

# Letters

theoretical reasoning. Their assumption is refuted by the proven good resolution of Achromatic Speed.

Moreover, our vision system includes not only the eye but also the brain, and is active as illustrated simply by the fact that the "blind spot" is not normally apparent to us. It is therefore reasonable to assume that any difficulty inherent in looking through the capillaries and nerves may be actively combated by neural corrective mechanisms that may not be yet well known.

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## More Dialogue Desired on Origin Models

In response to the editorial "Beyond the Edge?" (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 1), I am writing to encourage *PSCF* to seek and include more articles that are more procreationist. As a "special creation-young universe-worldwide flood" origin belief/model proponent, I find so much "strong anticreation put-down" writing hard to read. The view, "Theistic Evolution: Enough Already," (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 5-6) and article, "A Time and a Place for Noah" (*PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 24-40) were a breath of fresh air.

There are only two origin beliefs/models with several sub-beliefs/models. I realize that creationist ASA was taken over, shortly after its founding, by theistic evolutionists/progressive creationists; however *PSCF* needs to balance the evolution origin bias with more creation origin bias. The scientific method does not and cannot offer a proof for either of the two primary origin beliefs/models. Our challenge is to objectively determine which origin belief/model offers the superior explanation/prediction power for origin observations research data and modeling outcomes.

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## Response to Allan Harvey, "On Natural Explanations"

It's better to be disagreed with than to be ignored, so I am grateful to Allan Harvey for his letter (*PSCF* 53 [June 2001]: 139) in response to my note (*PSCF* 53 [March 2001]: 5-6). Like many readers of this journal, I am a Christian academic who desires to appropriately and effectively present the claims of Jesus Christ to my students and colleagues. It is in that context that I raise questions about two issues: (1) the relevance of provincial discussions of theistic evolution to the secular academy; and (2) the importance of communicating clearly in the secular academy when the issue of origins is discussed. Harvey's letter is mainly concerned with the second point.

Harvey feels that my comments denounce theistic evolutionists and imply that they lack "Christian integrity."

He may feel that way (if the shoe fits as they say), but I was merely suggesting that if we want to follow the scriptural injunction to honor God as creator, we must say what we mean when we talk about origins. It is obvious to the readers of this journal that evolution implies much more than a scientific hypothesis. Whether Christians subscribe to special creation or some form of theistic evolution, the critical point is that God created. If we say evolution when we really mean creation, we imply support for the materialistic world view. When Carl Sagan refers to evolution, he does not mean anything close to the idea that God created. If you mean that God created but use a term which implies random processes, then yes, that does demonstrate a lack of integrity. Why would you choose to mislead your audience, if not for the sake of "scientific appearances"? That is precisely the dilemma faced by my colleague in the situation described in my March 2001 article. If he refused to write within the context of evolution (random and purposeless processes), he risked losing the opportunity to write a book chapter, even though the topic had little to do with origins.

I am not suggesting that every reference to origins must be accompanied by a sermon on God's creative and providential acts, but an appropriate reference to the creator or God's design lets my students know about my world view. That encourages Christian students as well as students of other faiths, and creates opportunities to discuss my world view with non-Christian students. I see a profound irony in Christian scientists who, in their churches, actively debunk special creation in favor of theistic evolution, but casually refer to evolution in the classroom. Evolution is one of those wagon words which carries a metric tonne of philosophical assumptions, so it behooves us to put the term in context. The only and very simple point I am trying to make is that Christian academics ought to use terms which set them apart from secular humanism and scientific materialism. I personally know many Christian faculty on my campus, but last week when I asked a group of 120 Christian students if they had ever had a Christian professor, only six hands were raised. I take this to mean that there a lot of Christian faculty who are active in their churches but remain invisible on campus. With respect to the question of origins, let me describe how this works in my experience.

I am a food scientist with interests in dairy technology. I think one could derive something like the anthropic principle based only on the intricate physical, chemical, and biochemical interactions that determine the physical stability of milk. It would be completely inconsistent with my faith and dishonoring to the Scriptures for me to tell my students that this fantastic biological fluid came into existence by random processes. That is exactly what many of my students would assume if I referred to the evolution of milk composition and structure. My experience is that students appreciate my candor when I refer to creation or God's design rather than evolution. They appreciate my comfort with expressing my beliefs. Now, back to Harvey's letter.

