advocates and offers a Darwinian explanation supposedly thereby refuting the Intelligent Design argument (and in the process excluding God from nature).

Nevertheless Intelligent Design folk (which in a restricted sense would include a Young Earth Creationist such as myself) do not seem to realize they have been refuted, and if refuted defeated, and if defeated rendered superfluous. They have not modified their assertions, backtracked, folded their tents and slunk away in the gloom of humiliation, and it doesn't seem they are shrinking in numbers. What is going on? Why aren't they convinced? Are we really just a bunch of religious nuts who can't face reality? Let us take a close look at Collins' argument and try to understand why he believes Intelligent Design has suffered a fatal wound at the hands of the deep-time, random evolutionists, and why I wonder why he thinks so and remain an unconvinced Young Earth villain.

Collins is particularly pleased to “undercut” the Intelligent Design Movements claims of irreducible complexity for the *bacterial flagellum* for it is, in Collins words, “the poster child of ID.”¹⁷⁵ To understand Collins' refutation of the flagellum's “irreducible complexity” we need to understand what is being claimed and denied. The flagellum is a molecular kind of “outboard motor” that allows the bacterium possessing it to move in different directions:

The structure of the flagellum, which consists of about 30 different proteins, is really quite elegant. It includes miniature versions of a base anchor, a drive shaft, and a universal joint. All of this drives a filament propeller. The whole arrangement is a nanotechnology engineering marvel.¹⁷⁶

Now, if any genetic mutation were to occur within any one of the 30 proteins the complete “machine” would be rendered useless. So not only is it a “nanotechnology engineering marvel” but a very precariously balanced and delicate one at that. The

argument of the Intelligent Design people (in this case Collins references Michael Behe's explanation but surprisingly offers no citation the reader can consult) goes as follows:

...such a complex device could never have come into being on the basis of Darwinian processes alone. [Behe] postulates that one component of this complex outboard motor might have evolved by chance over a long period of time, but there would have been no selective pressure to maintain it unless twenty-nine developed at the same time.¹⁷⁷

Collins also notes that William Dembski, another leading Intelligent Design proponent (again without citation), has "crunched the numbers" and concludes "that the probability of such accidental coevolution of multiple independently useless components is almost infinitely small."¹⁷⁸

But Collins believes there is a fatal flaw in the Behe/Dembski scenario. The assertion of the flagellum's irreducible complexity,

...rests upon the assumption that the individual subunits of the flagellum could have had no prior useful function of some other sort, and therefore the motor could not have been assembled by recruiting such components in a step-wise fashion, driven by the forces of natural selection.¹⁷⁹

This, Collins is convinced, is a misdirected assumption. According to Collins, "recent research"[?] renders null and void the assertions of Intelligent Design:

Specifically, comparisons of protein sequences from multiple bacteria has *demonstrated* several components of the flagellum are *related* to an entirely different apparatus used by certain bacteria to inject toxins into other bacteria that they are attacking.¹⁸⁰ (Italics mine.)

We are not informed as to how they are related or why this is important except to realize that as far as deep-time, random evolutionists are concerned similarity always means one evolved from the other sometime in the mythical past. The apparatus Collins is referring to is called "type III secretory apparatus" and, according to Collins, "provides a clear 'survival of the fittest' advantage to organisms that posses it." And sure enough, he next presumes that certain genes of this poisonous apparatus "were duplicated *hundreds of millions of years ago*" (italics mine) and somehow enlisted "for a new use." These, in turn, combined [somehow] "with other proteins carrying out simpler functions" and at some point, Collins asserts, "the entire motor was ultimately generated."¹⁸¹

Collins is willing to admit that he doesn't have an "air tight" argument (the understatement of the century):

Granted, the type III secretory apparatus is just one piece of the flagellum puzzle, and we are far from filling in the whole picture (if we ever can). But each new puzzle piece provides a *natural* explanation for a step that

ID had regulated to supernatural forces, and leaves its proponents with smaller and smaller territory to stand upon.¹⁸² (Italics mine.)

At this point, despite the above admission, Collins almost smugly believes he has the better of the argument. But does he? Let us take a closer look for Collins own argument is based on many unprovable assumptions.

First, as we noted earlier, Collins unabashedly believes that God used a random (accidental), deep-time Darwinian evolution to bring about the present natural world. Therefore any scenario that would propose God as directly involved in the creation of life in any way is axiomatically wrong and even deceptive. Such a close minded approach means *a priori* that the Intelligent Design claim of irreducible complexity is mistaken no matter how strong the argument or how impressive the probability mathematics showing the impossibility of random evolution creating a complex structure. In modern science only naturalistic explanations (i.e., nature is its own Creator) are acceptable—whether provable or not—which means that deep-time, random evolution is the only acceptable theory of origins. And where and when deep-time, random evolution operated nothing is impossible, thus it can never be wrong or falsified. Evolution is the only science in which fiction is accepted as fact. Collins whole argument, then, is built on a fictional past and circular reasoning.

Due to protein similarities, part of Collins’ solution to the evolution of the flagellum is through genetic duplication of elements of the type III secretory apparatus. “Presumably,” he writes, “the elements of this structure were duplicated hundreds of millions of years, and then recruited for a new use; by combining this with other proteins that had previously been carrying out simpler functions, the entire motor was ultimately generated.”¹⁸³ But one still has to wonder—wouldn’t all 30 “parts” have to be assembled at once to create a functioning flagellum? If not, if it was assembled slowly, piece by piece so to speak, what function would the evolving “thing-a-ma-jig” serve on its way to becoming a working flagellum? So, does Collins’ explanation really refute Behe’s assertion that

One component [out of 30] of this complex outboard motor might have evolved by chance over a long period of time, but there would have been no selective pressure to maintain it unless the other twenty-nine developed at the same time. Yet none of these would have enjoyed any selective advantage either until the entire structure was assembled?¹⁸⁴

In other words, whether the “new proteins” were constructed out of random genetic material or in large part from functionless duplicate genes that were supposedly “recruited for a new use,” all 30 must be in place and properly configured so to speak before the outboard motor goes put-put-put. For until all thirty are in place what selective pressure is there to maintain any one of the thirty no matter what its source or prior function so that each will be ready to do its part once all 30 proteins are in place? Is random mutation suspended at this point? It is no small thing Collins is so casually proposing. It would seem Collins doesn’t really answer Behe’s objection. He simply

brushes it aside. To claim these functionless genes are being “driven by the forces of natural selection” is not only self-serving but vague in the extreme, even mystical. This is not to deny natural selection. I am just objecting to the omnipotent status that is often attributed to it by Darwinists. Too often it seems to be a way of avoiding explaining or demonstrating that which cannot be explained or demonstrated, only invoked. Exactly what “forces of natural selection” (and how) are working on a duplicate gene that has no function by itself, and that is dependent on 29 other components before it can “realize” its own ultimate purpose? If it is recruited for a new use how did its reprogramming come about? Was it by continuous random mutation? Isn’t this a bit of pure fiction itself? Is this even possible at the level Collins is proposing? And just what was that new use and in what way did it contribute to the better survivability of the host of which it is a part? And, of course, at this point its purpose is only transitional for it is not yet part of the bacterium’s flagellum. So would not another transition, at a minimum, have to take place for this homeless, “orphan” gene? Collins offers us no answers beyond the ubiquitous workings of natural selection. Indeed, we are back to imaginary science—fiction if you will. And beneath and behind Collins’ scenario, as mentioned above, is the assumption that deep-time evolution is *a priori* true.

When Behe suggested—as a mechanism by which God brought about irreducible complexity during the course of deep-time, random evolution—sleeper genes which had been “preloaded” into “primitive” life and “at an appropriate time hundreds of millions of years later” awakened to help create “complex multi-component molecular machines,” that is, irreducibly complex machines, Collins summarily dismissed the possibility:

Setting aside the fact that no primitive organisms can be found today that contains this cache of genetic information for future use, our knowledge of the mutational rate of genes that are not being utilized makes it highly improbable that such a storehouse of information would have survived long enough to be of any use.¹⁸⁵

Still, what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander. Would not the same principle of genetic mutation of unutilized genes apply also to the nonfunctioning duplicate genes that supposedly originated from the “type III secretory apparatus?” And one might also note the smuggled purpose-words used by Collins to help the reader understand the inevitability of the outcome of a process that is supposedly completely accidental. Thus the nonfunctioning duplicate genes are [immediately?] “*recruited* for a new use,” (italics mine). Recruited? How does a completely accidental process recruit? Note also that these “recruited” components are “*driven* by the forces of natural selection,” (italics mine). Driven? Driven where and how and by whom or what? Just what are these mysterious forces of natural selection that recruit and drive a gene without a function (purpose) thereby giving it one? Words like “recruit” and “driven” are hardly value-neutral terms. While on the one hand Darwinians deny teleology, on the other they smuggle it into their naturalistic scenario on how life originated and evolved. They must, of course, otherwise they would have no story to tell. (Maybe these are Peter Enns’ modern myth makers.) If evolutionists were to use value-neutral terms such as accidentally, randomly, without rhyme or reason, outlandishly against all odds a nonfunctioning gene received a series of beneficial mutations, as impossible as that is,

that gave it a new function, they wouldn't sound so convincing but at least they would be more honest.

In addition, one can't help but wonder that if the Intelligent Design folk had labeled the "type III secretory apparatus" an example of irreducible complexity (and it certainly seems like one), the Darwinians such as Collins would have done "research" to show that components of the "type III secretory apparatus" were "related" to the proteins that make up the flagellum, and developed an evolutionary scenario to show how the "type III secretory apparatus" evolved in side-step fashion, nonfunctioning duplicate genes and all, from the flagellum which certainly gives to those bacteria that possess it a "survival of the fittest advantage." And how do we know this is not what happened if we accept random evolution? How do we know the "type III secretory apparatus" came first? Assumptions abound but hard facts are scarce.

