Letters

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Three Dialogues: A Gentle Connecting Rejoinder

In the spirit of Wittgenstein, if excessive verbiage masks incommensurability, appropriate clarity may be sought by delving right to the heart of the matter. In dialogue #2, Robert Gentry defends an alternative model of the universe alleged to possess "spherical symmetry" with a Cosmic Center which he deems appropriate for fixing "the throne of God … in the heavenly Sanctuary." Whatever scientific merits this thesis may have, virtually banishing God in this way to a remote location within the universe of his own creation hardly comports with the eternal and omnipresent God of Scripture who is in no wise confined by any space-time constraints.

As Creator of all that is seen and unseen, God need not even tip his hand as to how he created or still creates, which is the central issue behind dialogue #3. Human limitations simply preclude any objective decision as to the possibility of God’s kenotic “hand” operating within material nature. But then, perhaps there is no such “hand” to be sought. Following Howard Van Till, the perceived absence of any such “hand” would be fully expected if his handiwork imbues the entire created universe. Denial of Christ is another “belief” position equally consistent with the perceived absence of any “hand” or even handiwork. Nevertheless, believers and “unbelievers” alike must always enter by the same “gate” where available evidence remains undetermined. Divergent belief expectations notwithstanding, each will find their particular “belief” position to have been validated in accordance with their own expectations.

Therefore dwelling upon “defeating” naturalism or materialism seems an inadequate approach that is inherently limited in virtue of not calculating the function of deep “conversion” into the larger picture. An appreciation of the deep structure of naturalism⁴ might help to clarify this multi-leveled issue. Beyond this, however, far more than a merely esoteric interaction between theology and science is at stake.

In dialogue #1, Ross McKenzie delves to the required depth by identifying the sort of eye-opening knowledge, even authentic enlightenment, which is available in principle to anyone who is sufficiently docile. Unfortunately this is “only accessible to those who already know God through revelation and redemption.”⁴ If docility and enlightenment through Christ truly function as enabling imperatives, as sine qua non preconditions for true understanding, presumably the pursuit of prayer for conversion would integrally bind these three dialogues together in a crucial way. Therefore a plea for persistent and genuine prayer on behalf of all unbelievers, wisely including ourselves, seems to be the very heart of this deeply compelling and convoluted matter.

Notes


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Natural History in Seventy Words: A Contribution to the Cosmology Dialogue

In the beginning, the Spirit of God stirred absolute nothingness. The stirring generated waves that turned into physical matter with relative space-time and the other laws of nature. Then God dispersed the matter that eventually formed into galaxies. Roughly ten billion years later, God intervened to bring forth the first cellular life, and God continued to orchestrate mutations and natural selection that culminated with the formation of anatomically modern humans.

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