CRITIQUE OF JOHN H. WALTON’S BOOK

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16 January, 2010


ABSTRACT OF CRITIQUE

The bottom line of this book is to sell evolution to the Christian Church as a theologically harmless explanation for the origin of life on the Earth, if that was the means used by God. This becomes very clear in the concluding pages where Walton states:

In promoting the theological position of the Bible and the interpretation of Genesis 1 presented here, there is no reason to believe that biological evolution teaches something contradictory to the Bible (though some evolutionists are proponents of metaphysical conclusions that contradict the Bible). Believing in the Bible does not require us to reject the findings of biological evolution, though neither does it give us reason to promote biological evolution. Biological evolution is not the enemy of the Bible and theology; it is superfluous to the Bible and theology. The same could be said for the big bang and for the fossil record. (p. 166)

Note the false coupling of the fossil record with evolution. While the fossil record is made up of factual finds, evolution is made up entirely of speculations. The two are not comparable. As for evolution not being contradictory to the Bible, Walton destroys the testimony of Genesis One by declaring that he has found a lost meaning for the verb BARA’ which rules out Genesis 1 as having anything to say about the origin of the material universe. The lost meaning is ‘to assign function.’ The author translates Genesis 1:1 as: “In the initial period, God created by assigning functions throughout the heavens and the earth, and this is how he did it” (p. 46). No attempt is made to apply this meaning to the other 47 occurrences of the verb.

This is the sum and substance of this book.

1. THE GOAL OF THE EVOLUTIONIST IS TO SEPARATE THE CHRISTIAN FROM HIS BIBLE

Unfortunately, this book will not leave the reader with a greater respect for the Bible after he has read it, or for the God who caused it to be written for all men in all ages. It takes a patronising view of anything to do with knowledge about this world that is contained in God’s meticulously, written work. In particular the cosmology of Genesis One is undermined from the outset by being labelled ‘ancient’ and so out-of-date. The concise presentation that the Bible reveals about creation is held up as an argument to turn away from it and look elsewhere for the real truth regarding cosmology. By assuming ignorance on the part of the Patriarchs about the world they lived in, this puts Walton in a superior position to them. He can look down on them and pat their heads in a patronising manner.

But our relationship to the Creator is not dependent on the size of our scientific knowledge of the universe. Knowledge of the universe does not necessarily enhance, but it may cripple, our ability to ‘know,’ or experience, the Creator. The vastness of our knowledge of the universe (and we know more in this regard than the ancients did) will not take us an inch nearer to God, or an inch nearer to a clearer understanding of Him. In this regard the ancients were much better off, because they ‘knew,’ or experienced God, in a way which we can only envy. We, by contrast, need only look at the godlessness of the vast majority of those intimately involved in handling the material of God’s creations in our higher institutions of learning to see this.

In the introduction to this book the reader is softened up by the author contrasting the differences between man’s knowledge today and man’s knowledge when Genesis One was written. The softening-up process is cleverly woven into a comparison of the different languages and the different cultures, and most subtle of all, into Israel’s absorption of ancient Near Eastern myths from surrounding cultures. The motive in this softening-up process is to downgrade Genesis One to the level of these ANE myths. Genesis One, and anything else that relates to cosmology in the Bible,
becomes the creation of Israel’s clever scribes, and not a direct revelation from God. Once Walton has got the reader believing that Genesis One is not what it purports to be, namely, the purest revelation about creation from God’s own mouth, he has successfully detached him from this revelation; and once he has got the reader detached by distancing himself from this Hebrew myth, he can go to work on him, by showing him that modern science is vastly superior to this ‘primitive revelation’. This subtle approach isolates the reader from his Bible and has him running into the arms of the scientist to guide him into all truth. The Bible becomes obsolete overnight—in an instant—and distrust grabs his hand and pulls him away to scientific textbooks for the truth about our cosmos.