Finally it should be mentioned (yet again) that Collins' explanation on how the flagellum came to be is not based upon demonstrable experimentation but rather on pure imagination. Collins and friends imagine this is what transpired. Yet no one has witnessed or is witnessing a flagellum developing either in nature or the laboratory. In fact, when one looks around at the various life forms one cannot help but be impressed, despite assurances that Darwinian evolution is still proceeding apace, at how irreducibly complex all of life appears. Yes, change is taking place but there appears to be a dearth of transitional forms indicating macroevolution (a term Collins disdains) is still working 24/7 as it supposedly once did. Whatever mutations are taking place seem mostly deleterious (cancer or MS or ?), some (perhaps) are neutral (one blue eye, one green eye), but can any of them really be beneficial as evolutionists claim? Assertions are made to this end but can they really be proved? (I will discuss one such possibility—the Blue Moon butterflies of the Samoan Islands—in the next section for it is a telling commentary on this present discussion.) Yes, certain bacteria have developed strong resistance to antibiotics and the HIV virus is constantly mutating making many wonder if a vaccine will ever be developed. But does anyone believe we are on the verge of a modern evolutionary breakthrough in which a bacteria is about to evolve into "other than a bacteria" or that the HIV virus is about to evolve into "other than a virus?" Is this not the heart of what deep-time, random Darwinism is all about? If we accept the axiom that "the present is the key to the past," and we certainly lean on this axiom when we accept the dating of rocks, and in uniformitarian geology, and when liberals wish to deny the miracles in the Bible—especially in the gospels—if we, then, accept this axiom and apply it to Darwinian evolution, we would have to say that while a great deal of genetic mutation is taking place, Darwinian evolution (macroevolution) does not occur except in a Darwinian scientist's imagination.

The Darwinian cladist, Henry Gee, author of *Deep Time: Cladistics, The Revolution in Evolution*, has succinctly noted that "such tales are sustained more in our minds than in reality...." They "tell us not what really happened, but what we think happened." However, Gee points out, "such scenarios are subjective," and because they cannot be tested, "unscientific." Their acceptance is not based "on scientific tests" but on the authority of those asserting them—in this case the Darwinian scientific establishment.

But, Gee concludes that this “assumption of authority is profoundly mischievously and dangerously unscientific.”¹⁸⁶ One would never come across such a disclaimer reading Collins. It is always nice when a deep time evolutionist is honest about the limitations and assumptions of Darwinism.

XXIII

The LiveScience internet article (itself a review of an article that appeared in *Science*, July 13, 2007,¹⁸⁷ begins with the breathless announcement that “A population of butterflies has evolved in a flash on a South Pacific island to fend off a parasite.”¹⁸⁸ The title of the (review) article is even “spicier,” proclaiming in attention grabbing headlines, “Evolution Occurs in the Blink of an Eye.” It is obvious, at this point, before one even reads further, that Darwinian evolution will be “proved.”

The gist of the LiveScience article is this: The butterfly *Hypolimnas bolina* a.k.a. the Blue Moon butterfly, teetered on the brink of extinction because a bacterium with the charming name (but not charming manner) of *Wolbachia* which infested only the female, selectively killed only the male embryos. Hmm. The situation became extremely critical with the male population reduced to 1% and extinction looming ever more certain. Then, somehow, somehow a male Blue Moon developed, activated, evolved—did something—a suppressor gene(s) that blocks the anti-male homicidal tendency of the *Walbachia* parasite. The end result, now that a male population exists that can neutralize the parasite’s proclivity, is that the male-female ratio, in a matter of months, has almost achieved a one to one ratio and the immediate future of the *Hypolimnas bolina* seems secure.

Now, I don’t think it matters whether one is an atheist or theist, all can be impressed with such a display of resiliency on the part of what I would call one of God’s creations. Just as fascinating is the Darwinian interpretation given to this event. The authors (7) of the report in *Science* concluded with these words:

The nature of the processes targeted by sex ratio distorters [the *Walbachia* bacterium]...suggests that intense selection for suppression could drive the evolution of core developmental traits that otherwise remain stable over time. With *Wolbachia* being just one of many widespread sex ratio distorters, it is probable that such phenomena occurred in the past on many branches of the tree of life.¹⁸⁹

In other words, our authors seem to be implying, scenarios such as this played a major role in stimulating evolutionary progress because the struggle to survive makes a species more fit to contribute to the overall success of deep-time evolution. The review article in LiveScience.com was even more profuse about the “wonders” of evolution as noted in its opening sentence—“A population of butterflies has *evolved* in a flash on a South Pacific island to fend of a deadly parasite,” (italics mine). The writer of the LiveScience. Com review also quotes one of the authors (Gregory Hurst) of the *Science* magazine report: “We usually think of *natural selection* as acting slowly, over hundreds or thousands of

years. But the example in this study happened in the blink of an eye, in terms of evolutionary time,” (italics author’s).¹⁹⁰ The scientists involved in this study believe (evidently more through a process of elimination rather than direct laboratory observation), that the male Blue Moon “found a way to *stealthily overcome* the parasite” by “evolv[ing] suppressor genes to shield against the parasite,” (italics author’s).¹⁹¹

What lesson should we garner from this unique natural event? It “illustrates,” the author of the LiveScience review article tells us, “the power of positive *natural selection* on suppressor genes that thwart the lethal bacteria, allowing the male butterflies to bounce back,” (author’s italics).¹⁹² But we also learn, indirectly of course, that deep-time Darwinism is true and here is living proof of it.

One can’t help but recall Collin’s denial of the charge (implied by Intelligent Design proponents), that “biologists are so used to worshipping at Darwin’s alter that they cannot consider an alternate view.”¹⁹³ After reading the LiveScience.com article, Collins’ denial carries little conviction. Few writers, except those compelled by habit to promote Darwinism at every turn, would title an article, in light of what happened, “Evolution Occurs in the Blink of an Eye,” or make the opening sentence read, “A population of butterflies has evolved in a flash on a South Pacific island to fend off a deadly parasite.” The heavy hand of Darwinian propaganda is more than obvious—and misleading because nothing has evolved in a Darwinian sense at all. Because it somehow managed to “procure” or activate a suppressor gene[s] doesn’t make it any more or any less than the same Blue Moon butterfly it has always been, nor is it on its way to becoming other than the *Hypolimnas bolina*. Perhaps a more modest and appropriate opening sentence would have read this way: “The South Pacific Blue Moon butterfly has developed a way to thwart a parasite that threatened it with extinction.” In this way we could actually focus on what happened devoid of the obligatory, gratuitous promotion of Darwinism.

For something remarkable did take place. To speak of the “evolution” of a suppressor gene[s] is to mask this remarkable turn-around in order to affirm Darwinism. To speak of Darwinian evolution taking place in “a flash” or in “the blink of an eye” is an oxymoron. Nor does it help much to speak of the wonder of natural selection, which usually acts “over hundreds or thousands of years” but in this instance acted “in the blink of the eye in terms of evolutionary time.” We know no more about what actually happened after that is said than before it was said. If that is so, what do the scientists actually know? The evidence supports the conclusion, as noted above, that the male *hypolimnas bolina* had somehow “acquired” or activated a suppressor gene[s] that prevented the *Walbachia* from killing the male embryo but does not actually destroy the *Walbachia* in turn. This is all that is known. How the Blue Moon managed to do this, especially in such a rapid manner at such a crucial juncture no one seems to know, thus the regress into talk about natural selection on the part of Darwinian biologists. But curiosity, if nothing else, compels questions. What caused this remarkable reversal to take place when it did and how? Was there a “sleeper” suppressor gene[s] already in place that suddenly awoke and “swung into action” so to speak? Why though at this particular moment, why didn’t it/they function sooner? Why did it/they not activate when the *Walbachia* first appeared? Neither nature in general nor the Blue Moon in particular knew that it was on the verge of

extinction so we cannot fairly claim that some external or internal stress factor activated the gene[s]. Besides, as Collins has pointed out, the mutation rate on inactive genes is such that it would tend to mitigate against their intended, original function. Obviously, then, if the suppressor gene[s] had already been there unused the risk of a damaging mutation would always be present. And if the suppressor gene[s] was already in place and merely “awoke,” then to speak of Darwinian evolution is clearly nonsense because nothing has evolved in a Darwinian sense.

Then, of course, there is the alternative scenario. One that is a bit far-fetched but nonetheless worth a comment or two with tongue in cheek. Perhaps a non-functioning duplicate gene suddenly appeared which was instantly “recruited for a new use” and driven by “the forces of natural selection” became almost immediately a suppressor gene. If this is the case, however, we would have to classify this as an evolutionary event of truly *miraculous* proportions—especially when we consider that the vast, vast majority of mutations are not beneficial in any way, the rapidity in which, if it were a non-functioning, duplicate gene, it became a gene with a very specific purpose, and the timing of its epiphany. The odds of such a transformation happening must border on the incalculable. Of course, such an obstacle has never deterred a Darwinian from believing natural selection is unstoppable and invincible. After all, one cannot be a scientist and believe otherwise, even if one’s answers do lack credibility and seem axiomatically self-serving.

Nevertheless, we have, in truth, a genuine mystery on our hands. Appeals to evolution happening instantaneously seek to turn one’s attention away from this fact, and talk of natural selection happening in the blink of evolutionary time’s eye is simply an admission of ignorance—and hubris. Even if I am told in a general way what appears to have happened—a suppressor gene[s] somehow suddenly appeared or awoke in a matter of hours, days, weeks (who knows?) that rescued the Blue Moon butterfly even as the bell of extinction was ready to toll its doom—none can tell me why, the oh so exquisitely timed why, why when the male population was down to 1% or even less. It would seem, then, that at this point natural selection comes very close to being spelled G-O-D and appeals to natural selection on the part of the rationalistic Darwinian seem to mimic appeals to the “God of the Gaps.” Indeed the why, the why now, the unanticipated why forces us to admit we are face to face with the inexplicable, the mysterious.

In fact, the miraculous comeback of the *Hypolimnas bolina* makes Collins’ condemnation of the so-called “God of the Gaps” seem premature and superficial for this is an ideal situation to invoke God’s loving hand overseeing his creation. If it is legitimate to appeal to a vague, omnipotent, wonder working natural selection to explain the rescue of the Blue Moon from the brink of extinction, simply so science can remain atheistic, (and if the suppressor gene already existed is such an appeal even legitimate?), it is just as legitimate to invoke the intervening hand of a personal Creator, and one can do so without going outside the bounds of nature. For if, as Hebrews 1: 2 and 3 tells us, God “made the universe” through His Son, and this same Son moment by moment sustains “all things by his powerful word” (NIV, see also Col. 1: 16 and 17), if no sparrow falls to the ground apart from” God’s specific will (Math. 10: 29), if in the blink of an eye, Jesus

can turn water into wine (John 2), or turn a violent low into a peaceful high on the sea of Galilee (Luke 8: 22-25), or turn a shriveled hand into a normal, healthy hand (Luke 6: 6-11), if as Psalm 104 teaches,

Every living thing looks to God
to give them their food at the proper time.
When you give it to them they gather it up;
when you open your hand they are satisfied
with good things.
When you hide your face they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.
When you send your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth. (NIV)

Finally, if, as Exodus 4: 11 reminds us, God determines who will be deaf or dumb, blind or seeing in a world under wrath, bondage, and disobedience, then we do not need to appeal to the “God of the Gaps” but rather to the Lord of Creation, the God of the Bible for the “salvation” of the Blue Moon butterfly. Nor do we need to appeal to some kind of creation *ex nihilo* as a solution though one would not exclude it. It is perfectly within the sovereign power of God to have “awakened” dormant suppressor genes to perform their guardian task, the very reason for which they were formed by their Creator in the first place. Or if, perhaps, to stretch things a bit, it were a non-functioning, duplicate gene[s], it is not an appeal to the “God of the Gaps” to propose that God stimulated, sped-up, specifically oversaw the mutation process to achieve precisely what he intended—suppressor genes to thwart the malevolent intentions of the *Walbachia* bacterium. If He can instantaneously change a violent low into a peaceful high with a word in a moment’s time, without ripping the fabric of the natural order than He can do the same for a mutating gene in order to save the Blue Moon butterfly.

