



EVOLUTION, SCIENCE, HISTORY AND RELIGION

Dawkins resorts to guilt-by-association by comparing evolution-deniers with Holocaust deniers and deniers of the reality of the Roman Empire. Yet the Romans and the Holocaust are supported by eyewitness accounts and ample written records, unlike evolution.

Dawkins and many other evolutionists fret that doubt of evolution will be the end of science, but most science works perfectly well without it, including biological. Indeed, most of the branches of modern science were founded by believers in biblical creation, including biological science. In reality, science flourished in the Middle Ages in a Christianized Europe, and increased further after biblical authority was rediscovered in the Reformation. This should not be surprising, since science requires certain presuppositions, and they are all provided by the Bible, but not by Dawkins' materialism or, for example, by mystical religions.

Dawkins demonstrates duplicity in his lecturing of preachers. He demands that they teach that Adam was not historical, yet in his previous book *The God Delusion* he had called a symbolic Adam "barking mad". In *Greatest Show*, he says he respects theistic evolutionists, but in *God Delusion*, he condemned that view.

Does science need evolution?

Dawkins acts as though “history deniers” are a threat to science in general. Even the title of his book, “The Greatest Show on Earth”, suggests the overwhelming importance of evolution.

History deniers?

Dawkins begins chapter 1 with:

“Imagine that you are a teacher of Roman history and the Latin language, anxious to impart your enthusiasm for the ancient world ... Yet you find your precious time continually preyed upon, and your class’s attention distracted, by a baying pack of ignoramuses ... who, with strong political and especially financial support, scurry about tirelessly attempting to persuade your unfortunate pupils that the Romans never existed. There never was a Roman Empire. The entire world came into existence only just beyond living memory. Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, Catalan, Occitan, Romansh: all these languages and their constituent dialects sprang spontaneously and separately into being, and owe nothing to any predecessor such as Latin.

“Instead of devoting your full attention to the noble vocation of classical scholar and teacher, you are forced to divert your time and energy to a rearguard defence of the proposition that the Romans existed at all: a defence against an exhibition of ignorant prejudice that would make you weep if you weren’t too busy fighting it.” (p. 3)

Of course, here, unlike evolution, there are written records by eyewitnesses of the Romans, and surviving documents in Latin. And all Dawkins’ complaints about history denial are hypocritical, since he gives tacit endorsement to a fringe view which is a *real* history denial—the so-called ‘Christ myth’ that Jesus did not even exist *at all*, not even as a person walking the earth (much less as the incarnate Son of God).¹ In his overtly atheopathic book *The God Delusion*, Dawkins says that it is “possible to mount a serious, though not widely supported, historical case that Jesus never lived at all”.² However, no historian accepts this.³ Instead, Dawkins appeals to G.A. Wells, a professor of *German*, not a historian.

Dawkins also appeared in a film by apostate Brian Flemming called *The God Who Wasn’t There*. This film stridently defended the ‘Christ myth’,

1. Holding, J.P., Dawkins’ Ironic Hypocrisy, creation.com/dawk-hyp, 21 November 2008.

2. Dawkins, R., *The God Delusion*, p. 97, Transworld Publishers, London, 2006.

3. For extensive documentation of the historical evidence that Jesus existed, see Holding, J.P., *Shattering the Christ Myth*, Xulon Press, 2008.

including the even more absurd proposition that Jesus' life story was derived from accounts of pagan deities.⁴ While Dawkins did not address the existence of Jesus in the film, his voluntary appearance—and warm praise for it in *The God Delusion*—amounts to an endorsement of its historical nonsense.

Dawkins continues:

“If my fantasy of the Latin teacher seems too wayward, here’s a more realistic example. Imagine you are a teacher of more recent history, and your lessons on 20th-century Europe are boycotted, heckled or otherwise disrupted by well-organised, well-financed and politically muscular groups of Holocaust-deniers. Unlike my hypothetical Rome-deniers, Holocaust deniers really exist. They are vocal, superficially plausible and adept at seeming learned. They are supported by the president of at least one currently powerful state, and they include at least one bishop of the Roman Catholic Church. Imagine that, as a teacher of European history, you are continually faced with belligerent demands to ‘teach the controversy’, and to give ‘equal time’ to the ‘alternative theory’ that the Holocaust never happened but was invented by a bunch of Zionist fabricators.” (pp. 3–4)

Here is a classic guilt-by-association ploy. In reality, the Holocaust deniers⁵ are doing just what Dawkins (or at least those he endorses) does with Jesus: ignores the eyewitness reports. And of course, there are living witnesses to the Holocaust, census records showing a vast drop in the European Jewish population, hardly any surviving European Jewish families who have not lost members in that tragic time and death camp records helpfully kept by the perpetrators, who were convicted in the Nuremberg trials. Evolution has nothing like this.