By loosening the grip the young Christian has on his Bible, Walton encourages him to distance himself from God’s Word by showing that it is not all that it claims to be. The claim that, “All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17), is undermined, and the young believer becomes aware that the Bible teaches not just imperfect knowledge, but false knowledge about the cosmos. The bottom falls out of his world, and he can no longer—from that day forward—trust the Bible implicitly to reveal the truth about the cosmos. He must distance himself from it and concede that Genesis One is a Hebrew myth—created to fill a gap in their knowledge at that time, but a make-believe creation story all the same.

2. WHEN GOD IS PITTED AGAINST SCIENCE, WHO WINS?

When God gave His own account of how He brought all things into existence, He was working from the beginning of what we see around us today, and He moved forward from that point. Science can only work backwards to the beginning. The scientist has no idea how God created all living land animals from the dust of the ground. That will probably always remain something beyond his capacity to find out. The amount of knowledge man has accumulated about his universe must fit easily on the point of a pin in comparison to what God knows about His universes. Indeed, should man go on accumulating knowledge of this world for a million years to come, the knowledge would hardly cover the head of a pin in comparison to what is still to be known.

God knows all things from the beginning, and it is He alone who could have written Genesis One. The evolutionary scientist of today is puffed up with his pin-head of knowledge, and thinks he can push aside God’s account. Man’s insatiable quest for answers, as he contemplates the planet on which his Creator has placed him, is natural, and was natural from the beginning. He is right to ask: Is Genesis One a factual account of how the universe came into being?

3. GENESIS ONE IS VALID FOR ALL AGES

From the moment God divulged Genesis One to Man (most probably first to Adam and Eve), He knew that the same question would arise with every discovery by Man as he descended into the world beneath his feet or ascended into the world of the orbiting planets. The same question arose when he looked through his microscope or his telescope. But the revelation of Genesis One has stood the test of time, and will do so to the end of time. It will never be found wanting. It will never become outdated. It will never become antiquated or obsolete. It will never be superseded by any scientific fact. All knowledge is known only to God. Man can only attain to a percentage of a decimal point of what is known only to Him. Let the creature not presume to know more than his Creator, but accept with a humble mind the limited knowledge that God has been pleased to divulge to him, and accommodate all future knowledge within the bounds of what has already been divulged in Genesis One and other parts of God’s Word.

The line taken by Walton for the rest of his book falls into the familiar theistic evolutionist’s approach, which I critiqued in the form of Ernest Lucas’ book, Can we believe Genesis today? (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001 [1989]). This critique can be found at: www.btiinternet.com/~lmf12

The contents of Walton’s book takes the form of a series of eighteen propositions.

PROPOSITION 1: Genesis 1 is ancient cosmology

Note how the author imposes on the Patriarchs various wrong conceptions of the universe, which the reader is intended to laugh at, and the subtle message is that they got these daft conceptions from Genesis One, therefore Genesis One is hung out for ridicule. The reader is immediately turned off Genesis One because Walton has shown that behind Genesis One are these crazy ideas about the origin of the universe.
If we treat Genesis One as the composition of God Himself—because there was no man to witness the creation—and look at it from God’s perspective as the statements of the Creator Himself, then we can throw off the crazy, bizarre myths that Walton has encased it in, and look at it with fresh eyes, and then we will see that science cannot touch it, because when it comes to origins it is out of its depth. (I am not referring to geological history here.) The sciences can only work within the post-Genesis 1:2 creation world. It cannot comment on the origin of the creation before Genesis 1:2. It is ignorant of its origin, and will forever remain so. God alone can take us into the pre-Genesis 1:2 world, if He had a mind to. All knowledge of its origin must come from Him alone. What He chooses to reveal, and what He chooses not to reveal, is in His gift. What He has chosen to reveal in His own composition in Genesis One is priceless. Science can never confirm it, because science can only handle the post-Genesis 1:2, material world. This is what makes Genesis One unique. If ‘science’ is ‘knowledge,’ then Genesis One is knowledge that science cannot touch, confirm, refute, adjust, modify, or suppress. It is a ‘take it or leave it’ situation that God presents Man with in Genesis One.

