

a book of its size. At times, one would like more elaboration in his statements. The short length of the book leaves little room for extra details that might make this a truly excellent study, but the space might have been used more effectively. Sometimes he uses footnoted sound bites to argue his point (although there are “meatier” parts), rather than putting the evidence in the text. Some flaws may also stem from the fact that the book is self-published and lacked the editing expertise that it badly needed. He has the odd habit of including an extended quote, then paraphrasing that quote exactly. This becomes repetitive. In one chapter, he repeatedly introduces a certain authority, quotes the authority, then tells the qualifications of that authority, which is an odd way of proceeding, and also adds to the repetitiveness of the book.

These weaknesses might be outweighed by the readability of such a short book, easily finished in an afternoon, which would not intimidate laypeople. The author meticulously documents his sources for those interested in further study, making the lack of detail slightly less an obstacle. In any case, the goal of this book was not to be a comprehensive resource, but to refute the allegation that Christianity was the dominant ideology behind Nazi Germany. Walker does accomplish that, though better style and more efficient use of space would have made it easier on the reader.

References

1. Bergman, J., Darwinism and the Nazi race holocaust, *J. Creation* 13(2):101–111, 1999; <creation.com/holocaust>.
2. <<http://org.law.rutgers.edu/publications/law-religion/nuremberg.shtml>>; see also Sarfati, J., Nazis planned to exterminate Christianity, *Creation* 24(3):47, 2002; <creation.com/naziex>.
3. See also Sarfati, J., Refutation of *New Scientist's* “Evolution: 24 myths and misconceptions”—The Darwin–Hitler connection, <creation.com/24myths>, 19 November 2008. This also refutes the false accusations against Lutheranism and Pope Pius XII.

Eating and keeping moral cakes

A review of
The Darwin Myth: The Life and Lies of Charles Darwin
by Benjamin Wiker
Regnery Publishing,
Washington DC, 2009

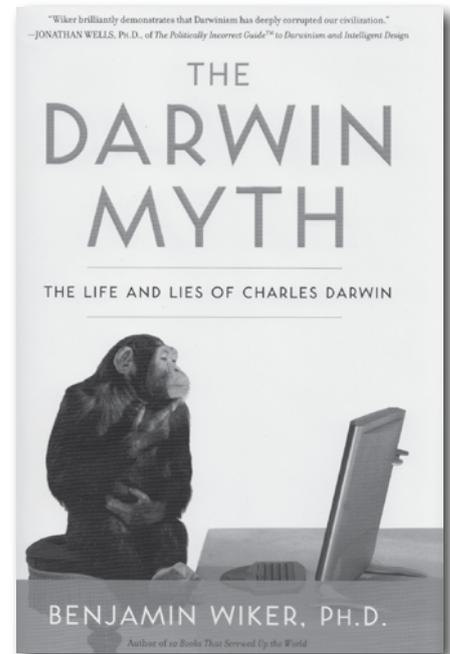
Don Batten

Benjamin Wiker is a Discovery Institute Senior Fellow. His academic background suggests he is probably from a Roman Catholic theological tradition.

The dust jacket summarises the content pretty well:

“In *The Darwin Myth*, Wiker reveals (my comments in parentheses):

- Why Darwin didn’t “discover” evolution (Erasmus Darwin, Lucretius and probably even earlier).
- How Darwin set out to create a godless version of evolution.
- Why many of his best friends and allies criticized Darwin’s theory, and how he never refuted their objections (St George Mivart is mentioned in particular, plus Lyell, Henslow, and even Wallace, as criticising Darwin’s materialism; in insisting that natural selection was sufficient to explain all).
- How “social Darwinism” is not a misapplication of Darwinism, but is Darwinism (Wiker has a chapter on Darwinism and Nazism).
- Why Darwin’s theory supported natural slavery, an institution he abhorred.
- How much of what we know about Darwin comes from his *Auto-biography*—which at key points is downright misleading (Two “lies” are detailed, although



the author repeatedly acknowledges Darwin’s gentlemanly and sympathetic character—summarized on pp. 148–9:

1. Darwin’s attempt to portray sympathy as a peak achievement, even objective, of aimless evolution; that is, that morality has a basis in naturalism. Wiker rightly exposes this fallacy: “Darwinism cannot but collapse morality into the survival of the fittest.”