Evolution: central principle of biology?

After this rhetorical flourish, Dawkins laments the problem, as he sees it:

“The plight of many science teachers today is not less dire. When they attempt to expound the central and guiding principle of biology; when they honestly place the living world in its historical context—which means evolution; when they explore and explain the very nature of life

4. Either the parallels evaporate under even moderate analysis, or they post-date Christianity. See Sarfati, J., Was Christianity plagiarized from pagan myths? Refuting the copycat thesis, creation.com/copycat, 10 January 2009.

5. What really is often denied is the overtly evolutionary basis of the Nazi Holocaust and eugenics programs. See Weikart, R., *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics and Racism in Germany*, Palgrave MacMillan, NY, 2004; *Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress*, Palgrave Macmillan, NY, 2009. See also Sarfati, J., Refutation of *New Scientist's* “Evolution: 24 myths and misconceptions”: The Darwin–Hitler connection, which also refutes the ‘Hitler was a Christian’ mendacity seen on some gutter atheopathic sites; creation.com/hitler-darwin, 19 November 2008.

itself, they are harried and stymied, hassled and bullied, even threatened with loss of their jobs. At the very least their time is wasted at every turn.” (p. 4)

Yet the ones who are threatened with loss of jobs are usually those who dare to dissent from goo-to-you evolution.^{6,7} Dawkins provides no evidence for this assertion that science teachers today are threatened with loss of jobs for teaching evolution. This seems like a classic case of *projection* on Dawkins’ part.

The alleged centrality of evolution is echoed by the US National Academy of Science’s book *Science, Evolution and Creationism*⁸ (2008), and even extended, by implication, to other branches of science:

“Scientific and technological advances have had profound effects on human life. In the 19th century, most families could expect to lose one or more children to disease. Today, in the United States and other developed countries, the death of a child from disease is uncommon. Every day we rely on technologies made possible through the application of scientific knowledge and processes. The computers and cell phones which we use, the cars and airplanes in which we travel, the medicines that we take, and many of the foods that we eat were developed in part through insights obtained from scientific research. Science has boosted living standards, has enabled humans to travel into Earth’s orbit and to the Moon, and has given us new ways of thinking about ourselves and the universe.

“Evolutionary biology has been and continues to be a cornerstone of modern science.”

But it is not hard to notice that most of the scientific advances listed haven’t the slightest thing to do with evolution. Computers, cell phones, airplanes, and the moon landings certainly don’t! Indeed, they largely depended on the foundations laid by creationist scientists:

- The creationist Robert Boyle (1627–1691) fathered modern chemistry and demolished the faulty Aristotelian four-elements theory. He also funded

6. See documentation in Bergman, J., *Slaughter of the Dissidents: Shocking Truth about Killing the Careers of Darwin Doubters*, Leafcutter Press, 2008; If you can’t beat them, ban them, review by Lloyd To, *J. Creation* 23(2):37–40, 2009.

7. An entertaining documentary with a very serious message is Ben Stein’s *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, Premise Media, 2008, which features an interview with Dawkins among others. It also documents the evolutionary basis of the Holocaust, including some of the Nazi propaganda films that proclaimed, “We have sinned against natural selection” for allowing the ‘unfit’ to live and reproduce.

8. For refutation, see Sarfati, J., Science, Creation and Evolutionism: Response to the latest anti-creationist agitprop from the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS), *Science, Evolution and Creationism*, creation.com/nas, 8 February 2008.

lectures to defend Christianity and sponsored missionaries and Bible translation work.

- Cell phones depend on electromagnetic radiation theory, which was pioneered by creationist James Clerk Maxwell (1831–1879).
- Computing machines were invented by Charles Babbage (1791–1871), who was not a biblical creationist but was a creationist in the broad sense. He “believed that the study of the works of nature with scientific precision, was a necessary and indispensable preparation to the understanding and interpreting their testimony of the wisdom and goodness of their Divine Author.”⁹
- The creationist brothers Orville (1871–1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867–1912) invented the airplane after studying God’s design of birds.
- The theory of planetary orbits was invented by Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), famous for claiming that his discoveries were “thinking God’s thoughts after him”. Kepler also calculated a creation date of 3992 BC, close to Ussher’s.
- The theory of gravity and the laws of motion, essential for the moon landings, were discovered by the creationist Isaac Newton (1642/3–1727), who also discovered the spectrum of light (so was the forerunner of my own speciality, spectroscopy), invented the reflecting telescope, discovered the exponential law of cooling, and co-invented calculus.
- The moon landing program was headed by Wernher von Braun (1912–1977), who believed in a designer and opposed evolution. And a biblical creationist, James Irwin (1930–1991), walked on the moon.
- America led the world in the number of Nobel prizes awarded, including in biology, before evolution was part of the school curriculum. And the Apollo moon landings were achieved by scientists and engineers educated under the same curriculum.
- Furthermore, these great scientists had precedents in the Middle Ages, often wrongly called the ‘Dark Ages’. Science historian Dr James Hannam writes:
“Popular opinion, journalistic cliché and misinformed historians notwithstanding, recent research has shown that the Middle Ages were a period of enormous advances in science, technology and culture.

