



In Defense of Evolution (1994)

by Mark I. Vuletic

If, as the creationists would have us believe, all life on Earth came into existence through a process of special creation, then the God presumably in charge of the process has had ample opportunity to create evidence that would refute what the religious extremist minority naively labels the "heresy" of

evolution. However, when we examine the physical and biological Earth, we encounter not only a complete lack of disproof of evolution, but also vast quantities of evidence supporting evolution, all of which indicates one of three possibilities: (1) life evolved on its own; (2) God used evolution as a means of "creating" life; or (3) God created all life through special creation, but wants to deceive man into believing that evolution is true. All three of these options run counter to the creationist's claims.

Examining the Fossil Record

A crucial prediction made by the theory of evolution is that one should find a general progression of increasingly diverse and complex life forms when one examines the fossils in progressively higher strata of sedimentary rock. While creationists should expect the oldest strata of sedimentary rock to yield fossils of very complex life forms (like mammals), since their God presumably created all life within a short period of time, evolutionists specifically expect the fossil record not to. Thus, had God

wished to supply evidence refuting evolution and proving His status as Creator, He could easily have done so by depositing, preerving, and later exposing to paleontologists numerous mammalian fossils in the oldest rock strata. In fact, a God powerful enough to create an entire universe would surely find it a trifle to invert the whole sequence of fossils, placing the simplest life forms in the most modern strata and the most complex life forms in the earliest strata, thereby disproving evolution. Yet, when we look at the fossil record, we find the one sequence of life forms that evolution predicts -- not one of the many sequences that would have demolished evolutionary

science. One must wonder why the creationist's God has failed to seize such a beautiful opportunity to refute evolution.

Another prediction made by the theory of evolution is that the fossil record should yield transitional forms -- special creation, on the other hand, predicts a complete absence of transitional forms. As it turns out, transitional forms do exist, despite the attempts of creationists to deny them out of existence with wishful thinking. *Archaeopteryx lithographica*, displaying a distinct blend of major reptilian and avian characteristics and highly resembling the theropod reptiles of its time, is

unquestionably a transitional form. *Basilosaurus isis* is the name given to a whale whose 40-million year old fossilized skeleton features a small pelvis with hind legs. The rhipidistians link the crossopterygian fishes to the ichthyostegid amphibians through a clear temporal progression of vertebral and skull characteristics. *Diarthrognathus* sports both reptilian and mammalian jaw joints. *Tetraceratops* links the pelycosaurs to the therapsids (the pelycosaurs and therapsids are themselves reptile-mammal transitional forms). Creationists honest enough to acknowledge that the listed creatures exhibit obvious transitional characteristics and exist at precisely the

right time periods and in precisely the right places where evolutionists would expect to find them, have no route left but to assume that God created all of those creatures directly. But why would God create creatures that look so much like transitional forms, unless He wanted to trick man into believing in evolution and rejecting Him as Creator -- or unless He actually instituted the process of evolution. But this runs counter to the will of the creationists, who wrongfully wish to portray evolutionists as atheistic sinners who reject the "obvious truth" of special creation out of wicked, godless pride.

Examining Genetic Material

If God created all life, He could have used a fraction of His boundless power to endow each "kind" with a different form of genetic material. But all life forms on Earth use DNA and RNA as genetic material, which is what one would expect had all life evolved from a common ancestor. Moreover, DNA does not appear to have been engineered for functionality. Species that look virtually identical and live in equivalent climates on separate continents often exhibit highly dissimilar DNA -- their DNA actually more closely resembles that of

more different species living in adjacent environments. This is impossible to reconcile with the expectation that God would design the DNA of every species to enable it to best function within its environment. However, what we find makes complete sense in the light of evolution: adjacent species have similar DNA because one species diverged from the other and adapted to a new environment. Similar-looking species with dissimilar DNA are the product of convergent evolution -- they are not necessarily related, but they adapt in the same manner to their environments, resulting in similar appearance.

As if all this were not enough, the DNA

of many organisms also contains introns. Introns are segments of genetic material that are transcribed into mRNA, but are then excised before the mRNA is translated into protein. In plain English, introns constitute genetic garbage. We might expect some meaningless but non-harmful sequences to accumulate in an organism's genes as it evolves, but there is no reason for a creator to have put nonfunctional sequences in any creature's genes. Surely a God that wishes us to believe in special creation would have eliminated all of the evidence for evolution that we acquire through genetic research.

Evolution and Atheism?

Sometimes the creationists drop their scientific pretenses and reveal their religious motivations by attacking evolution on the grounds that it is an "anti-religious" or "atheistic" theory. The creationists would have one believe that evolution is atheistic, because it contradicts their naively literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis in the Bible. However, evolution is not atheistic. Evolution is a scientific finding, and science tells us nothing about metaphysical issues such as the existence of God. We know through

science that evolution is a reality. Whether a God exists who used evolution to create life is an open question.

The Bible Refutes Creationism

The creationists have sought hard to conceal from the public a fact that completely shatters the case for believing that a literal reading of the Book of Genesis reveals the true origin of life. The surprising fact is that a literal reading of Genesis results in self-contradiction, because there are two mutually exclusive creation stories in the Book of Genesis.

The first chapter of Genesis describes a six-day creation: on the first day, God created light. On the second day, God

created Heaven by making a division between the waters which apparently engulfed the universe. On the third day, God created dry land by gathering together the waters beneath Heaven, then created the seas, grass, herbs, and fruit trees. On the fourth day, God put the sun, the moon, and the stars in Heaven, beneath the upper layer of the waters which he had divided on the second day. On the fifth day, God created sea creatures and birds. On the sixth day, God first created land creatures, and then He created man.