But if man wants to undermine this unique revelation then Walton’s method is as good as any. By linking God’s pure revelation in Genesis One with the debased myths of man in the form of ancient Near Eastern myths, the young believer is hoodwinked into believing that they are all man-made explanations to account for the world around them. John Walton, Ernest Lucas, Dennis Alexander, and other theistic evolutionists are adept at pulling the wool over the eyes of the ignorant and the immature. They are imprisoned within a cocoon of their own choosing; and this world makes perfectly good sense to them, so they will never step outside their secure environment to engage with the possibility that Genesis One is from God, and that it should not be treated as just a Hebrew version of pre-existing Babylonian myths.

The common denominator between all theistic evolutionists’ writings is the mistake of treating Genesis One as a human explanation for the material universe. Because of this initial assumption they lump all such explanations together, and exploit their common features to ‘prove’ that they all descended from one, very, early myth. Literary criticism, form criticism, the history of ideas, are all brought to bear to ‘prove’ this theory. And when you see it all carefully laid out with colourful charts and adorned with massive, academic footnotes, it is impressive, and for the uninformed, and weak-minded, it is the end of their quest for the absolute truth. They will never be able to read Genesis One again as pure revelation—the writing of God.

For all TEs Genesis One is no different from the other ANE stories of creation. They are so enamoured by the similarities (and dissimilarities) linking the national myths, that they allow their minds to be taken over by what is placed in front of them. So immersed do they become in their linguistic and textual comparisons that it would never occur to them to place Genesis One in the time of Adam and Eve. Yet human beings required ‘science’ from the very beginning. The Sabbath day of rest was introduced with the creation of Adam and Eve, and they would need this knowledge from the day they were created. Genesis One provided them with the prime reason why they should rest one day in seven, because God created the present world in six days and rested on the seventh day. If the Lord God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, what did they converse about? Did Adam not have hundreds of questions to ask as he pondered the creation—the heavens included? The theistic evolutionist would deny that God ever walked in the Garden of Eden. For him the whole story is just another myth—another untruth dressed up to fill some unexplained gap in their mental world.

Another ploy common to TEs is to compare ‘modern’ man with ‘ancient’ man. Ancient man is primitive, so the Patriarchs—Adam included—were primitive men. It is easy to convince the unwary and the immature that this is so, because ancient man could not fly in the air, or walk on the moon. By ranking Adam and the Patriarchs as ‘primitive’ human beings, struggling to make sense of their world, and inventing all sorts of stories, which were then handed down through the centuries, this gives him scope to show how primitive were their ideas of ‘god’ and the underworld, and the multitude of demons and spirits that share this earth with us. By means of this comparison, the disparity between the Patriarchs and ourselves is widened to the extent that the Patriarchs could be viewed as so primitive as to be barely ‘human’ as we are today. If they do not formally categorise Adam and Eve as advanced Neanderthals or Neolithic beings, the seed is sown in the mind of the immature, that somehow Adam and Eve were not like us originally, even though we are in some sense descended from them.

By playing on the words ‘primitive’ and ‘ancient’ in different contexts, and the negative connotations that these convey, a gulf is placed between Adam and modern man, and between the knowledge conveyed by Genesis One and the knowledge gained by modern man about the universe.

Some TEs may be aware of what they are doing in exploiting the connotations of what is ‘primitive’ and ‘ancient’ in order to separate the young believer from trusting God’s revelation about
His own world. But I suspect that most of them are unable to think through the issues for themselves and have handed over their uninformed minds to their teachers. In the case of children who are taught evolution from infancy, they never stand a chance to reject evolution, because it is taught as a ‘fact of science’. They grow up in a social environment which reinforces this ‘fact of science.’ It then becomes impossible for them to have any respect for the Bible and especially when so-called Christians reinforce the ‘fact of science’ as incompatible with the Bible.