9. Buxton, H.W., *Memoir of the Life and Labours of the Late Charles Babbage Esq.*, unpublished, p. 1986. Cited in: Dubbey, J.M., *The Mathematical Work of Charles Babbage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 227.

The compass, paper, printing, stirrups and gunpowder all appeared in Western Europe between AD 500 and AD 1500.”¹⁰

These ‘dark ages’ also saw the development of water and wind power, agricultural advances that enabled huge population growth, spectacles, magnificent architecture, the blast furnace, and much more.¹⁰ It was also the time when universities were founded—including Dawkins’ own Oxford—and these were modelled on theological colleges.

Some have claimed that most of these scientists would have been evolutionists had they known about Darwin. This is hypothetical and question-begging; it doesn’t explain the creationists who were contemporaneous with Darwin or lived after him, and ignores the fact that evolutionary ideas had long predated Darwin.¹¹

Does biology need evolution?

Some might argue, the above have nothing to do with biology, so we should not expect evolution to be relevant. However, an extremely common first point of attack on anti-evolutionists is that they are ‘anti-science’ and that science in general would collapse if evolution were not taught, yet the above shows how much science has little to do with evolution. So evolutionists have no just cause for complaint when all these branches of science are used as a rebuttal to their exaggerated accusation.

Furthermore, even in biology, some prominent academics have recently queried its *usefulness*. A.S. Wilkins, editor of the journal *BioEssays*, commented: “Evolution would appear to be the indispensable unifying idea and, at the same time, a highly superfluous one.”¹² The leading chemist Philip Skell, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, echoed similar thoughts in a column he wrote for *The Scientist*:

“Further, Darwinian explanations for such things are often too supple: Natural selection makes humans self-centered and aggressive—except when it makes them altruistic and peaceable. Or natural selection produces virile men who eagerly spread their seed—except when it prefers men who are faithful protectors and providers. When an explanation is so supple that it can explain any behavior, it is difficult

10. See Hannam, J., *God’s Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science*, p. 5, Icon Books, 2009.

11. See Sarfati, J., Newton was a creationist only because there was no alternative? (response to critic) creation.com/newt-alt, 29 July 2002. The critic I was replying to later wrote thanking CMI for the response, and to say that he no longer agreed with the sentiments of his original letter. He was happy for his original letter and response to remain as a teaching point for others who might need correcting.

12. Wilkins, A.S., Evolutionary processes: a special issue, *BioEssays* 22:1051–1052, 2000.

to test it experimentally, much less use it as a catalyst for scientific discovery.”¹³

Dr Marc Kirschner, founding chair of the Department of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School stated:

“In fact, over the last 100 years, almost all of biology has proceeded independent of evolution, except evolutionary biology itself. Molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology, have not taken evolution into account at all.”¹⁴

Does medicine need evolution?

Then what about medicine? Dawkins touched on this with antibiotic resistance (pp. 132–3), as refuted in ch. 4. I noted that even antibiotics were developed by the creationist Jew, Ernst Chain. What about other advances in science that are rightly credited with the vast drop in deaths of children due to disease and elimination of many scourges like smallpox and polio? No joy here for the evolutionists either. Many of the most important medical advances were made without the slightest use being made of evolution:

- Vaccination was discovered by Edward Jenner (1749–1823—note that Darwin published *Origin* in 1859).
- Aseptic surgery by Joseph Lister, creationist (1827–1912).
- Anaesthesia by James Young Simpson (1811–1870), who believed that God was the first anaesthetist, citing Genesis 2:21.
- Germ theory of disease by Louis Pasteur, creationist (1822–1895), who disproved spontaneous generation, still an evolutionary belief, as shown in ch. 13.
- In modern times, we have the outspoken biblical creationist Raymond Damadian (1936–), inventor of the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner,^{15,16} and John Sanford (1950–), the inventor of the gene gun.

See more in “Darwinian medicine?”, ch. 4, p. 77.