Collins warns us not to appeal to the miraculous when science can give us an adequate explanation. In this instance, however, biologist cannot give an adequate explanation other than vague appeals to an “omnipotent” natural selection dispensing the miraculous as it trudges endlessly through endless ages. Well, appeal to natural selection and I will agree. But it is a natural selection under the control of, and a servant of, the sovereign Lord of Creation, Jesus Christ who can at any moment, for His good pleasure and glory, manipulate it as He sees fit. It is He who determines which species will live and which species will go into extinction. In the rescue of the Blue Moon butterfly we have a perfect example of this. Nature is not autonomous nor does it write its own history. Yet once more Romans 1: 18-20 stares us in the face and reminds us why mankind is under judgment.

XXIV

If, for the sake of argument, we concede Collins is right, then all we have to explain origins and the present make-up of nature—humans included—is a rationalistic

Darwinism; unfathomable time plus chance, accident, randomness (which ever word you prefer) somehow channeled by the mystic “forces of natural selection .” One may believe in a God but there is no evidence of such as one inductively examines the natural world. The Big Bang may cry “out for a divine explanation” according to Collins, but he also believes that “once evolution got under way, no special supernatural intervention was” necessary and that “humans are a part of this process, sharing a common ancestor, with the great apes.”¹⁹⁴

We have previously noted Collins’ interpretation of Genesis 2 as an allegory of that time when God gave man a “soul,” a free will and made him aware of and accountable to the universal moral law (i.e., knowing right from wrong). How did this work? Collins asserts that “studies of human variation,” the “fossil record,” and “genetic analysis suggest that approximately ten thousand ancestors” have given rise to today’s human population. In other words it would be to this group of ancestors or some portion of it (but not to just one couple), that God infused with a human “soul” and gave the “moral law.”¹⁹⁵ And it was through the evolutionary process that God brought this about. One would have to presume that all other humanoids which were identical to those receiving the human “soul” but that did not receive one were doomed to extinction. No matter how much evangelical scientists may wish to make the evolutionary process appear ultimately benign, in the words of Stephen Pinker (a grim and unsmiling Rationalist), it is not only “far from being intelligent and purposeful” it is at heart “wasteful and cruel.”¹⁹⁶ In other words, how could and can God create through such a system?

Collins is aware of this situation and seeks to provide an answer—though his answer is both odd and unsatisfactory for he seems to offer a position that includes both sides. How can we accept a God who “carried out creation using such an apparently random, *potentially heartless* [my italics], and inefficient process” as deep-time Darwinism? (Potentially heartless?—how about just plain heartless) After all, evolution is all chance therefore the outcome can never be guaranteed. There is no assurance, in fact, if Stephen Gould was right, that the present status, if evolution were to do a repeat, would be the same.¹⁹⁷

For example, if the now well-documented collision of a large asteroid with the earth 65 million years ago had not happened, it might well be that the emergence of higher intelligence would not have come in the form of a carnivorous mammal (Homo sapiens), but a reptile.¹⁹⁸

Collins’ statement is an attention grabber, which, of course, it was intended to be. What about the Genesis’ claim that man is made in the image and likeness of God? Does that have any bearing on his assertion? Collins response is interesting:

Well, perhaps one shouldn’t get too hung up on the notion that this scripture [Genesis 1:27] is referring to physical anatomy—the image of God seems a lot more about mind than body. Does God have toenails? A belly button?¹⁹⁹

It is obvious with such sarcasm, Collins gives short shift to Genesis 2:7—“the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (NIV). In other words, God directly gave man the shape he now possesses. However, as Genesis carries no historical authority for Collins, he blandly ignores its claims and embraces the marvels of chance. And apparently God did also—or did He? “If evolution is random,” Collins writes, “how could He really be in charge and how could He be certain of an outcome that included intelligent beings at all?”²⁰⁰ Collins has a two-part answer to this question. First before the Big Bang was initiated, God could have had foreknowledge of “every detail of the future.” This would even extend to the very words I am now typing. Presumably, then, though Collins doesn’t say one way or the other, had God not liked the outcome He would not have lit the Big Bang fuse. God’s absolute foreknowledge leads Collins to his second conclusion, one that seems to contradict his earlier claim that “once evolution got under way no special supernatural intervention was required.” “Thus,” Collins speculates,

God could be completely and intimately involved in the creation of all species, while from our perspective, limited as it is by the tyranny of linear time, this would appear a random and indirect process.²⁰¹

At times one wonders whether Collins is trying to have it both ways. Still, one must ask, but what about Romans 1:18-20? What about Romans 8:20 and 21? Collins gives no answer. What Collins presents as a vague possibility, however, the Bible presents as an actuality. Not only did God *directly* create every living thing after its own kind, but he placed them all under bondage to death due to Adam’s sin. Nevertheless, he sustains them and cares for them under this present system of bondage (Psalm 104). Only those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness deny this (Romans 1: 18-20). It bears repeating—Collins has placed himself in a very awkward position.

Equally important, even Collins can offer no answer to the theological implications of Steven Pinker’s statement that “the process of evolution, far from being intelligent and purposeful [or an elegant mechanism as Collins asserts], is wasteful and cruel.” Now, these are value terms, even moral terms. If nature is all there is and it is the product of limitless time and chance, then they are meaningless words in any absolute sense. If there is a God, however, then such a system reveals the character of God. The God of deep-time evolution allows, or is himself, unfathomably wasteful. He allows (not because of sin), or enjoys, extreme cruelty—nature is what He is. He allows but is indifferent to wholesale suffering or possibly delights in massive, indiscriminate, wholesale, horrifying suffering. The same holds true regarding death. And all of this taking place over a period of hundreds of millions of years if not billions of years. Does it have to be said that this hardly integrates with the biblical description of the character of God or His activities as Genesis 1:31 tells us that God looked at all he had created at the end of 6 days and declared all of it very good. Evangelical Darwinians simply cannot biblically justify the God of the Bible as the God who used deep-time evolution to create. The contrast could not be greater and no where is this more obvious than with the contrasting scenarios of the creation of man.

XXV

This problem of harmonizing the character of the God of evolution with the character of the God of the Bible is a precarious one for those who embrace deep-time, random evolution, yet still want to be evangelical Christians holding to a saving faith in the person and work of a real, historic Jesus Christ. More than converting Genesis 1-11 into an allegory or metaphor is required. An excellent example of what I have in mind is a short apologetic essay authored by six Christian scientists from New Zealand titled, “The Chimpanzees Genome and the Christian View of Humanity.”²⁰² “Genetic science,” they write in the Australian apologetic journal CASE, “has shown that humans and chimpanzees have a common ancestor,” and this in turn has profound implications for Christianity.²⁰³

They make this assertion based on the fact that “DNA sequencing has shown that we share myriad individual parasitic elements with other primate species such as chimps and gorillas.” These elements function as “fingerprints” as it were, “proving evolutionary relationships.”²⁰⁴ Due to this irrefutable proof “that we have evolved” efforts on the part of Christians, our authors believe, “to base faith in God on denying that evolution has occurred are untenable. Such attacks on evolutionary science are futile.”²⁰⁵ So much for a Young Earth Creationist explanation integrated with Genesis 1-11. And so much for even a whiff of historical truth to Genesis 1-11.

If this is the case, however, these six authors are faced with the enormous task of explaining how the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ could and would “create through such an *insanely slow and brutal* process as evolution” (their words, my italics).²⁰⁶ In response to this challenge, they offer an amazingly inventive, two-fold explanation, but not one drawn from or grounded in Scripture. In the process we are left with a reconfigured Christianity, one that only minimally identifies with biblical/historic Christian doctrine or biblical history. One can only speculate that having confessed that deep-time, random evolution is true, these scientists find it necessary to somehow bring their faith into conformity with this truth. Otherwise, if this is not possible, Christianity would have to be abandoned as the one true revealer of true truth about God, man, nature, and reality as a whole. Committed as they are to the historicity of Jesus Christ, these men are not willing to yield to the latter. One must commend them for their loyalty to our Savior. Like their 19th century forebears, they, too, are determined to save God and His history from the too literal, narrow confines of the Bible. Sadly, the end result is, at best, serious error, and at its worst a modern Gnostic heresy. Whether we like to consider it this way or not, ultimately when we deny true historicity to Genesis 1-11 and substitute deep-time, random evolution there can be no other outcome.