Of course, we know that there are no waters above the stars, and that fruit trees did not exist before the first aquatic

creatures, and that the earth (much less grass, herbs, and fruit trees) did not exist before the sun or the stars. But lets put aside all of these problems with a literal Genesis 1, for the moment, and focus on how Genesis 1 compares with the next creation story in the Book of Genesis.

The second chapter of Genesis states that God first created man, then created trees, then made the animals, and finally created woman. All of this happened in one day -- the same day that God created the heavens and the earth, as described in Genesis 2:4. Not only is the sequence of creation different, but the time span is different as well.[[1](#)]

At most, only one of the two stories can

be literally correct. Creationists use all sorts of rhetorical and interpretive ploys to try to deny the contradiction between the first two chapters of Genesis, thereby violating their own precept that the Bible must be read literally. Modern biblical scholars agree that Genesis 1 and 2 do conflict. The two accounts were, after all, written centuries apart, and in very different cultural contexts. To believe in a completely literal rendition of the Book of Genesis is thus to claim that God inspired a self-contradictory set of writings. Apparently the creationists, as much as they claim to worship God, actually believe Him to be exceedingly stupid.

When the two creation stories in the Book of Genesis are appreciated for what they truly are -- allegories inspired by God, or myths designed by the ancient Hebrews -- only then does the Book of Genesis no contradict itself or the discoveries of science.

The Verdict on Creationism

The notion of a good, intelligent creator that wishes us to believe in special creation, yet stupidly or deviously creates evidence that points towards evolution, and nevertheless expects us to believe in a self-contradictory literal rendition of a set of ancient writings, is illogical, untenable as a scientific theory, and too blasphemous to be a valid religious belief. Why would a good God give us five senses and a mind with which to explore the physical world, and then deceive us, that He might condemn us for being deceived? If

God exists, He must surely find such creationist nonsense insulting.[[2](#)]

If we cannot trust science, which rigorously tests its hypotheses and unceasingly double-checks its own conclusions using the tools of observation and logic, then it is evident that we cannot trust anything. The creationists say they can trust their literal rendition of the Bible, but if they reject observation and logic, how can they be certain that the things they see in the Bible are not as much a "deception" as they claim evolution to be? Surely they cannot base their beliefs on faith, because many Christians base their beliefs in an allegorical Genesis on

faith. Indeed, one can have faith in anything at all.[3] In order for us to have any objective knowledge whatsoever, we must at least trust science.

To the rational Christian, science is a way of using the God-given gift of intelligence to understand how God actually does things. Christians used to think that the sun revolved around the earth, because they thought that the Bible revealed this "truth." But science revealed that the earth revolves around the sun. Although they resisted this discovery bitterly at first, most Christians eventually understood that God did not set up things the way that they had thought, and that, at the very

least, they had misread the Bible. Where fact is revealed, faith must often give way. One can use science to better understand one's religion -- and vice versa -- but it is sheer folly to insist upon a religious doctrine when scientific evidence indicates its falsity.

Creationism contradicts scientific fact, and its religious basis contradicts itself. But the creationists, like the geocentrist Christians of the Dark Ages, cling to their falsified beliefs, unwilling to admit that perhaps they have made a mistake in interpreting the "Word of God." The time will hopefully come when the creationists join the geocentrists of old, and set aside their pride and their dogmas so that they may learn the great

wonders that science teaches of the universe, and -- if he exists -- of God.

Footnotes

[1] [Note added 1999] I have come to realize that the time frame of a single day that I have attributed to Genesis 2 is not necessarily correct unless (as some biblical inerrantists do) one sticks firmly to the KJV or NKJV as infallible in its literal wording. A more appropriate translation of "in the day that" would be the rather indefinite "back when." Of course, this does not help the creationist much since the sequences of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 have typically been acknowledged (even by the Church Fathers) to disagree with one another, and should be expected to given their

separate mythological origins.

[2] The creationist might claim that Jesus himself spoke in parables to deliberately deceive people, so that they would not be saved (Mark 4:11-12). To this, we respond that Genesis 1 and 2 clearly must serve as a parable that was meant by God to keep anyone as closed-minded as a creationist from being saved. It is doubtful that God would want to be eternally surrounded by people who refuse to use the brains that He has so graciously given unto them.

[3] Sometimes the creationists claim to have "experienced Christ" in such a manner that they are convinced that a literal reading of the Bible, including

Genesis, yields the truth. But there are Christians who claim to have experienced Christ, yet do not support special creation or a literal reading of the Bible (some don't think much of the Bible, period). Each side denies that the other has really experienced Christ. Since there is no means of testing which side is right (if either!) the "experience of Christ" thus is as unauthoritative as faith.

From:

<http://www.infidels.org/librai>

Copyright © Internet Infidels 1995-1999. All rights reserved.

Last updated: Friday, 20-Aug-99 21:02:35 MDT

The Secular Web Copyright

The Secular Web is copyright protected by the **Internet Infidels** and **Jeffery Jay Lowder**. Contents of the Secular Web may not be reproduced for profit without the expressed written consent of Jeffery Jay Lowder. Permission is granted to electronically distribute any and all material on the Secular Web over the Internet or elsewhere--and in fact is highly encouraged--provided the material is not sold for profit and the following notice is retained.

*These files, and many more are
available at the Secular Web:*
<http://www.infidels.org/>.

For more information send mail to
infidel@infidels.org.

Note that some files are also protected
under other additional copyrights.

Copyright © Internet Infidels 1995-1999. All rights reserved.