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13. Skell, P.S., Why Do We Invoke Darwin? Evolutionary theory contributes little to experimental biology, *The Scientist* **19**(16):10, 29 August 2005. Skell wrote a similar article: The Dangers Of Overselling Evolution: Focusing on Darwin and his theory doesn't further scientific progress, *Forbes magazine*, www.forbes.com, 23 Feb., 2009.
 14. Quoted in the *Boston Globe*, 23 October 2005.
 15. Mattson, J. and Simon, M., *The Pioneers of NMR and Magnetic Resonance in Medicine: The Story of MRI*, Bar-Ilan University Press, Jericho, New York, 1996; chapter 8: “Raymond V. Damadian: Originator of the Concept of Whole-Body NMR Scanning (MRI) and Discoverer of the NMR Tissue Relaxation Differences That Made It Possible.”
 16. See also Sarfati, J., Dr Damadian's vital contribution to MRI: Nobel prize controversy returns, 21–22 October 2006, creation.com/damadian. This documents Dr Damadian's vital contribution: showing that healthy and diseased tissue could be differentiated. Without this discovery, there would be nothing for MRI to ‘image’.

The Christian roots of science¹⁷

Many anti-Christians claim that Christianity and science have been enemies for centuries. This is the opposite of the truth, as already shown above with all the Christian founders of modern science. Informed historians of science, including non-Christians, have pointed out that modern science first flourished under a Christian world view while it was *stillborn* in other cultures such as ancient Greece, China and Arabia.¹⁸

This should be no surprise when we ask why science works at all. There are certain essential features that make science possible, and they simply did not exist in non-Christian cultures.¹⁹

1. There is such a thing as *objective truth*. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). But postmodernism, for example, denies objective truth. One example is, “What’s true for you is not true for me.” So maybe they should try jumping off a cliff to see if the Law of Gravity is true for them. Another postmodern claim is, “There is no truth”—so is *that* statement true?; or, “We can’t know truth”—so how do they *know* that?
2. The universe is *real*, because God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1). This sounds obvious, but many eastern philosophies believe that everything is an illusion (so is *that* belief an illusion as well?). There is no point in trying to investigate an illusion by experimenting on it.
3. The universe is *orderly*, because God is a God of order not of confusion—1 Corinthians 14:33. But if there is no creator, or if Zeus and his gang were in charge, why should there be any order at all? If some Eastern religions were right that the universe is a great Thought, then it could change its mind any moment.

It is impossible to prove from nature that it is orderly, because the proofs would have to presuppose this very order to try to prove it. Also, in this *fallen* world with natural disasters and thunderstorms and general chaos, it is not so obvious that it was made by an orderly Creator. This is a major message of the book of Ecclesiastes—if we try to live our lives only according to what is under the sun, the result is futility. Hence our chief end is to “Fear God and keep his commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

17. Based on my articles Why does science work at all? *Creation* 31(3):12–14, 2009; and The biblical roots of modern science, *Creation* 32(4), 2010; creation.com/roots.

18. Stark, R., *For the Glory of God: How monotheism led to reformations, science, witch-hunts and the end of slavery*, Princeton University Press, 2003; see also review by Williams A., The biblical origins of science, *J. Creation* 18(2):49–52, 2004; creation.com/stark.

19. I acknowledge Sean Wieland’s input into such a list.

A fundamental facet of science is deriving laws that provide for predictable outcomes. This is only possible because the universe is orderly.

4. Since God is sovereign, He was free to create as He pleased. So the only way to find out how His creation works is to *investigate* and *experiment*, not rely on man-made philosophies as did the ancient Greeks.

This is illustrated with Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). He showed by experiment that weights fall at the same speed (apart from air resistance), which refuted the Greek philosophy that heavy objects fall faster. He also showed by *observation* that the sun had spots, refuting the Greek idea that the heavenly bodies are perfect.

Another example is Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), who discovered that planets moved in ellipses around the sun. This refuted the Greek philosophies that insisted on circles because they are the most ‘perfect’ shapes, which then needed the addition of an increasingly cumbersome system of circles upon circles called *epicycles* to try to accommodate the observations.

But when it comes to origins as opposed to understanding how things work, God has revealed that He created about 6,000 years ago over six normal-length days, and judged the earth with a globe-covering flood about 4,500 years ago. It’s thus no accident that Kepler calculated a Creation date of 3992 BC, and Isaac Newton (1643–1727), probably the greatest scientist of all time, also strongly defended biblical chronology.

5. Man *can and should investigate* the world, because God gave us *dominion* over His creation (Genesis 1:28); creation is not divine. So we don’t need to sacrifice to the forest god to cut down a tree, or appease the water spirits to measure its boiling point. On the contrary, many other founders of modern science saw their scientific research as bringing glory to God. Newton said:

“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being. ... This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called ‘Lord God’ Παντοκράτορ [*Pantōkrator*], or ‘Universal Ruler’. ... The Supreme God is a Being eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect.”²⁰

20. *Principia*, Book III; cited in; *Newton’s Philosophy of Nature: Selections from his writings*, p. 42, ed. H.S. Thayer, Hafner Library of Classics, NY, 1953.