To achieve their goal these six scientists must somehow justify and sanctify God’s use of what they, themselves admit is an *insanely slow and brutal* process. They must show that not only was this the best way for God to create but that it also reflects positively on His character. To do this they first seek to prove—to what has to be a most skeptical audience—that evolutionary genetic randomness is not evidence of God’s absence but rather proof of His existence and involvement of some sort in creation via deep-time

evolution. My old Webster colligate dictionary defines the word ‘random’ as that “without definite aim, direction rule or method. . . . Random implies little or no guidance by a governing mind, eye, objective, or the like.”²⁰⁷

Now, our authors do accept the fact “that random events have structured our DNA.” For any true-blue, grim, unsmiling Rationalist, this would pretty well exclude God, especially the God of the Bible, from having, at a minimum, anything to do with the creation of our present world. In fact he or she would conclude that randomness (i.e., pure chance) pretty well excludes the possibility that God exist. And many non-Rationalists would be inclined to admit that this is a potent point to refute. But the authors of this essay, strange as it may seem, disagree. For them such randomness gives evidence of a law-giving God. In fact, they are convinced that “Randomness cannot...undermine faith in God as Creator.”²⁰⁸

“Randomness,” they reason Alice in wonderland like, perhaps straining credulity to the point where it will snap, “reflects the underlying consistent pattern by which nature operates.” In other words, “it reflects lawful behavior” and therefore must be “consistent with the law-giving rationality of the Creator.” Their view of God as Creator is similar to Collins’—“God does not control the events of nature in a vice-like grip. He is not a master puppeteer.” If he was, they reason, life would be “static,” rigid, devoid of “freedom...newness...” and “novelty.” In place of God the “master puppeteer,” they propose a rather novel relationship between God and His creation. “God values his creation so much,” they assert, “that it is given the freedom to change, to generate a history [of its own], to follow an independent course...” constrained only by “the limits that God maintains.”²⁰⁹

But, one is inclined to ask, “isn’t a limited, guided randomness something of a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron if you will?” Our authors justify this oddity, however, by juxtapositioning chance and necessity (i.e., natural law). On the one hand, randomness produces novelty. On the other, “the consistent, rational lawfulness of nature (necessity)” puts limits on any novelty “so that change is limited (constrained) in particular directions.” All this constant tension between chance and necessity or “randomness and lawfulness is consistent with a Creator’s plans.” Such being the situation, our authors believe it is legitimate to assert “Chance is an aspect of creation.”²¹⁰ One might even say a deliberate, planned “aspect of creation,” but then one is back with Alice in the murky realm where, evidently, A is non-A afterall. And one must conclude that the only authority in support of the authors’ position is their own personal faith.

Deep-time, random evolution, our authors enthuse, “is a wondrously fruitful process” (despite being “insanely slow and brutal”) that has given to us a “breathtaking diversity of life” due to the “potentiality” given to it “by its Creator.” Thus “the rationality of evolution is consistent with the conclusion that humanity is a purposed outcome,” a more acceptable way, perhaps, to describe wasteful and cruel.²¹¹ Our authors confess that “not everyone” agrees with their conclusion. The Rationalists, for example, considers that the deep-time, apparent randomness of evolution implies that all is meaningless and purposeless. “The Christian observes the same randomness,” our authors counter, “and

perceives a grand design in the story.”²¹² This may be true for our authors but not for this evangelical Christian. Without the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit and God’s revelation, the Bible, I would have no way of perceiving a Grand Design in a universe that everywhere and at all times appears entirely contingent.

The Bible informs me that the contingency (randomness) that seemingly dominates our creation is not caused by God giving freedom to His creation but by Adamic sin which has placed God’s creation under bondage to death. And, in fact, our authors have smuggled in their Christian faith without admitting it. Though all they have written seeks no support whatsoever in Scripture, and, in fact, separates the God described in Scripture from His creation, nevertheless, they ultimately must appeal to Him to justify their own creation scenario. First, of course, they must ignore Genesis 1-11 and make God into an aficionado of Darwin.

Perhaps by writing, “God valued his creation so much that it is given the freedom to change, to generate a history, to follow an independent course within the limits that God has maintains,” the authors hoped to distance God from any negative feedback regarding the cruel and wasteful system such as deep-time, random evolution apparently has given us. In other words, the system that developed may be cruel and wasteful, as well as “insanely slow and brutal,” but that doesn’t mean that God is that way. After all, He gave it “freedom...to generate its own history” and this is how it exercised that freedom. Of course, we are now splashing about in a pool of nonsense at this juncture. For surely it is nonsense to write that “God values his creation so much that it is given freedom to change,” etc. What can this possibly mean? How can creation (nature)—it—exercise freedom? Does “it” have a free will, a mind of its own? Did “it” determine that its purposed outcome was to be man? It would seem that our authors, by embracing true Darwinism have backed themselves into a corner. How can we possible speak of the loving and righteous God of the Bible and the brutal, cruel god of deep-time evolution in the same breath? Are we now modern day Marcionites? Except, of course, in this case we don’t have two gods, but one who has two personalities.

As noted previously, the Bible presents God as very much overseeing and controlling His creation, that no part of it operates autonomously or “generates its own history.” Does that mean, according to our authors’ reasoning, that God doesn’t value His creation? Yet Scripture reminds us that the redemption Christ wrought at the cross was in part a redemption of the created order from the bondage imposed upon it by *Adam’s* sin, (Col. 1: 19, 20; Rom. 8: 19-21). It is difficult in the extreme to say that the Genesis proposed by our authors is one that is superior too, and will commend itself as such, as a replacement for Genesis 1-11, the Chimpanzee genome notwithstanding. As noted earlier, an imaginary, fictional science cannot trump a recorded and witnessed history.

Nor, as our authors admit, does it really protect God from the charge that he has used, or allowed to be used, a system of “creation” that was/is brutal, wasteful, cruel—evil if you will—filled to overflowing with death, disease, deformity, and dead-ends for multitudes of species. And this would include evolving mankind. If God is all powerful, holy, loving merciful and compassionate, how could He do this? How could God tolerate

or “respect” a creation that developed along these lines, how could he “value” it? More than an appeal to creation’s freedom to be random, then, is necessary if we are going to understand why God used “such an insanely slow and brutal process.” As this is a question science cannot answer, we are informed by our six authors, we must look elsewhere for an answer. However, as our authors confess, we are not at liberty to “interrogate God as we would like.”²¹³ And Scripture, as far as one can determine, carries no authority in their eyes.

Thus they do not, and in fact they cannot, appeal to Scripture for the God described and revealed in Scripture did not use a cruel and brutal and wasteful, nor “insanely slow” process to create nature. He spoke it into existence in six days and when He was finished speaking He “saw all he had made and it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). Which means that there was no death, disease, deformity, or dead-ends for multitudes of species. And because these six authors cannot interrogate God and cannot legitimately appeal to Scripture, they offer (invent) their own theological reason why God choose, or allowed, a process of creation that has produced over billions of years, and continues to produce, such extreme suffering for no apparent reason. Or is there a reason? And this question brings us to the second part of their inventive answer to the question they raised themselves—why has God used such an insanely slow and brutal process in creating?

Their general assertion is that nothing of value in this life is achieved without sacrifice, or as they put it, “travail.” All success demands “time and pain.” And this seems to hold true for God as well as nature. “At the heart of the Bible story,” they write, “is the conviction that God has paid dearly for his commitment to his creation.”²¹⁴ Their second assertion stemming from the first, is “that all of nature is obedient to [this] supreme law of sacrifice” that rules over all living things. In fact, they claim, the only way we can explain “the spectacular diversity of life” that inhabits and has inhabited our biosphere, is that it “could only come about at the cost of *ongoing death* [my italics]. This law of sacrifice—life from death—seems to be embedded in the deep structure of reality.”²¹⁵

Based on the above, that all life is obligated to obey a universal, “supreme law of sacrifice”, these six scientists next assert that Christianity represents or exemplifies the supreme outworking or example of the same. Let me quote them in full at this point:

At the start of the Christian faith is the suffering of a gory Roman gibber. God himself in a person called Jesus of Nazareth experienced utter abandonment on a cross so that he could renew creation and reconcile humanity to himself. The death of Jesus is the chief exemplification of the sacrificial law of the universe, the time when God entered creation to remove evil and its attendant suffering by the sacrifice of himself.²¹⁶

In a corresponding endnote (#19), the author of *Genes, Genesis, and God* (1999), H. Rolston, is quoted approvingly for writing:

The way of history too, like that of nature, only more so, is *via dolorosa*. Since

the beginning, the myriad creatures have been giving up their lives as a ransom for many. In that sense, Jesus is not the exception to the natural order, but a chief exemplification of it.²¹⁷

These six authors close their apologetic rewrite of Christianity by noting that while evolution can be viewed as a repetitive process, encased within it is the unique, and it is these unique happenings that has made us genetically “what we now are.” And what holds true for natural history also holds true for human history, and, surprisingly, validates gospel history. “A pattern of unique events in the random confusion of human history—God appearing among us as a peasant carpenter who died on a cross and, according to eye witnesses, returned to life—seems totally consistent with this view of reality.”²¹⁸ We are more, our authors conclude, than the sum total of our DNA history. That in itself simply cannot explain, for example, why “we are social, relational creatures.” Something more is needed in the authors’ estimation. “God has involved himself personally in history, and shared our suffering that he might redeem and transform us.”²¹⁹

XXVI

One must not treat lightly what these six Christian scientists are seeking to accomplish—reconcile the God who uses a random, “insanely slow and brutal” process to bring about our present natural world with the personal God, the miracle working God of the Gospels who so loved the world he gave us His Son—and by doing so rescue Christianity so it is relevant to the 21st century. This is no small task. In fact, if one is going to accept deep-time, random evolution, it is difficult to envision what they could have done differently. That the Christianity they end up with differs considerably from biblical/historical Christianity goes without saying though they, themselves never broach this subject. Their Christianity is ultimately derived from philosophic speculation limited by a hermeneutic of deep-time, random evolution. It ignores, except for a vague appeal to the gospel accounts, Scripture entirely. It is mystical, not historical, contradictory not harmonious, with biblical revelation being replaced by a new Gnosticism fit for the 21st century naturalistic Christian. When all is said and done, their noble attempt leaves them advocating a frightening heresy.

To support this conclusion, let us begin with their basic premise—nothing of value is achieved in this life without “travail”—and compare their speculations on our suffering and sacrifice with the teachings of Scripture on the same subject. Positing the premise that things of true value only come through travail leads our authors to claim that all life is “obedient” to a “supreme law of sacrifice.” In other words, the rich variety of life that now exists on earth could have “only come about at the cost of *ongoing death*” over billions of years [*italics mine*]. “Life from death” is permanently etched in all of nature, and God himself even seems subservient to it. This is evident in the ultimate example of the “supreme law of sacrifice,” Jesus Christ’s death on the cross “when God entered creation to remove evil and its attendant suffering by the sacrifice of himself.”

My “ancient” Webster Colligate Dictionary (1946) defines travail as a) “Toil; esp. painful effort or exertion,” b) “Parturition labor” [which refers to the labor associated with child-birth], c) “Agony, racking pain.” Interestingly, Paul used the analogy of child-birth labor in Romans 8:22 when he wrote, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of child-birth right up to the present time,” (NIV). In other words, it is in travail. But the reason for this is not because a “free” nature, addicted to randomness, has been outworking and over working the “supreme law of sacrifice” that has dominated all of evolving life through all of unfathomable time. Rather “the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one [God] who subjected it...” (Romans 8: 20, NIV). This verse would not only seem to eliminate the idea that creation was free to set its own course, but would also eliminate the possibility that travail, as understood by our six authors and experienced in our present world, was a part of God’s original creation. And while Adam (and Eve) labored (and possibly sweated in their labor), it was not a labor or sweat of travail, but of joy, of loving service to the Lord and to the creation that Adam ruled as God’s vice-regent. There was no sorrow or agony, either physically or psychologically, attached or associated with it.