2. That as a young man Darwin was a scriptural fundamentalist who subscribed to the church’s *39 Articles* and only lost his faith as a result of the evidence seen while on the Beagle. “This I maintain, was simply Darwin fitting his life in the standard Enlightenment Whig history of progress from superstition to science ... it is not a small lie ...”. I think that calling these “lies” is a bit over-the-top. Something closer to a lie would be Darwin’s insertion into later editions of *Origin* of “by the creator” regarding the first life

“having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one”—an insertion that Darwin did not believe and later expressed regrets about¹).

- “How Darwin helped make ideological atheism the battle cry of science” (Wiker labours this point).

Other comments

Wiker makes a distinction between evolution and Darwinism—this is the major theme of the book. He then asserts that Christians can/should accept evolution, but not Darwinism, which he defines as materialistic evolution; that evolution is sufficient to explain *everything*, including human intellect and morals, etc. He insists that God is necessary for evolution.

Wiker says that there are two wrong approaches to evolution by Christians: One is young earth creationism (YEC) and the other is the blind defence of Darwinism without recognizing its materialistic roots and consequences. He writes,

“... the historical fact that Darwinism has been the most significant contributing cause in the de-Christianization of the west, and what should be the most obvious contemporary fact, that most evolutionary biologists today (or at least most of the famous and influential ones) are atheists because they regard evolution as having proven the whole God thing intellectually obsolete” (pp. 166–167).

He also criticises the view of this camp that, “all the evidence must be sifted through an entirely reductionist, materialist filter, and also that they must attack anyone who has any reservations at all about uncritically accepting Darwinism” (p. 165).

He completely dismisses YEC: “... its denizens feel they must attack evolution itself, that is, all the evidence from the great age of the earth to the fossils, that

indicates all too clearly that God did not create the earth and all its creatures, fully-formed, just six thousand years ago. Needless to say, Christians of this camp appear entirely irrational and unscientific” (p. 166).

He also wrongly equates YEC with fideism.² He clearly has not studied much of what biblical creationists believe, but is going on stereotypes from his own imagination.

He advocates a third way, “the reasonable Christian”, which is rather elitist, but here, like Behe,³ he goes to water when it comes to the details. He defines his alternative in terms of what it is not but not what it is. “Paradoxically, the Christian fideist, I shall argue, has a stunted view of faith, and the rationalist Christian, a stunted view of reason. Each is actually plagued by the disease that he sees in his opponent” (p. 167).

Wiker admits that Scripture, as “a revelation of God himself” (p. 168), is superior to nature, and does not, or cannot, contradict it. But to avoid getting down to specifics, he appeals to the difficulty of interpreting Scripture, claiming that “a strictly literal reading of the Bible is too small for [the reasonable Christian] ... it cannot take into account the complex, multi-layered reality of the text”, etc. (p.169). He dissolves into non-specifics. He lacks the Reformation perspective of the perspicuity of Scripture and this comes through in his approach. The implication is that the interpretation of nature according to the scientific consensus (minus the pervasive materialism) is really the authority and “difficulty in interpreting Scripture” leaves “the reasonable Christian” free to make the latter fit the science. Just how this is to be done Wiker does not say.

Method thinks that Wiker suffers from a similar disease to the one he diagnosed in Darwin: Wiker wants to keep a moral cake (from God and the Bible) but wants to eat it too (accept evolution). He asserts that

“our peculiar moral and intellectual capacities are not up for negotiation; they are givens that any account of evolution must explain, not (like Darwin) explain away” (p. 169). By this he means that evolution must involve God, otherwise he says it cannot explain these peculiar attributes of humans.

The author writes well and in an interesting way, but it’s a disappointing book in which the author really fails to grasp the matter of biblical authority and also perpetuates a false characterisation of biblical creation (YEC).

References

- 1 “But I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant ‘appeared’ by some wholly unknown process.” (Darwin C.R., letter to J.D. Hooker, March 29, 1863; in: Darwin F. (Ed.), *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, 1898, Basic Books, New York, vol. 2, pp. 202–203, 1959).
- 2 Sarfati, J., What? A Christian mind? *Creation* 28(4):6, 2006; <creation.com/what-a-christian-mind>.
- 3 Clarity and confusion: A review of *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism* by Michael J. Behe, *J. Creation* 22(1):28–33, 2008; <creation.com/review-michael-behe-edge-of-evolution>.