Also: “Opposition to godliness is atheism in profession and idolatry in practice. Atheism is so senseless and odious to mankind that it never had many professors.”²¹

6. Man can *initiate* thoughts and actions; they are not fully determined by deterministic laws of brain chemistry. This is a deduction from the biblical teaching that man has both a material and immaterial aspect (e.g. Genesis 35:18, 1 Kings 17:21–22, Matthew 10:28). This immaterial aspect of man means that he is more than matter, so his thoughts are likewise not bound by the material makeup of his brain.

But if materialism were true, then ‘thought’ is just an epiphenomenon of the brain, and the results of the laws of chemistry. Thus, *given their own presuppositions*, materialists have not freely arrived at their conclusion that materialism is true, because their conclusion was *predetermined by brain chemistry*. But then, why should their brain chemistry be trusted over mine, since both obey the same infallible laws of chemistry? So in reality, if materialists were right, then they can’t even help what they believe (including their belief in materialism!). Yet they often call themselves ‘freethinkers’, overlooking the glaring irony. Genuine initiation of thought is an insuperable problem for materialism, as is consciousness itself (see also ch. 9, p. 147).²²

Even a non-Christian social commentator, Dr Theodore Dalrymple, showed up the flaws in this evolutionary reasoning, as promoted by the atheist philosopher Daniel Dennett:

“Dennett argues that religion is explicable in evolutionary terms—for example, by our inborn human propensity, at one time valuable for our survival on the African savannahs, to attribute animate agency to threatening events.

“For Dennett, to prove the biological origin of belief in God is to show its irrationality, to break its spell. But of course it is a necessary part of the argument that all possible human beliefs, including belief in evolution, must be explicable in precisely the same way; or else why single out religion for this treatment? Either we test ideas according to arguments in their favour, independent of their origins, thus making the argument from evolution

21. *A Short Scheme of the True Religion*, manuscript quoted in *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton* by Sir David Brewster, Edinburgh, 1850; cited in; *Newton’s Philosophy of Nature*, p. 65, Ref. 20.

22. Thompson, B. and Harrub, B., Consciousness: the king of evolutionary problems, *CRSQ* 41(2):113–130, 2004; see review by Tate, D., Consciousness: a problem for naturalism, *J. Creation* 21(1):29–32, 2007.

irrelevant, or all possible beliefs come under the same suspicion of being only evolutionary adaptations—and thus biologically contingent rather than true or false. We find ourselves facing a version of the paradox of the Cretan liar: all beliefs, including this one, are the products of evolution, and all beliefs that are products of evolution cannot be known to be true.”²³

7. Man can think rationally and logically, and that logic itself is objective. This is a deduction from the fact that he was created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26–27), and from the fact that Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the *logos* (John 1:1–3). This ability to think logically has been impaired *but not eliminated* by the Fall of man into sinful rebellion against his Creator. (The Fall means that sometimes the reasoning is flawed, and sometimes the reasoning is valid but from the wrong premises. So it is folly to elevate man’s reasoning above what God has revealed in Scripture.²⁴) But if evolution were true, then there would be selection only for survival advantage, not rationality.
8. Results should be reported *honestly*, because God has forbidden false witness (Exodus 20:16). But if evolution were true, then why not lie? It is not that surprising that scientific fraud²⁵ is now “a serious, deeply rooted problem.”²⁶ “[T]he dozen or so proven cases of falsification that have cropped up in the past five years have occurred in some of the world’s most distinguished research institutions—Cornell, Harvard, Sloan-Kettering, Yale and so on.”²⁷ This was said in 1981 and evolution has even more of a stranglehold on thinking today.

Note, it’s important to understand the point here—*not* that atheists can’t be moral but that they have *no objective basis for this morality from within their own system*. Dawkins himself admits that our “best impulses have no basis in nature,”²⁸ and his fellow anti-theistic evolutionary biologist William Provine said that evolution means, “There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.”²⁹

23. Dalrymple, T., What the new atheists don’t see: to regret religion is to regret Western civilization, *City Journal*, www.city-journal.org, Autumn 2007.

24. Sarfati, J., Loving God with all your mind: Logic and creation, *J. Creation* **12**(2):142–151, 1998; creation.com/logic.