But with the fall of Adam and Eve from innocence to guilt, from righteousness to unrighteousness, travail, painful, agonizing labor entered all of creation. Eve would experience intense birth-pains (Genesis 3:16), the ground was cursed so that it no longer was as productive and bountiful as it had been, and Adam could no longer count on it being “friendly” when he worked it. Only “through painful toil” (travail) and “the sweat of [his] brow” would he be able to extract food from it, (Genesis 3:17-19). The burden of this divine curse is made clear in Genesis 5:29, when Lamech named his son Noah, “and said, ‘He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil (travail) of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed,’ “ (NIV). And, of course, the greatest agony of all, the most excruciating travail—death—became an alien but permanent fixture of mankind and his domain, nature, when God told Adam he would now die, (Genesis 3:19). The immediate consequence of this pronouncement is seen in Genesis 3: 21, where we are informed “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them,” (NIV). Death, then, came first not to man but to his subjects, perhaps to bring to Adam’s attention the enormity of his actions, that more than Eve and he would experience death (which Adam now understood), but all of creation. Again, in Genesis four we now find animal sacrifice (death of a living creature), a covering for sin, being practiced by Abel. Even more tragic, envy, resentment, murder, and victimization (self-pity) became part of the human condition, (Genesis 4:4-16). In Genesis 5, in “the written account of Adam’s line,” the phrase “and then he died” is repeated to the point of stultifying monotony. And so it has been for every man and woman ever since. By Genesis six, man and the animal kingdom over which he had dominion, had become so corrupted by sin that God determined He would “wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved I have made them,” (Gen. 6: 7). And He did. “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord,” (Gen 6: 8).

Finally, in Genesis nine, we find God pronouncing an interesting judgment upon man in relation to other red blooded creatures that fits in with the biblical understanding of

travail and suffering resulting from the fall. “The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air,” God said to Noah and his sons (in contrast to Genesis 2: 19 and 20), “upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea: they are given into your hands. Everything that has life and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything” (Gen. 9: 2 and 3, NIV). Once more, the terrible consequence of Adam’s sin is exposed. Originally man and all other land creatures as well, were vegetarians. Now man, who was to have stewardship over creation for its well being, becomes the ultimate blood-thirsty predator causing terror and fear among his subjects, killing and eating them, and even hunting and killing them for the thrill of it (Gen. 10:8 and 9).

I mention all of this to show that the Bible knows nothing of a “supreme law of sacrifice” which through on-going death gives us the “spectacular diversity of life” that makes up our biosphere. The bloody fang and claw rules. Death, disease, deformity, predation, violence, extinction are, according to Scripture, the consequences of Adam’s fall from righteousness. As the king, so his subjects. On-going death has not been the door-way to life but an alien intruder blotting it out as the fossil record demonstrates. And the rich diversity of life is not beholden to hundreds of millions of years, even billions, of an insanely slow and brutal outworking of a “supreme law of sacrifice.” Try as they might, our six scientists cannot romanticize or legitimize or sanctify as something noble an endless, senseless, ruthless, cruel system of terror such as deep-time Darwinism. The rich diversity of life exists because God “imagined” it and then spoke it into existence—*ex nihilo* creation. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, the starry hosts by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spoke, and it came to be: he commanded and it stood firm,” (Psalm 33:6 and 9, NIV; also see Hebrews 11:3).

The same Jesus Christ who miraculously gave sight to those born blind, who fed thousands with a handful of loaves and fishes, who changed a life-threatening squall into a pleasant day on the lake, who saved the dying with a word, and raised the dead by that same word, this same Jesus Christ, we are told in John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16, created everything that exists. It is both inconceivable and incongruous in the extreme that Jesus would, on the one hand, exhibit absolute Lordship over creation, and in doing so right every wrong brought on by Adam’s sin, giving hope to a people dwelling in darkness and the “shadow of death” (Luke 1: 79), yet on the other hand use an “insanely slow and brutal system” in which he so “respected his creation” that he gave it “freedom” to be wasteful, cruel, senseless, filling *hundreds of millions* of years with predation, deformity, violence, disease, death and extinction in order to bring about the present natural order.

And Scripture tells us he did not do this. Surely we have a schizophrenic, bi-polar God if Scripture is wrong. Arbitrarily allegorizing Genesis 1-11 solves nothing; it only makes matters worse. (We cannot make opposites one and the same—not even in a postmodern era.) This is highlighted by our six authors’ attempt to integrate their supreme law of sacrifice with the cross. “The death of Jesus,” they write, “is the chief exemplification of the sacrificial law of the universe. . . .” But if He is the prime exemplification [illustration] of this law, He also, then, proves its truthfulness. This would be their point. The H. Ralston quote used above seems an attempt to reinforce this

conclusion: human history and natural history together, like Jesus' life, "is a *via dolorosa*"—a way of the cross, that is, a (deadly) sacrifice (for sin). "Since the beginning," Rolston wrote, "the myriad creatures have been giving up their lives as a ransom for many." Thus Jesus' death on the cross, rather than deny "the natural order," becomes "a chief exemplification (illustration) of it." To put this thought in context, imagine the extinction of dinosaurs (supposedly done in by a thoughtless asteroid), as a willing "sacrifice" on their part, a (sin) ransom if you will, so that mammal species—who over the next tens of millions of years would randomly evolve into the humanoid, *homo sapien*—might be free to emerge as the dominate species.

If this scenario strikes one as ludicrous one is rightly struck, for it is. If one is even more deeply offended by the outlandish and perhaps blasphemous comparison of a cruel, wasteful, unfeeling and unthinking process with Christ's deliberate and vicarious atonement for our sins, one is justly offended. It is difficult to imagine Christians offering such a solution to the enormous theological and historical difficulties random, cruel, deep-time evolution presents to biblical/historical Christianity. They are doing it but it is difficult to wrap one's mind around such thinking. To compare the death of Christ on the cross, to put it on the same level with the countless deaths of various creatures through "hundreds of millions of years" by an "insanely slow and brutal," thoughtless process, to imply they are one and the same, that they serve the same purpose is to trivialize the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and by association raise-up, glorify, sanctify an insanely and brutal system as the wisdom of God par excellent. Jesus' suffering was due to being our Passover lamb, our sinless substitute, the one who bore our judgment (2 Cor. 5: 21). Yet it was voluntary. He was not compelled to sacrifice himself due to some dominant universal law of sacrifice; there was no necessity to it. He freely offered Himself on our behalf because He loved us (Gal. 2: 20). He took pity on us because we had turned the whole earth into one vast killing field from which there was no escape. We were, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "without hope and without God," (Eph. 2: 12).

XXVII

As noted above, sacrifice of animals as a covering for sin until Messiah came had been a part of human history since Adam and Eve were ejected from the garden. Under the law given to Israel tens of thousands, more likely hundreds of thousands, of sheep, goats, and cattle were killed and gutted and skinned, a horrible, smelly, disgusting practice because of human sin. It was a bloody, awful spectacle and deliberately so. A constant visual reminder of the consequences of Adamic sin—death—as well as the sin practiced since by his progeny. Sacrifice was necessary but not noble, nor did the sacrifice of any animal ransom any sinner from God's judgment. Only Jesus Christ's death could do that. Among pagans the slaughter of unnumbered animals was sheer folly and futility. And in nature, where one is either eating "the other" or being eaten by "the other," it is an exercise in see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil to claim the whole process is simply an outworking of one species offering itself as a ransom for another. For the whole of nature exhibits not a law of sacrifice, life coming from on-going death for the sake of life, but rather a law of bondage, of futility, a law of alienation from its

true purpose, a law in which life is frustrated by death, cut short by death. Death is the alien, unwelcomed intruder, the enemy of creation. In 1 Corinthians 15: 24-26, the Apostle Paul reminds us that when the end [of Christ's millennial reign] comes, Jesus will hand over" the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put *all his enemies* under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death," (NIV, italics mine). If death is the last enemy of God, how can we glorify it as if it were His friend and faithful servant, as the on-going means by which God brings forth life? This is to turn Scripture on its head and claim that what it says is not what it means. With every sin we are reminded that death is both God's enemy and ours. It is not the death of Christ that promises me life but His resurrection, it is not His death that assures me of my justification before God but his resurrection (Romans 4: 25).

Even as we must not trivialize the cross of Christ by making it simply an extension of natural death—for the death of Jesus was His glory and our salvation, whereas death in nature is man's shame and nature's slavery—so we must not trivialize the consequences of Adam's sin. According to Genesis chapters 3-9, it had a devastating impact on creation as a whole and mankind in particular. It is hard to imagine death, disease, deformity, predation, and endless violence could be a part of a creation God has declared to be "very good!" Paul's assertion in Romans five, that "...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin..." and his assertion in Romans 8:29 that God subjected nature to "frustration" which left it in "bondage to decay," a bondage that will only be abrogated at the second coming, supports this conclusion. In other words, God Himself placed His "very good" creation in bondage to death—there was no freedom nature possessed to generate its own history of on-going life from on-going death in accordance with some mystical, supreme law of sacrifice. The "frustration" of nature (all living things) to death is an inescapable and overwhelming reminder of the consequences of Adamic sin (our sin). To deny this basic biblical truth is to trivialize Adam's act of defiance and minimize its significance. For if death, decay, predation, disease, deformity and extinction of kinds were always there through hundreds of millions of years, what significance, what impact can we attribute to Adam's sin, especially if man evolved in such an environment?

The fact that death and its derivatives stem from Adamic sin is further confirmed by their temporary nature, and that the death of Christ reconciled an estranged creation once more with its Creator. Colossians 1: 20 informs us that through Christ, God has "reconciled to himself *all things*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, making peace through his blood, shed on the cross," (NIV, italics mine). If nature, however, was randomly generating its own history because God had so allowed it (out of respect on God's part), and if in the course of this process which was taking hundreds of millions of years nature was none the less fulfilling the supreme law of sacrifice necessary to bring life from on-going death, why did it need to be reconciled with God? What was wrong? And if something was wrong how and when did the wrong occur?