This is where Walton’s book come in to its own. It does the job of claiming that Genesis One is from God, and is the truth, but on the other hand he contextualises it in such a subtle way that it was ‘truth’ in those days (the days of the Patriarchs), but is no longer the ‘truth’ in our day. This is the core goal of every TE’s rejection of Genesis One. He does not want to state out loud that he does not believe Genesis One happened as God has stated that it did happen. For him this is too easy—too simplistic. It could not have happened that way. Life is far more complex than that. But if he stated honestly that he no longer believed it was composed directly by God, or that it came from God, and that He conveyed its contents to man (probably Adam in the first place), this would instantly alert the mature Christian where this man stood, and instantly convey the truth that he had a defective view of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. The theistic evolutionist does not want to reveal his position so he twists and turns, and is evasive, and deceptive, so as not to give the impression that he distrusts Genesis One. Often this will be cloaked by a reference to great ‘Christian’ men in the past who held the same view of Scripture that he does. Somehow, by pointing to others, this justifies carrying forward their defective view of Scripture.

Note the subtle argument on page 17: “If we accept Genesis 1 as ancient cosmology, then we need to interpret it as ancient cosmology . . . .” He has already coloured the term ‘cosmology’ as unscientific myths, unworthy of our respect, and then he foists this ‘cosmology’ on Genesis 1! He accepts Genesis 1 as the source of this despicable cosmology. He is guilty of foisting on Scripture mythical views which he then rightly rejects. Some will be fooled by this sleight of hand, but not those who have absorbed Jesus’ trust in God’s Word, who said: “You do err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.”

It is one thing to unearth the myths of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt. It is another thing to draw comparisons between these and Genesis One. But it is another thing altogether to assume that they all go back to one human composition, and thereby destroy the pristine revelation of God, which is older than all human compositions. But this is the route that Walton is taking his readers down in an effort to accommodate evolution indirectly within the account of Genesis One. However, the goal of this book is to destroy the traditional understanding of Genesis One, to sideline it, to rob it of any influence it should have in the life of the young Christian. His object is to turn it into a museum piece—an anachronism; valuable, but useless; worth keeping, but only as a keepsake.

The criterion every young Christian should judge his teacher by is this: Is this teacher drawing me closer to God and His Word, or is he distancing me from Him and His Word? The answer is that every evolutionist, theistic or atheistic, is already distant from God, and is steadily getting further and further from His Word. He can never increase the young believer’s respect for God or His Word. He can only decrease it. At the end of the day, the young Christian should discern whether he is being put off respecting Genesis One as being relevant today as it was in the day it was revealed by God to man. If an interpretation is placed between the Christian and Genesis One which relegates it to the status of an antiquarian document, then reject it. “You make the word of God of none effect,” was the charge Jesus levelled against the religious teachers of His day, who interposed their scholarly interpretation between the believer and God, and Jesus denounced this interference in the strongest language possible. He had no respect for these teachers. He viewed them as false teachers who prevented—not helped—God’s people from entering into the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes the testimony of Genesis One is quietly set aside with the comment that its primary intention was religious. The same thing is said of the Gospels: “Any attempt to reconstruct the chronology of the NT must be tentative at best. The primary intention of the Gospels and other NT writings is not historical or biographical—they are documents of faith intended to proclaim, teach and encourage the various early Christian communities.”¹ We need to be aware that whatever some may determine is the ‘primary’ intention of the Gospels or Genesis, references to historical figures, living in historical times, are no less factual than if the these works were intentionally ‘historical and biographical’ as well as conveying religious truths. Just because Genesis One teaches us the truth about God as Creator does not undermine the biological truth that it refers to that all things reproduce ‘after its kind’—a truth that can be established by man in any age. Our understanding of

the mechanics of this law of nature may be better understood today, but this does not add to, or subtract from, the truth of this biological law, which was known from the beginning. The attempt to gag Scripture when it speaks on biological matters on the spurious grounds that ‘it is not a scientific textbook’ is fortress-science’s way of saying to the Bible, “Hands off this subject. This is my domain, not yours.”