25. Bergman, J., Why the epidemic of fraud exists in science today, *J. Creation* **18**(3):104–109, 2005.

26. Roman, M., When good scientists turn bad, *Discover* **9**(4):50–58; 1986; p. 58.

27. Editorial: Is science really a pack of lies? *Nature* **303**:361–362, 1981; p. 361.

28. Evolution: The dissent of Darwin, *Psychology Today*, January/February 1997, p. 62.

29. Provine, W.B. (Professor of Biological Sciences, Cornell University, USA), *Origins Research* **16**(1/2):9, 1994.

Scientific jump after the Reformation

Europe in the Middle Ages had a Judeo-Christian worldview, what Oxford don C.S. Lewis³⁰ (1898–1963) called “Mere Christianity” in a famous book of that name. So it’s not surprising that there were very significant advances in science at that time, as documented above (p. 306). But it took the Reformation to recover specific biblical authority. With this came the recovery of a plain or historical-grammatical understanding of the Bible,³¹ recovering the understanding of the New Testament authors³² and most of the early Church Fathers.³³ This turned out to have a huge positive impact on the development of modern science. This is so counter to common (mis)understanding, yet it is well documented by Peter Harrison, then a professor of history and philosophy at Bond University in Queensland, Australia (and now Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford):

“It is commonly supposed that when in the early modern period individuals began to look at the world in a different way, they could no longer believe what they read in the Bible. In this book I shall suggest that the reverse is the case: that when in the sixteenth century people began to read the Bible in a different way, they found themselves forced to jettison traditional conceptions of the world.”³⁴

As Prof. Harrison explained:

“Strange as it may seem, the Bible played a positive role in the development of science. ... Had it not been for the rise of the literal interpretation of the Bible and the subsequent appropriation of biblical narratives by early modern scientists, modern science may not have arisen at all. In sum, the Bible and its literal interpretation have played a vital role in the development of Western science.”³⁵

Stephen Snobelen, Assistant Professor of History of Science and Technology, University of King’s College, Halifax, Canada, writes in a similar vein, and also explains the somewhat misleading term ‘literal interpretation’³⁶:

“Here is a final paradox. Recent work on early modern science has demonstrated a direct (and positive) relationship between the

30. See also Bergman, J., C.S. Lewis: creationist and anti-evolutionist, *J. Creation* **23**(3): 110–115, 2009.

31. Kulikovskiy, A., The Bible and hermeneutics, *J. Creation* **19**(3):14–20, 2005; creation.com/hermeneutics.

32. Sarfati, J., Genesis: Bible authors believed it to be history, *Creation* **28**(2):21–23, 2006; creation.com/gen-hist.

33. Q&A: Genesis: Early Church Fathers; creation.com/fathers.

34. Harrison, P., *The Bible, Protestantism and the rise of natural science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001; see review by Weinberger, L., *J. Creation* **23**(3):21–24, 2009.

35. Harrison, P., The Bible and the rise of science, *Australasian Science* **23**(3):14–15, 2002.

36. Grigg, R., Should Genesis be taken literally? *Creation* **16**(1):38–41, 1993; creation.com/literal.

resurgence of the Hebraic, literal exegesis of the Bible in the Protestant Reformation, and the rise of the empirical method in modern science. I'm not referring to wooden literalism, but the sophisticated literal-historical hermeneutics that Martin Luther and others (including Newton) championed."³⁷

Prof. Snobelen explains the reason why: scientists started to study nature in the same way they studied the Bible. Just as they studied what the Bible really said, rather than imposing outside philosophies and traditions upon it, they likewise studied how nature really did work, rather than accept philosophical ideas about how it should work (extending their allegorizing readings of Scripture to the natural world).

“It was, in part, when this method was transferred to science, when students of nature moved on from studying nature as symbols, allegories and metaphors to observing nature directly in an inductive and empirical way, that modern science was born. In this, Newton also played a pivotal role. As strange as it may sound, science will forever be in the debt of millenarians and biblical literalists.”³⁷

It is thus no accident that science has flowered since the Reformation, where the Bible's authority was rediscovered. And it is no accident that the country with the strongest remnants of Bible-based Christian faith, the USA, the one Dawkins disparages because 40% of its population believe in creation, leads the world by a mile in the output of useful science.

Belief in the Fall of Adam: how it inspired science

Prof. Harrison has researched another commonly overlooked factor in the development of science: belief in a literal Fall of a literal first man Adam. These founding modern scientists, including Francis Bacon,³⁸ reasoned that the Fall not only destroyed man's innocence, but also greatly impaired his knowledge. The first problem was remedied by the innocent Last Adam, Jesus Christ³⁹—His sacrifice enabled our sin to be imputed (credited) to Him (Isaiah 53:6), and His perfect life enabled His righteousness to be imputed to believers in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). But as for recovering what they believed to be Adam's encyclopedic knowledge, they looked to science.

Harrison explains:

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37. Snobelen, S., “Isaac Newton and Apocalypse Now: a response to Tom Harpur's ‘Newton's strange bedfellows’; A longer version of the letter published in the Toronto Star, 26 February 2004; isaacnewton.ca/media/Reply_to_Tom_Harpur-Feb_26.pdf.
38. Wieland, C. and Sarfati, J., Culture wars Part 1: Bacon vs Ham—*The story behind the modern-day separation of faith and science*, *Creation* 25(1):46–48, 2002; creation.com/bacon.
39. Cosner, L., The Resurrection and Genesis, *Creation* 32(2):48–50, 2010; creation.com/res-gen.