Only if we accept Adam's fall as a real historical event does Colossians 1: 19 make sense—death is an alien intruder which must be removed if God's creation is to be

restored to its original state, if there is to be peace with God. And this includes mankind. That which the first Adam failed to give to his progeny through his disobedience, physical, material eternal life, the second Adam gives to us through His resurrection. Thus Paul asserts that just as we who believe in Jesus Christ long for His second coming—for we shall be just like Him physically—all of nature also longs with us. In fact, we groan together in our shared bondage longing for that moment when “the redemption of our bodies” takes place. “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed,” Paul excitedly writes, because when that happens “the creation itself will be *liberated* from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God,” (Romans 8: 20-23, NIV, my italics). This only makes sense if the first three chapters of Genesis are actual history. As an allegorical covering for deep-time Darwinism, it makes no sense at all.

What kind of liberation does Paul envision? The answer in part is found in Isaiah, chapter eleven. Referring to the millennial reign of Christ, the prophet proclaims:

The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.
The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
and the young child will put his hand into the viper’s nest.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11: 6-9, NIV)

Now, one might say that Isaiah is using hyperbole here (and poetic allegory) to emphasis how wonderful will be Christ’s millennial reign, not necessarily talking about actual history. Yet Genesis 1: 29 and 30 explicitly state that the animal kingdom was vegetarian prior to the fall. “Then God said,

I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food. *And it was so.* (NIV, my italics)

Isaiah’s prophecy, therefore, claims that predatory behavior at least—preying on or being preyed upon—will cease during the millennial reign, as well as the animal kingdom’s fear of man which was pronounced by God in Genesis, chapter nine. Predation, then, was the result of Adamic sin, a part of nature turned on itself and war replaced peace. In the millennial kingdom, nature will be at peace with itself once again

and predation will cease. This view hardly fits with deep-time, random evolution nor does it integrate with our six scientists' own "genesis" scenario of on-going death necessary for life in its present richness to exist. There comes a point where (or when) Scripture can no longer be rendered inconsequential. This is one of those places.

Interestingly, our six authors admit to the above. In their concluding sentences they write that Christ died "on a cross so that he could renew creation and reconcile humanity to himself," and that the incarnation was "the time when God entered creation to remove evil and its attendant suffering by the sacrifice of himself," and finally the very last sentence of the essay, "God has involved himself personally in history and shared our suffering that he might redeem us and transform us."²²⁰

But how do these sentences fit in with the rest of their essay? If randomness is a part of God's creation plan, and He gave freedom to His creation to generate its own history, and if in its insanely slow and brutal way it was outworking the "supreme law of sacrifice" that is "embedded in the deep structure of reality," why did Christ have to die so that creation could be renewed? What was wrong with it? Again, why did God have to enter creation "to remove evil and its attendant suffering?" What evil? What is it? Where did it come from? If God used an insanely slow and brutal process, with all that is implied by that phrase, what do we consider evil that is absent from the system these six scientists present to us? And if suffering [travail] is the only way "anything of value" can be achieved, why would God abolish it and why is it associated with evil? Finally, of course, why does man need to be reconciled, redeemed and transformed? If man is the product of an insanely slow and brutal system used by God to produce man, what is there about his behavior that is wrong or estranges him from God, or needs redemption?

None of these questions are answered by our six New Zealand scientists because none of the above questions can be answered by a deep-time, random evolutionary genesis. Francis Collins believes Genesis 1 and 2 are a "poetic and powerful allegory of God's plan for the entrance of the spiritual nature (the soul) and the moral law into humanity."²²¹ We were also given a free will, he believes, which allows us to disobey this moral law.²²² Even if this were true, however, it would not be enough, and, in fact, God might even be justly accused of being sadistic. For if God used an insanely slow and brutal process, cruel and wasteful, given over to violence and death, deformity, selfishness and predatory behavior, then man is a product of, and a willing participant in, this selfish system. To give such a creature an immortal soul and a moral law of right and wrong, a law that would surely condemn all that he would consider normal and necessary, that would be *natural* for him, thus making it impossible for man to keep this moral law, cannot help but make God seem sadistic and cruel. Even if man had free will it would only be "free" within the confines of his evolved nature—a nature honed to survive in a world of bloody fang and claw. Any attempt to keep a universal moral law would always end in futility due to man's innate make-up.

Only if man, when given an immortal soul and the moral law, was somehow made righteous—that is, all innate instincts and cognitive behavior shaped by a survival of the fittest, eat or be eaten, kill or be killed environment were removed as it were from his

brain and body, were rendered foreign to his existence—could it be said that God had been fair or just in commanding man to keep His moral law. On second thought, even that may not be sufficient. These original humans would also need to have the world they lived in free from all predation and violence so that all possible sources of secondary contamination would be eliminated. In other words, only a situation identical with Genesis one and two would have to exist for God to justly hold man accountable for violating His moral law, and for that violation to carry the destructive consequences the Bible tells us Adam’s sin brought upon all of creation.

It follows then, that if the New Testament is truly a special revelation from God explaining His redemptive purposes in His Son, Jesus Christ in real space-time history, the beginning chapters of Genesis must of necessity be also real space-time history. Otherwise the New Testament has no historical foundation, no historical necessity. It becomes a free-floating, quasi-Gnostic declaration, supposedly from God, which we are to believe not because of any historical reality undergirding it, but because like the Mormons, there is a burning in our bosom telling us it is true.

XXIII

All confessions must end—including this lengthy one. Those who disagree with me may consider me a greater villain now than when I began. Let me add to their certainty in closing by responding to three statements made by evangelical Darwinists that succinctly clarify the crisis of confidence evangelical Christianity, which claims to believe in an infallible Scripture, now faces. Even if this were only a belief in the infallibility of Scripture that covers only matters of salvation, we are still faced with an enormous crisis of confidence in the trustworthiness of God’s word.

I want to begin with the words of Stephen Moshier, Chairman of the Wheaton College department of Geology, as quoted by Hanna Rosen in her *New York Times* article. “It can get so frustrating. Many of us at Christian colleges really grieve at what a problem this young-earth creationism makes for the Christian witness. It is almost like they’re adding another thing you have to believe in to become a Christian. It is like saying, you have to believe this world is flat to be a Christian, and that’s absolutely unreasonable.”²²³

Other than the nicely crafted back-of-the-hand-to-the-face put-down, that Young Earth Creationists are of the same genre as flat-earthers, Moshier raises a pertinent question—one Christian Darwinists constantly seek refuge behind, and that question is “what must I believe to be a Christian?” Moshier’s not so subtle point is that you don’t have to believe Genesis 1-11 is truly historical to be a believer in Christ. And he is right, you don’t. And Young Earth Creationists need to be careful that we don’t give the impression that we are adding to the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. Having said that, however, it is not unreasonable to ask that if Jesus and the Apostles believed Genesis 1-11 was true shouldn’t we? It is noteworthy to consider how much of Genesis 1-11 is inserted into the New Testament—as historically real—crucially so. Whether we consider Paul’s comparison of the two Adams in Romans 5 or Peter’s defense of Christ’s second coming by reminding the skeptics of Noah’s flood in II Peter, chapter 3, we have past historical

events from Genesis 1-11 undergirding the reality of New Testament historical events or future historical reality. These cannot be lightly shrugged off as if they are of no consequence—or that they don't need to be grounded in real history.

Noll quotes David Young as saying there is no geological evidence for a universal flood but that this in no way effects the “essence of Christianity.”²²⁴ I question this assertion. One of the essentials of Christianity is its historicity, and that covers more than just the gospel accounts—at least to the early Church Fathers this was so.²²⁵ They insisted that Christianity differed from paganism in that Christianity was really historical and not mythological. And by historical they meant and included Genesis 1-11. The God of Christianity was the God of the Old Testament who started time and would conclude it. He created matter *ex nihilo*, and He specifically and deliberately created man out of the dust of the earth. The flood in Genesis was the true account of the universal flood that so many ancient cultures spoke of in their myths and legends. And it was a young earth, not yet 6,000 years old.²²⁶ Christianity was not rooted in myth nor was the coming of Christ, for in Genesis three was/is the protevangelion, the first promise of Christ's coming to redeem lost mankind—it was all historical from first to last.

Now, of course, under the tutelage of evangelical Darwinians, we know the early Church Fathers were wrong: Christianity is ahistorical, it is no less mythical than pagan stories of beginnings. The gospel, then, has no historical roots we can know with certainty. Therefore Enns is right. Genesis 1-11 is all allegory, metaphor, myth. And having negated Genesis 1-11 as true, evangelical deep-time evolutionists scramble to write their own. The end results have been noted above. They are vague, naturalistic, fictional and inadequate, even bizarre at times, and certainly lacking in any transcendent authority. What is most astounding is that none of this seems to trouble us. How can anyone say that simply because Genesis 1-11 is not true, Christianity is in no way effected?

As a Young Earth Creationist, I have no desire to add to the gospel that which does not belong there. But I do intend to do all that I can to preserve what is historically necessary for the gospel to make historical sense. For if it does not make sense historically it will not make sense theologically. Christianity cannot be half myth and half historical.

Next, I want to respond to Dean Arnold's statement that “scientific explanations... will always be naturalistic and materialistic....”²²⁷ Certainly this is true when investigating natural phenomena. As Paolo Antonio Foscarini wrote in 1615, “God chose to reveal only what could not be discovered by the light of reason; the rest he left to human disputation....”²²⁸ When it comes to origins and the history related in Genesis 1-11, I do not see how a Christian can adopt such a position. Let me bring up the Noachic flood yet one more time to illustrate my thinking on this issue. Young claims there is no evidence geologically for a universal flood. We have already given a creationist's response. But in a sense this is beside the point. Right in the middle of Genesis 1-11 is the claim and description of a universal flood that destroyed all (land) animals, birds, and human life except those in the ark. (Supposedly it is in Genesis because God wanted it included.) It

is presented as an historical fact. Ancient civilizations and ancient Israel believed it was true. Evidently Jesus and the Apostles believed it was true. To say that Moses intended it to be understood as a metaphor or allegory is to strain credulity. An allegory or metaphor of what and to what end? To interpret it as a local flood is to hold both the exegete and the Scriptures up to ridicule as well as insult the reader's intelligence. If it never happened, why would God put it in the Bible to begin with? And if it never happened, why did God allow it to be used in the New Testament as if it was truly historical? The only rational answer that respects Scripture and reason is that it did happen. None of it makes sense apart from historical reality. The Noachic flood is an inescapable stumbling stone to evangelical Darwinists whether they recognize this or not.