The wise men of this age believe that they are in a position to correct Scripture, especially where it impinges on observational science. They take great pride in being able to do this. Scripture may not be a textbook on angels, but what it says about angels is true. Scripture may not be a textbook on the stars, but what it says about Pleiades and Orion is true (Amos 5:8; cp. Job 9:9; 38:21, Arcturus [the Great Bear?]). Scripture may not be a textbook on biology, but what it says about biology is true. God reveals that when He made each animal, insect, creeping thing, plant and tree, He endowed each to reproduce ‘after its kind’. This is biology. And this is a true fact of biology today as it was in the day God revealed it to Adam and the Patriarchs. The endowment which God gave to each creature to reproduce its own kind has been in continuous operation from the day He created them entire and singly. All things have continued to reproduce to this day on the strength of that endowment, and they will continue to do so to the end of time. That endowment incorporated variety within unity, and unity within variety. Thus, from Adam and Eve—created as distinct from all other animals, and endowed with the Spirit of God—have descended all human beings. But within the reproduction process—‘after his kind’—we observe a huge diversity and a wide range of attributes and characteristics. These are all contained within the life that God endowed Adam and Eve with. Possibilities include having six fingers and six toes, gigantism, dwarfism, and every other deviant form that we can imagine, but these are not new human beings, or a new species of human beings, or an ‘improvement’ or ‘development’. What can go wrong, will go wrong, within the process of reproduction. But the core teaching of God in Genesis 1 is that ‘life reproduces its own life’. Nature cannot disobey its individual commission to reproduce itself. It was God’s express intention that each species should remain distinct, and faithfully reproduce itself according to its original pattern.

THE ENIGMA OF THE MISSING EVIDENCE

From the time of Darwin, Christians have challenged evolutionists to bring forward a live specimen of an animal whose predecessor and successor are coexisting today on the earth, so that we can see the three-part transition in operation before our very eyes. They throw up their hands in horror at this demand and claim that the transitional forms take millions of years to reach the point where they reproduce faithfully after their own kind, so that mutations are harmful to any further development. Yet others deny that evolution among humans has stopped. They claim that “as humans face new adaptive challenges, particularly the challenge of warding off new pathogens” they are still evolving.2

When it is pointed out that they have a pool of over one hundred million species from which to find a single three-part transition form, they are silent. They know that such an example is nowhere to be found on the earth today. They claim to see the transitional form between monkey and man in the form of the chimpanzee, but when you ask for the immediate predecessor and the immediate successor of the chimpanzee, they are silent, or claim that the predecessor and the successor became extinct. And this leads us to the ‘truth’ as they want to see it. Because there is not a single example on the earth today of the predecessor and successor of any one of the one hundred million species in existence today, they have come up with the idea that the ‘before’ and ‘after’ evidence of transitional forms must have become extinct. How convenient!

EVOLUTIONISTS DO NOT HAVE TRANSITIONAL FORMS

When one asks for evidence of evolution in progress today, the best that evolutionists can come up with is what Christians have known as ‘variety within unity.’ The unity of each species prevents mutations dominating the species. Six-fingered human giants may have existed on the earth, but they did not dominate the species to the extent that the five-fingered specimens became extinct. They coexisted, for a while. The diversity of modern skulls is so great that if one hundred specimens of 40-year old contemporary males from every nation on the Earth were arranged before a class of evolutionists (without any prior knowledge) they would arrange them according to brain size, and then date them in terms of millions of years apart, yet they would all be modern, contemporary, human skulls. They might even attempt to plot the ‘before’ and ‘after’ transitional forms!