“New [*sic*] literal readings of the creation narratives in Genesis provided 17th Century thinkers with powerful motivating images for pursuing the natural sciences.

“Adam was thought to have possessed a perfect knowledge of all sciences, a knowledge lost to posterity when he fell from grace and was expelled from the Garden of Eden. The goal of 17th Century scientists such as Francis Bacon and his successors in the Royal Society of London was to regain the scientific knowledge of the first man. Indeed, for these individuals, the whole scientific enterprise was an integral part of a redemptive enterprise that, along with the Christian religion, was to help restore the original race to its original perfection. The biblical account of the creation thus provided these scientists with an important source of motivation, and in an age still thoroughly committed to traditional Christianity, the new science was to gain social legitimacy on account of these religious associations.”³⁵

“For many champions of the new learning in the seventeenth century, the encyclopaedic knowledge of Adam was the benchmark against which their own aspirations were gauged. ...

“The experimental approach, I shall argue, was deeply indebted to Augustinian views about the limitations of human knowledge in the wake of the Fall, and thus inductive experimentalism can also lay claim to a filial relationship with the tradition of Augustinianism.”⁴⁰

Objection

Some atheists admit that science was in effect a child of Christianity, but now claim that it's time science grew up and cut the apron strings. However, none other than former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher answered that type of claim:

“I think back to many discussions in my early life when we all agreed that if you try to take the fruits of Christianity without its roots, the fruits will wither. And they will not come again unless you nurture the roots.

“But we must not profess the Christian faith and go to Church simply because we want social reforms and benefits or a better standard of behaviour; but because we accept the sanctity of life, the responsibility that comes with freedom and the supreme sacrifice of Christ expressed so well in the hymn:

40. Harrison, P., *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, introduction.

‘When I survey the wondrous Cross, On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.’⁴¹

So Dawkins’ decades-long campaign against Christian faith is undermining the roots of the science he professes to love.

Will the real Clinton Richard Dawkins please stand up?

Dawkins asserts that his book is not anti-religious, although it attacks the foundational belief of God as creator. In doing this, he invokes the ‘churchians’ who support evolution.

“It is frequently, and rightly, said that senior clergy and theologians have no problem with evolution and, in many cases, actively support scientists in this respect. This is often true, as I know from the agreeable experience of collaborating with the Bishop of Oxford, now Lord Harries, on two separate occasions. In 2004 we wrote a joint article in *The Sunday Times* whose concluding words were: ‘Nowadays there is nothing to debate. Evolution is a fact and, from a Christian perspective, one of the greatest of God’s works.’ The last sentence was written by Richard Harries, but we agreed about all the rest of our article. ...

“The Archbishop of Canterbury has no problem with evolution, nor does the Pope (give or take the odd wobble over the precise palaeontological juncture when the human soul was injected), nor do educated priests and professors of theology. *The Greatest Show on Earth* is a book about the positive evidence that evolution is a fact. It is not intended as an antireligious book. I’ve done that, it’s another T-shirt, this is not the place to wear it again. Bishops and theologians who have attended to the evidence for evolution have given up the struggle against it. Some may do so reluctantly, some, like Richard Harries, enthusiastically, but all except the woefully uninformed are forced to accept the fact of evolution. ...

“They may think God had a hand in starting the process off, and perhaps didn’t stay his hand in guiding its future progress. They probably think God cranked the Universe up in the first place, and solemnised its birth with a harmonious set of laws and physical constants calculated to fulfil some inscrutable purpose in which we were eventually to play a role. But, grudgingly in some cases, happily in others, thoughtful

41. Thatcher, M., *Christianity and Wealth*, Speech to the Church of Scotland General Assembly, 21 May 1988; www.margarettatcher.org.

and rational churchmen and women accept the evidence for evolution.”
(pp. 4–6)

Yet in *The God Delusion*, Dawkins had nothing but contempt for the idea of God using evolution as His means of creation. For example,

“I am continually astonished by those theists who, far from having their consciousness raised in the way that I propose, seem to rejoice in natural selection as ‘God’s way of achieving his creation’.”⁴²

This suggests that Dawkins regards these churchian evolutionists as ‘useful idiots’, to use Lenin’s term for his dupes in the West who couldn’t see that they were cutting off the branches on which they sat. See also ch. 16 for why this is indeed an untenable view.