Harvey considers the "absurdity that would result if this view is taken to its logical conclusion." He asks if atmospheric scientists are lacking Christian integrity when they discuss the weather in naturalistic terms. The rhetorical answer is "of course not," but Harvey is comparing

apples and oranges. The physical/chemical aspects of atmospheric science can be discussed without raising any confusion about world views and metaphysical presuppositions. I don't see too much space devoted in this journal to scientific and Christian perspectives on atmospheric science, but evolution is discussed constantly because it comes loaded with metaphysical presuppositions and social implications.

Regarding Harvey's comments about my "God of the gaps" error, I am accustomed to hearing this phrase used to silence all objections to theistic evolution, so I am grateful to David Snoke for his article "In favor of God-of-the-gaps reasoning" (*PSCF* 53 [September 2001]: 153). Of course, the biblical perspective is that God fills all the gaps; he created and remains actively involved with his creation. To glorify God for his providential and creative acts is a dominant theme throughout the Scriptures. The question is not if but how he created. Theistic evolutions prefer to believe that he created according to some facsimile of Darwin's theory. That paradigm feels more comfortable in the context of the secular scientific community where few dare to challenge Darwin's emperor status, but in my view, the emperor's clothes are increasingly transparent. With sincere respect to theistic evolutionists, I think the ongoing effort to squeeze the *Origin of Species* out of the first few chapters of Genesis is a futile exercise.

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## Humans and Consciousness

William Struthers in "Defining Consciousness: Christian and Psychological Perspectives" (*PSCF* 53 [June 2001]: 102-6) deals with the difficult question of the nature of human consciousness. This involves the ability to separate "me" from "not me" to, perhaps, its being the central processor of information that attempts to make sense of our inner and outer experiences.

The study of human beings encompasses all sorts of disciplines—cognitive science, neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, etc. However, although the existential object under study is the same, *viz.* humans, yet the subject matter of each discipline involved is totally different. This difference determines, for instance, the nature of the evidence to which each kind of knowledge appeals. Also, one ought not to equate a person's use of reason to know, which can be applied to non-scientific as well as to scientific studies, with the pursuit of knowledge solely with the aid of the scientific method.

A Christian perspective considers a human being to be body/mind/soul; whereas to science a human being may be viewed only as mind/body and mind further reduced to brain. Note, however, that John Eccles says: "It [ego' or 'self'] is essential to the concept each of us has of being a self," and he adds, "in the religious sense it corresponds to the soul."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, consciousness cannot be determined or measured with physical devices and so it is not

the subject matter of science. Only the nonphysical self in humans can detect consciousness.

The scientific attempt to relate the function of consciousness to the ability to enhance survival and procreation considers only the aspect of history consistent with evolutionary thoughts. One ought to distinguish historical science, e.g., cosmology, evolutionary theory, etc., from physics. The former is more akin to forensic science and deals only with unique events; whereas physics is the prototype of experimental science. Of course, the introduction of history into the study of the nature of consciousness brings forth the fundamental role that miracles play in the Christian world view.

C. S. Lewis clearly indicates that the notion of miracles requires a clear and unequivocal understanding of what Nature is.<sup>2</sup> It should be remarked that the subject matter of science is data collected by physical devices. In physics, knowing is based on evidence obtained via the interactions of particles/fields. If something cannot, in principle, be measured by physical devices, then that something is outside the purview of science. This gives a clear demarcation of what science is and what it is not. This definition of science is what requires that the evidentiary data of the historical sciences must be collectible by physical devices.

The essence of consciousness, the ability to know self, is not something that can be detected with the aid of physical devices. Therefore, the study of consciousness cannot be limited to the methods of sciences. A human being is the "detector" of his or her own self and so a human being is in a sort of space with both physical and nonphysical dimensions. The latter is what C. S. Lewis calls "Supernature." Conceptual thought, free will, moral autonomy, the notion of God, etc. are all unique to humans and cannot be reduced to the purely physical. Of course, different levels of conscious experience are related to brain-states but self cannot be reduced to such physical states. It is analogous to electrical charge that must always be accompanied by mass but cannot be reduced to it.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>W. H. Thorpe, *Purpose in a World of Chance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 81.

<sup>2</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 10.

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## "AGOG versus GOG"

Stimulated by the article by David Snoke entitled "In favor of God-of-the-gaps reasoning," (*PSCF* 53, no. 3 [September 2001]: 152) I think I must declare I am AGOG and think that GOG and MAGOG are not good enough.

Let me start to explain with two quotations from C. A. Coulson, onetime holder of the Rouse Ball Chair at Oxford University (from *Science and Christian Belief*, London: OUP, 1955). The first is from a letter of Isaac Newton to the master of his college at Cambridge, Trinity. He says: "The