This shows how precarious is the theory of evolution, or rather the ‘theory of evolutions,’ because when it was demonstrated that if all life ascended from a single-celled amoeba, this would not account for the difference in eyes between some species. The theory was quickly shored up by

suggesting that life began independently from two unrelated amoebae. This seemed to plug the hole in the theory, until it was demonstrated that neither amoebae could explain a third kind of eye. The theory was quickly shore up by suggesting that life began independently from three unrelated amoebae. This seemed to plug the hole in the theory, until it was demonstrated that this solution could not explain a fourth kind of eye. The complexity of the eye was giving the theory a headache. They thought they had plugged all the holes by speculating that evolution had four, independent, and unrelated, starting-points. In other words by multiplying the number of independent evolutions—a theory of evolutions, rather than a theory of evolution—they were able to solve all the difficulties that a single evolutionary line could not. Scientists have come to the conclusion that the eye has evolved independently fifty times in forty different directions! This is a theory that cannot be falsified. It survives only because it is the only one that they have to replace Genesis One with. They cannot let go of it. They cannot even question it any longer. There is always a plausible, theoretical, scenario to plug every hole in the dyke of evolution, such as convergent evolution. This is a catch-all theory to defend evolution at any cost. Only when the ingenuity of man runs out of stop-gap excuses, will evolution come under serious scrutiny. That time has not yet come.

**EVOLUTIONISTS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME**

Not only can evolutionists not come up with transitional forms, they cannot come up with the millions of years needed to obtain these transitional forms, because all land animals were created on the same day, which means that Adam is as old as any other land animal. Their only hope is to latch on to the ‘Day-Age’ interpretation to accommodate evolution within Genesis 1. Most realise that this is futile, and they have had to turn their back on Genesis 1 altogether, and dismiss it as irrelevant in a scientific age. Walton accepted that the days of creation were 24-hour days, so he could not accept the Day-Age interpretation.

Between Jesus and Adam there are seventy-seven generations (cf. Lk 3:23-38). Granted that we can show from Scripture itself that not every link in the generation chain is named, it is difficult to fit in millions of years between the chimpanzee and Adam, yet both are contemporaries today. It is difficult to fit 150,000 years between the earliest evidence of *homo sapiens* (presumably Adam) and modern man. The biblical genealogies cannot be stretched to cover that time scale.

*Time and transitional forms are against evolution as God’s method for bringing all living things into existence.*

**THE TYRANNY OF A THEORY**

We have come full circle in our universities. Whereas in medieval Europe the theory of a flat earth dominated the universities, and was not to be questioned; today, the theory of evolution dominates our universities, and it is not to be questioned. To do so, will not lead to preferment in Earth-science departments, or evolutionary biology laboratories, or permit access to peer-review journals. There is a self-censorship regime in place which is as dominant and oppressive as the one in medieval Europe. The Christian in science need only contemplate questioning the declared ‘factualness’ of evolution with his departmental staff to experience the force of it in his mind. And contemplation is as far as he can go. He cannot verbalise it without a negative cost to him in some form. So it is best to stay gaggged.

Evolution is a tyrant who brooks no rival. The theory has become a noose round the necks of all Christians in science. It forces them into the tentacles of a godless, aimless, pointless, evolution of all things. It has become a snob theory. If you agree with it, you are ‘in’; if you disagree, you are ‘out.’

Every Christian should be in the ‘out’ group, and recognise—with the Lord Jesus—that Abel, the son of Adam, was the first righteous person to be murdered since the creation of the present world (Abel is dated, “from the foundation of the cosmos,” Lk 11:50). Jesus had no problem in recognising Abel as a real person, and that His Father spoke to Adam, who was also a real person. Adam lived to be 930 years of age. This, evolutionists laugh at, as impossible. Theistic evolutionists pass it off as something that theologians will find a clever ‘interpretation’ for some day, which will remove it as an obstacle to