More than Genesis 1-11, however, is challenged by deep-time evolution. Also challenged is the truthfulness of Romans 1:18-20. It doesn't matter how evangelical deep-time evolutionists reinterpret general revelation, Romans 1:18-20 declares that God is clearly and plainly evident in His creation but men suppress this truth in unrighteousness. But deep-time evolution which is an "insanely slow," brutal, cruel, and wasteful process mocks such a declaration. Where are "God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—...clearly seen" in Darwinian evolution stretching over billions of years? Romans 1:18-20 states that *all* men know there is a personal creator God who made the natural world, not just believers, and it is not something they have to puzzle their way to through philosophical speculation or scientific investigation. God has made it plain and clear to them, so plain and clear that they are without excuse thus justifiable under God's judgment. This simple declaration of God cannot be reconciled with deep-time evolution and it cannot be reduced to the fact that the Big Bang must have been caused by God because we cannot see how nature could have done it on its own. Sometimes I have to wonder whether evangelical deep-time evolutionists really understand what they are doing?

Last, I want to respond to a statement made by Stan Guthrie in an article he penned in the March 2007, *Christianity Today*. The article, "Living with the Darwin Fish," seems to have been written to assure us we can believe both in deep-time evolution and God and suffer no "apparent spiritual harm."²²⁹ Numerous Christians have done so including, we are informed, Pope John Paul II and Francis Collins. Guthrie proceeds to quote Collins to the affect that deep-time evolution is a fact, just like gravity is a fact. And the reason Collins can make such a bold assertion is because we share DNA fossils that are "found in other species in the same place, in the same way."²³⁰ This moves Guthrie to write:

This "fact" interpreted through the lens of faith and not doubt, can perhaps deepen our understanding of our Creator, who works all things according to the counsel of his will. If evolution, *messy and circuitous* as it appears, is true, then God is more mysterious than I imagined—but no less God.²³¹
(Italics mine.)

This is an interesting remark in that Guthrie does not seem able to describe deep-time evolution in straight forward terms: it is a brutal, cruel, heartless, horrid, wasteful system. Instead we have euphemisms: evolution is "messy and circuitous." And God, rather than

being, bizarre, strange, even frightening and indifferent and darkly ominous (how else can we view the god of Darwinism?), is simply more “mysterious” than originally conceived. Guthrie never questions whether the god of evolution, though “no less God” is the same God as revealed in Scripture.

One wants to say Guthrie is in a state of denial but if he is he has numerous companions. I find it almost incomprehensible that so many evangelicals find no disconnect, nothing disconcerting, between the god of deep-time evolution and God as portrayed in the Bible. It does not seem to disturb them or even to occur to them that something is not normal here. Only the New Zealanders, critiqued above, seemed to have grasped the problem and thus sought to separate God from the horrors of “his” “insanely slow and brutal” evolving creation. He gave it freedom to be whatever it wanted to be—within limits, of course. In other words, He disassociated himself from it.

Guthrie, however, continues to assure his readers with soothing bromides. “God is never in a hurry,” he writes confidently, quoting Psalm 90:4 to justify deep-time evolution. Nor does he believe God is diminished in anyway by evolution, writing:

And accepting the idea of common descent [i.e., deep-time evolution] doesn’t mean abandoning our belief that the created order declares the glory of God. Increasing numbers of world-class scientists, . . . are in awe of the apparent design and fine-tuning of Creation. “The more I examine the universe and the details of its architecture,” physicist and mathematician Freeman Dyson writes, “the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we were coming.”²³²

At first read Dyson’s words sound/feel comforting. But on closer inspection one realizes they are, in essence, so much romantic nonsense. And any good pantheist or even Rationalist devoted to deep-time evolution could have said something similar.²³³ It is ironic that after quoting Collins, and holding him up as a sterling example of a Christian who believes in deep-time evolution without spiritual harm, Guthrie appeals to one of the Intelligent Design folk, folk Collins holds in great disdain. Third, Guthrie is still hiding behind euphemisms, unwilling and unable to address the hard realities of deep-time evolution square on.

One suspects that Guthrie represents a great many evangelicals who have come to accept deep-time evolution. Somehow it must be prettied up so to speak, softened, mystified, romanticized, described euphemistically, perhaps because the psychic shock that the God of the Bible and the god of deep-time evolution are one and the same is, or can be, devastating mind-boggling to any one who takes Scripture seriously. It is next to impossible to wrap one’s mind around it. As noted previously, Stephen Pinker (*The Blank Slate*) had a valid, though jaundiced, criticism of the Intelligent Design scientist, Michael Behe, when he wrote:

When it comes to the Intelligent designer, Behe suddenly jettisons all scientific scruples and does not question where the designer came from or how the

designer works. And he ignores the overwhelming evidence that the process of evolution, far from being intelligent and purposeful, is wasteful and cruel.²³⁴

Given the descriptive reality of deep-time evolution, I cannot disagree more than I do with Guthrie. God is not glorified in the details of deep-time evolution, nor is He magnified in the process as a whole. How can one glorify God for such a brutal and cruel system that is never-ending. Collins is right about one thing: in such a system all one can see is the process—unfathomable time, plus chance, plus an omnipotent natural selection dispensing with impossibility. Show me, you evangelicals that embrace deep-time Darwinism, where the glory of God shows through clearly and plainly? Genesis 1:3 claims, “God saw all that he had made, and it was *very good*. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day,” (NIV, italics mine). At what point during the hundreds and hundreds of millions of years of deep-time evolution did God say this? Considering what a cruel, senseless, brutal, indifferent process it was and is, at what point could God have said this? Ah, I forgot, Genesis one is only an allegory. This being the case, one must conclude that God never really did look at all He had made and never really declared it very good. If deep-time evolution is true, one can only wonder why He would even want to.

I am a villainous man. I began this extended essay with these words, good reader, and I conclude with them—villainous because I am a Young Earth Creationist. For those of you who have paid me the courtesy of reading this essay to its completion, you now understand fully why I am unapologetic about my villainy. And as long as the Fourth Commandment contains these words, “for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day,” so long shall I remain a villain.

ENDNOTES:

1. See “Intelligent Design vs Tenure,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 1, 2007, A9 for the story of Professor Guillermo Gonzales of Iowa State University. Also see Ben Unruh, “Darwin challenged, research censored,” www.WorldNetDaily.com.
2. Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 200.
3. Ibid, 173, 174.
4. Ibid, 176.
5. Ibid, 177.
6. Ibid.

7. See pages 92, 93, 107, 136, 137.
8. Ibid, 210.
9. Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 188.
10. Ibid, 196.
11. Ibid, 196, 197. What is interesting is Collins' disdain toward the Intelligent Design Movement which in turn owes so much to Philip E. Johnson.
12. Ibid, 197.
13. Collins, 178.
14. Dean E. Arnold, "Why Are There So Few Christian Anthropologists? Reflections on the Tensions between Christianity and Anthropology," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Vol. 58, No. 4, December 2006, 272.
15. Collins, 177, 178.
16. Noll, 232.
17. Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 163.
18. Exodus 20:11 reads: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy," (NIV).
19. Collins, 175, 178.
20. Ibid, 175.
21. Ibid.
22. Noll, 198, 200, 207.
23. Ibid, 197.
24. Ibid, 199.
25. See Hall, 25-27 for his explication of Noll's position on this issue.

26. De Lamar Jensen, *Reformation Europe: Age of Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1992), 65.
27. *God Hath Spoken* (Philadelphia: Bible Conference Committee, 1919). The doctrinal statement is found on pages 11 and 12. Actually the fundamentalists were quite taken with statements of faith every time they gathered together.
28. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 129.
29. Ibid, 128.
30. Ibid, 194.
31. Collins, 175.
32. Noll, 199.
33. Ibid, 197.
34. Collins, 175.
35. *St. Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Vol. 1. Bks. 1-6, Translated and Annotated by John Hammond Taylor, S. J. (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 142.
36. Alister E. Mc Grath, "Augustine of Hippo," in *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought*, Michael Bauman and Martin I. Klauber, eds. (Nashville: Broadman Press and Holman Publishers, 1995), 85-87.
37. "The Hexameron," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, VIII, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), 101.
38. Ibid, 101, 102.
39. "Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on Galatians 4:22-31," *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, trans. and ed., Karlfried Froehlich (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 96.
40. Ibid, 96, 97.
41. Ibid, 97.
42. Ibid.

43. Bill Crouse and Gordon Franz, "Mount Cudi—True Mountain of Noah's Ark," *Bible and Spade*, 19:4 (2006), 105, 106. Also see Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth* (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2008), 49-51.
44. *Luther's Works, Lectures on Genesis*, Vol. I, Chapters 1-5, Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 3.
45. *Ibid*, 5.
46. *Ibid*.
47. *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith and Catechism* (Sterling, Virginia: Grace Abounding Ministries, n.d.), 21.
48. *Ibid*, 17.
49. *Ibid*.
50. Thomas A. Levy and Mohammed Najjar, "Edom and Copper: The Emergence of Ancient Israel's Rival," *Biblical Archeology Review*, July/August 2006, 25-36. [Also include article from *Bible and Spade*].
51. Collins, 210.
52. *Ibid*, 45.
53. *Ibid*, 200, 201.
54. George, 311.
55. Collins, 200, 201. See Chapter 9, pages 181-195 for his negative analysis of the Intelligent Design Movement.
56. *Ibid*, 200. Also see pages 80-82, and 205.
57. *Ibid*, 205.
58. Arnold, 269.
59. *Ibid*.
60. *Ibid*, 271. Also see 270.
61. *Ibid*, 269, 270.