Dawkins continues (in *Greatest Show*):

“To return to the enlightened bishops and theologians, it would be nice if they’d put a bit more effort into combating the anti-scientific nonsense that they deplore. All too many preachers, while agreeing that evolution is true and Adam and Eve never existed, will then blithely go into the pulpit and make some moral or theological point about Adam and Eve in their sermons without once mentioning that, of course, Adam and Eve never actually existed! If challenged, they will protest that they intended a purely ‘symbolic’ meaning, perhaps something to do with ‘original sin’, or the virtues of innocence. They may add witheringly that, obviously, nobody would be so foolish as to take their words literally. But do their congregations know that? How is the person in the pew, or on the prayer-mat, supposed to know which bits of scripture to take literally, which symbolically? Is it really so easy for an uneducated churchgoer to guess? In all too many cases the answer is clearly no, and anybody could be forgiven for feeling confused.” (pp. 7–8)

Yet in *The God Delusion*, Dawkins was withering about ministers who do exactly that, including his buddy Harries:

“Oh, but of course, the story of Adam and Eve was only ever *symbolic*, wasn’t it? *Symbolic*? So, in order to impress himself, Jesus had himself tortured and executed, in vicarious punishment for a *symbolic* sin committed by a *non-existent* individual? As I said, barking mad, as well as viciously unpleasant.”⁴³

42. Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 118.

43. Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 253, emphasis in original.

It doesn't bother him that belief in a historical Adam and historical Fall was instrumental in the beginnings of modern science, as documented above (p. 315). Then Dawkins preaches (*Greatest Show* again):

“Think about it, Bishop. Be careful, Vicar. You are playing with dynamite, fooling around with a misunderstanding that's waiting to happen—one might even say almost bound to happen if not forestalled. Shouldn't you take greater care, when speaking in public, to let your yea be yea and your nay be nay? Lest ye fall into condemnation, shouldn't you be going out of your way to counter that already extremely widespread popular misunderstanding and lend active and enthusiastic support to scientists and science teachers? The history-deniers themselves are among those who I am trying to reach. But, perhaps more importantly, I aspire to arm those who are not history-deniers but know some—perhaps members of their own family or church—and find themselves inadequately prepared to argue the case.” (p. 8)

This is ironic, because a frequent mantra of evolutionists is ‘Leave creation out of the schools; teach it in church only.’ But now Dawkins wants church leaders to teach evolution in church! In America, this putsch to get creation (God) out of schools is augmented with the mantra ‘Separation of Church and State’, which is nowhere found in the US Constitution.⁴⁴ And at the start of his book, Dawkins complained about people telling biology teachers what to teach. Yet Dawkins now objects to creation being taught in churches as well, and is telling pastors what to teach!

Summary

- Dawkins' attempt at guilt-by-association rebounds: the Holocaust and Roman Empire have ample written records by eyewitnesses in support. And Dawkins himself has given tacit support to a fringe history denial: the claim that Jesus of Nazareth never existed.
- While denial of evolution is often equated to denial of science, most science functions perfectly well without belief in evolution. This includes biology. Many scientific advances were made before Darwin.

44. In the case, *ACLU vs Mercer County* (KY, 2005), circuit judge Richard Suhrheinrich ruled: “[T]he ACLU makes repeated reference to ‘the separation of church and state.’ This extra-constitutional construct grows tiresome. The First Amendment does not demand a wall of separation between church and state ... our Nation’s history is replete with governmental acknowledgment and in some cases, accommodation of religion. ... (‘There is an unbroken history of official acknowledgment by all three branches of government of the role of religion in American life from at least 1789.’) After all, ‘[w]e are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being.’ ... Thus, state recognition of religion that falls short of endorsement is constitutionally permissible. [Cited court cases omitted]”...

- The Bible provides presuppositions essential for science to work, such as objective reality of nature, freedom of the Creator to create, so that only experiments and observation would find out how; that the Creator was a God of Order so the universe would be orderly; the right to investigate it and that this investigation would honour the Creator; that man can initiate thoughts and think logically, and that results should be reported honestly. Evolution can't provide any basis for these presuppositions.
- Most branches of modern science were founded by creationists. The misnamed 'Dark Ages' in Christianized Europe was a period of much invention and scientific advance.
- After the Reformation, an objective understanding of Scripture was rediscovered, which scientists carried over to nature, leading to huge advances.
- Belief in a real historical Fall of a historical first man Adam inspired scientists like Bacon to use science to try to rediscover the superior knowledge of an unfallen Adam.
- Trying to use the fruits of Christianity while rejecting the roots will result in withering of the fruits.
- Dawkins allies with churchians who claim that God used evolution, yet he has nothing but contempt for this belief.
- Dawkins demands that preachers tell their congregation that Adam was not a real figure, but also claims that belief in a symbolic Adam is "barking mad".
- Dawkins complains when Christians tell biology teachers what not to teach (evolution), but he tells Christian pastors what not to teach (a historical Adam).