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2 The devastating effect of scholarly ostracism is graphically recalled by Casper J. Labuschagne in his book *Numerical Secrets of the Bible: Rediscovering the Bible Codes* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2000). pp. xiii-xv. Labuschagne is no evangelical-conservative scholar as he had a low view of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of the written word (pp. 93, 95), and consequently he attributed the insertion of secret, structural messages, and numerical codes, to Hebrew scribes finalising the text of the OT between the Babylonian exile and the first century AD (pp. 118, 161). He rejected the long ages in Gen 5 and 11 as unhistorical (p. 67; cf. 99). Book 2 of the Psalms did not fit his numerical scheme, so he rejected it as a late addition to the Psalter (see pp. 103, 128) in order to make his scheme work. The topic has been badly researched. There is a place for numerics, but this book is not a good guide to discover them. The point of this note is to draw attention to the mental torment that can be brought to bear on any scholar who spurns the consensus view.
human evolution. Also laughable, and worthy of scoffing, is the idea that Adam had immortality, which was lost through disobeying God. This is counter to all that evolution stands for, where death is an essential mechanism for change. Genesis One separates the sheep from the goats. It reveals who has faith and who lacks it, when it comes to trusting the biblical record, in the manner that Jesus and His apostles did.

It should be remembered that the theory of evolutions is just that—a theory—and no more. It cannot cancel out what God has revealed about earth’s origin, and it cannot deny that all things reproduce ‘after its kind.’ This fixity within the ‘variety’ that pertains to each single species, is an observed fact of nature. It should not be hijacked to serve the interests of evolutionists.

SHOULD MAN TRY TO CLASSIFY ALL THINGS ON A SINGLE EVOLUTIONARY TREE?

It is a foolhardy act of man to think that he can presume to classify all that God created by means of a single tree of life. The Christian should question whether man can ever know the mind of the Creator at the moment that He created each animal. Did God have man’s evolutionary ‘tree of life’ chart in front of Him when He was creating each animal as a unique being? Can all of God’s creations be fitted on to one artificial tree of man’s devising? Is the exercise to draw up such a ‘tree of life’ an exercise in arrogance and presumption? It would seem so.

The Christian should view each creature as the unique, direct creation of a supreme Creator. He claims to be the creator of the ostrich, and of it God says: “for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense” (Job 39:13; cf. Lam 4:3). We fall into a misguided enterprise if we think we can follow the thinking of God as He planned and created each distinct specie. They did not evolve out of each other, which might justify a ‘tree of life’ to illustrate it. But since God revealed to Job and others that He endowed each specie with a different measure of wisdom, then all diversity comes through design and purpose. Whether man can infallibly classify any animal according to some unrevealed blueprint in the mind of God is doubtful. Therefore, it would be wise not to be sucked into the fumblings of man in his attempt to cram one hundred million species into one ‘tree of life,’ even if God used the same method of construction of the bodies of all living things, which He did not. Christians should stand aloof of any man-made ‘tree of life,’ and distance himself from the fumblings of a fallen mind, in the grip of a dangerous illusion.

When Adam gave names to God’s creations he was in an unfallen state. He was a ‘son of God’ (Lk 3:38). He was not like a child giving arbitrary names on the basis of sight only. He was created with a language from the beginning, and with phenomenal mental and spiritual powers, which were greatly dimmed if not lost (at least some of them) when he rebelled against his Head. Evolutionists do not accept this revelation of Adam’s pristine, unfallen, immortal nature. They prefer to keep God out of the picture altogether and devise a scenario whereby nature got going without His help (or maybe He can be credited with starting it off, says the Christian who wants to stay in the ‘inner circle’).

CAN EVOLUTION EXPLAIN THE BEAUTY GOD HAS GIVEN TO WOMAN?

One has to question how a Christian can be an evolutionist when he contemplates the form and beauty of woman in all her glory, and dismiss her “as an accident of random mutations and natural selection.” She is one-hundred per cent different from anything in the ape world, but evolutionists pull the wool over our eyes by insisting that the female chimp is 98% identical to her! When God made her, He made her as a unique being. He did not take a female chimp and convert it into a woman. He took the rib of Adam, a real person, and from it He built her frame and all that she is. Her whole substance was derived from Adam, including her life-force. The whole substance of Adam’s body, on the other hand, came from the dust of the earth, but his spirit came wholly from God, not from another, lower order, creature. His spirit was uncreated. This is what separates him from all of God’s creation. He was made head over God’s creation from the beginning; He did not evolve to become head of creation.

A belief in evolution and a belief in creation as revealed in Genesis One are totally incompatible beliefs.