62. Ibid, 272.
63. Ibid.
64. Noll, 199.
65. Ibid, 185, 186.
66. Augustine's quote can be found in Noll, 202, 203, and Collins, 156, 157.
67. Collins, 156. The scriptural verses Collins is referring to are Psalm 93:1, Psalm 104:5, and Eccl 1:5.
68. Ibid. Collins states that not all criticism of Galileo came only from the Roman Catholics—"John Calvin and Martin Luther also objected," 155. However, as Luther died in 1546 and Calvin in 1564, this would have been impossible. I think what Collins meant was that Luther and Calvin also denied Copernicus' heliocentric theory but this is far from clear in Collin's book at this point.
69. Noll, 206.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid, 205, 206.
72. William R. Shea and Mariano Artigas, *Galileo in Rome: The Rise and Fall of a Troublesome Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 57, 73. Also Stillman Drake, *Galileo at Work: His Scientific Biography* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 224, 225, and "Letter to the Grand Duchess," in *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*, Maurice A. Finocchiaro, ed. And trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 106, 107.
73. Drake, 227, 228, 229f: (Drake is quoting directly from Galileo's *Letter to the Grand Duchess*).
74. Shea and Artigas, 69.
75. Keith Windshuttle, *The Killing of History: How a discipline is being murdered by literary critics and social theorists* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 202, 203. Windshuttle is trying to make the point that observations do not necessarily come laden with *a priori* theories.
76. Noll, 182, 183.
77. Ibid, 207. Noll's take on Warfield is interesting. He is not concerned over whether Warfield is fair to Calvin or whether it is proper for Warfield to impose his views on

Calvin's writings. What is important for Noll is that Warfield allowed the best science to interpret Scripture proving yet again that YEC are incorrigible. Collins, while admitting "it is risky to make presumptions about historical figures," (199) nevertheless thinks Augustine would be a Darwinist were he alive today. Of course, when Augustine was really alive, he was a young earth creationist.

78. Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Acquiring Genomes: A Theory of the Origin of the Species* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 28-33, 39. Also see Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason, and Earth History: A Paradigm of Earth and Biological Origins by Intelligent Design* (Berreïn Springs, MI:Andrews University Press, 1997), 170, 171.

79. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39, 40. Gaddis would have been more accurate if he had used the term "cosmic evolution rather than "astronomy."

80. Noll, 206.

81. Richard m. Brace, *The Making of the Modern World: from the Renaissance to the Present*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966), 348, 349.

82. Shea and Artigas, 86.

83. Ibid, 115, 116.

84. Noll, 207.

85. Shea and Artigas, 88.

86. Ibid, 62.

87. Collins, 156.

88. Brace, 348.

89. "The Hexaemeron," 101, 102. Also see *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, 23-51 for an excellent discussion of Basil and other early Church Fathers in this area.

90. Collins, 155.

91. William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, edited and with an Introduction and Notes by David Daniell (New York: Penquin Books, 2000 [1528]), 156.

92. Kenneth J. Howell, *God's Two Books: Copernican Cosmology and Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern Science* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2002), 109.

93. Ibid, 115.
94. Ibid, 120.
95. Ibid, 121.
96. Ibid, 124.
97. Ibid, 125.
98. Ibid, 131.
99. Ibid, 121-123.
100. Drake, 246.
101. Ibid, 248.
102. Ibid, 245.
103. Shea and Artigas, 67.
104. Ibid, 69, 70.
105. Ibid, 54, 70, 73.
106. Collins, 153. Also see page 206 where he quotes Theodosius Dobzhansky along this same vein.
107. Ibid, 175.
108. Ibid, 209.
109. Noll, 207.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid, 197.
112. Collins, 154, 155.
113. Arnold, 272.
114. Noll, 183, 184.
115. www.humbolt-foundation.de/kosmos/title/2005_004.htm. Accessed 8/27/2007.

116. Noll, 207.
117. Collins, 207.
118. Ibid, 134.
119. Ibid, 207.
120. Ibid, 223.
121. Robert L. Reymond, *The Justification of Knowledge* (N. P.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), 49.
122. Collins, 209.
123. Ibid.
124. Arnold, 271.
125. Froelich, 97.
126. Henry B. Smith, Jr., "The Genesis Flood: An Interpretive Key to the Past," *Bible and Spade*, 19.4 (2006).
127. Noll, 231.
128. Collins, 175.
129. www.nwcreation.net/noahlegends.html. Accessed 10/16/2007.
130. Arnold, 272.
131. Hanna Rosen, "Rock of Ages, Ages of Rocks," www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/magazine/25wwln-geologists-t.html. Accessed 12/5/2007. A survey of the journal of the Creation Research Society from the beginning of 2003 through April 2009 show 23 articles were published on geology from a universal (noahic) perspective.
132. Ibid. "It can be so frustrating," Hanna Rosen quotes Stephen Moshier, chair of the Wheaton College Geology Department as saying, "many of us at Christian colleges really grieve at what a problem this young-earth creationism makes for the Christian witness. It's almost like they're adding another thing you have to believe to become a Christian. It's like saying, You have to believe the world is flat to be a Christian, and that's absolutely unreasonable."

133. Noll, 232.

134. For accounts of Intelligent Design scientists being persecuted see Bob Unruh's, "Darwin Challenged, research censored," www.WorldNetDaily.com (accessed October 5, 2007), or Ben Stein's movie, "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed," which came out in the Spring of 2008, and a spin-off from Stein's movie, David Berlinski's, *The Devil's Delusion, Atheism and Its Scientific Pretentions* (New York: Crown Forum, 2008).

135. Email to the author on April 13, 2009. Snelling lists six evidences for a Genesis flood. The first is "Fossils of sea creatures high above sea level due to ocean waters having flooded over the continents," 2) "Rapid burial of plants and animals," 3) "Rapidly deposited layers spread across vast areas," 4) "Sediment transported long distances," 5) "Rapid or no erosion between strata," and 6) "Many strata laid down in rapid succession." www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v2/n4/geologic-evidences-part-one&vPrint=1, accessed April 14, 2009.

136. Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2006), 40.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid, 26-29, 55.

140. Ibid, 27, 54.

141. Ibid, 53.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid, 53,55.

145. Ibid, 49.

146. Ibid, 50.

147. Ibid, 49.

148. Ibid, 52.

149. Ibid, 55.

150. “Stone Age Temple May be Birthplace of Civilization,” www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,452365,00.html, accessed 1/5/2009. German archeologist Klaus Schmidt has uncovered a massive temple site in southeastern Turkey (Gobelki Tepe) that is dated about 9500 B. C. and supposedly built by a Neolithic society of hunter-gatherers as agriculture was not yet “invented.” It is a highly sophisticated structure consisting of “three dozen T-shaped limestone monoliths...10 feet high” weighing “several tons each...” Each monolith has stylized carvings of either foxes, scorpions, lions, wild boars, or birds. Such a complex structure requires a sophisticated knowledge of engineering, architecture, and construction—supposedly something beyond the capabilities of a hunter-gatherer society. Where did they obtain such sophistication? Of course, if Genesis 11 is true, such sophistication of a dispersed people should not surprise us.

151. Enns, 50.

152. Ibid, 53.

153. Ibid.

154. Collins, 20.

155. Ibid. See for example pp 45, 106, 107, 136, 188, 197, 198, 200.

156. Ibid, 107.

157. Ibid, 200.

158. Ibid, 45.

159. Ibid, 106.

160. Ibid, 86.

161. Ibid, 67.

162. Ibid, 6.

163. Ibid, 204.

164. Ibid, 183.

165. Ibid, 187.

166. Ibid, 130.

167. Ibid, 92, 93.

168. Ibid, 94, 95.

169. Ibid, 95.

170. Ibid, 187.

171. Ibid, 188.

172. Ibid, 188, 189.

173. Ibid, 193.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid, 192.

176. Ibid, 185.

177. Ibid, 186.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid, 192.

180. Ibid.

181. Ibid.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid. Also see Brand, 171. Brand, who has his Ph D in ecology and evolutionary biology, offers a brief but excellent critique of the enormous difficulty of converting an existing gene to a new gene with a new function. In essence, there is no proof it can happen.

184. Ibid, 186.

185. Ibid, 188.

186. Henry Gee, *Deep Time: Cladistics, The Revolution in Evolution* (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 2002), 2, 5, and 8.

187. Sylvain Charlet, et. al., "Extraordinary Flux in Sex Ratio," *Science*, July 13, 2007, 214.

188. Jeanna Bryner, "Evolution Occurs in the Blink of an Eye," www.Live Science.com, accessed 7/18, 2007, page 1 of 1.
189. Charlet, 214.
190. Bryner.
191. Ibid.
192. Ibid.
193. Collins, 187.
194. Ibid, 200.
195. Ibid, 207.
196. Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking: Penquin Group, 2002), 130.
197. Collins, 204, 205.
198. Ibid, 205.
199. Ibid.
200. Ibid.
201. Ibid.
202. The essay originally appeared in the Australian apologetic journal CASE, No. 10, 2006. It was authored by Graeme Finlay, John Flenlay, Nishi Narunasinghe, Graham O'Brien, Chris Print, and Andrew Shelling. My Copy of the article came as an email attachment dated 5/2/2007. The page numbers used are from the attachment.
203. "The Chimpanzee Genome and the Christian View of Humanity," p 1 of 8.
204. Ibid, 2 of 8.
205. Ibid, 3 of 8.
206. Ibid, 4 of 8.
207. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass: G & c Merriam Co., Publishers, 1946), 700.

208. "The Chimpanzee Genome....," 3 of 8.
209. Ibid.
210. Ibid.
211. Ibid.
212. Ibid.
213. Ibid, 4 of 8.
214. Ibid.
215. Ibid.
216. Ibid, 8 of 8.
217. Ibid.
218. Ibid.
219. Ibid.
220. Ibid.
221. Collins, 207-209.
222. Ibid, 45, 201.
223. Hanna Rosen, "Rock of Ages, Ages of Rocks." See ednt #132 above.
224. Noll, 231.
225. Terry Mortensen and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth* (Green Forest, AZ.: Master Books, 2008), 50, 51. In fact the whole first chapter of this book is an excellent discussion of the issue.
226. Ibid, 51.
227. Arnold, 271.
228. Shea and Artigas, 67.
229. Stan Guthrie, "Living with the Darwin Fish," *Christianity Today*, March 2007, 74.

230. Ibid. Brand writes the following regarding the claim that evolution is a fact like gravity is a fact. “Can we honestly make that type of statement? The study of the history of life is a study of a series of events that happened some time in the past. We can’t make those events happen again. Thus it is unrealistic to say that the historical dimensions of evolution...is as much a proven fact as the law of gravity. A very great difference exists between these two phenomena,” (page 24).

231. Ibid.

232. Ibid.

233. And indeed we do have such a Rationalist(s) in mind. Harold Morowitz, Robert Hazen, and James Trefil have proposed what they call “deterministic origins” which basically asserts that “life’s chemical origins and many of its subsequent steps [were] inevitable—a cosmic imperative.” In other words what has happened, happened because it had to happen as it happened. To me, “deterministic origins” seems to be an attempt to co-opt the ID argument by admitting that there does indeed seem to be some sort of design and direction to deep-time evolution while denying any necessity for an Intelligence to be behind that design and direction. (“Intelligent Design Has No Place in the Science Curriculum,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 2, 2005, B8.

234. Pinker, 130.

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