PROPOSITION 3. “Create” (Hebrew bārā’) Concerns Functions

The style I have adopted in this critique is sometimes one of cynicism and sarcasm, because of my total lack of respect for its detrimental reading of God’s Word. I set out Walton’s goal and his stratagem in order to achieve that goal, and then present my own counter-arguments.
WALTON’S GOAL IN PROPOSITION 3: To empty the meaning of BARA’ so that it cannot refer to creating the material universe.

WALTON’S STRATAGEM (i.e., seeing the argument from Walton’s perspective): Walton says to his imaginary disciple: Toy with the idea that BARA’ may not, after all, refer to bringing material things into physical being, but that the verb really means bringing function into being for objects which were already in existence. Subtly impose this idea on the other ANE languages, and then make sure that you lock the Hebrew language into their ‘logical concepts,’ because this will provide you with the bridge to import it into the Hebrew language. By means of this roundabout route you will give the impression that you are an expert in these languages and that you have discovered a new level of understanding which all other experts in the field have overlooked due to their non-ANE cultural background. Inform them that the line between existence and non-existence is functional, not material (p. 38). If existence is defined in functional terms, creating is a function-giving activity (p. 39).

COUNTER (by LMF, adopting a cynical approach): Isn’t it odd that only one ‘expert’ (Walton) who is proficient in all the Near Eastern Semitic languages (which he isn’t), has made this discovery? Isn’t it odd that no expert within each Semitic language, over the past three centuries of studying these languages through their literature, has failed to spot this new level of understanding? Isn’t it fortuitous that this new level of understanding completely destroys the idea that God presents Himself as ‘physically’ involved in His creation that He not only takes a daily rest (like the working man), but also requires a full day of rest from His exertions? Given that the new level of understanding of BARA’ applies only to the (re)allocation of new functions to already existing material things, was God’s rest intended to be a mental rest only?

Isn’t it purely coincidental that a writer, plugging his case for evolution, happens to discover (by accident?) a new level of understanding for BARA’, which, providentially, does not rule out evolution as God’s chosen means for bringing His material creation into being? Indeed, not only does it not rule out evolution, it positively supports and confirms the new level of understanding for BARA’ in that it refers to a functional activity more than it refers to a material/creational activity (p. 39), and that this new understanding is supported and confirmed by all the ancient Semitic languages?

(Sarcasm:) We owe Walton a great debt of gratitude for discovering something that was lost for thousands of years, but which he, through his diligent study of all the ANE languages, has recovered in these last days. His discovery will mean that all previous translations of the Bible will have to be pulped and consigned to the dustbin of failed attempts to uncover the ‘true’ meaning of Hebrew words. We owe him a great deal of gratitude as he stands alone against all that have gone before him, and against all who will—in the future—seek to suppress his new translation of Genesis 1:1, which reads: “In the initial period, God created by assigning functions throughout the heavens and the earth, and this is how he did it” (p. 46). The world awaits to see how the other 47 occurrences of BARA’ in the Old Testament will receive new light in Walton’s new translation of the Hebrew Bible. It may be that not just BARA’ but ‘ASAH, TOHU’ WeVOHU, and other Hebrew expressions such as ‘after its kind’ will give up their new meanings to John H. Walton as he carries on his meticulous comparative study of the ancient Semitic languages.

If Walton had wanted to convince Hebraists that he had a watertight case for his new meaning for BARA’, he would have devoted a short chapter to a translation of the 48 occurrences of it in the Old Testament. This is not asking very much. The reader should try substituting ‘created by assigning functions’ in place of ‘create’ in the 47 other places, and he will soon see how ridiculous it is. His case would have been lost had he attempted to force his new translation on the Hebrew text. It was for this reason that the evidence was not given. For example, Yahweh calls Himself, or is called, ‘creator’ 13 times, using the participle of BARA’. In Isaiah 45:7 we have five participles (underlined) that describe the activity of God.

“Forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and creating evil, Jehovah, am doing all these things.”

4 I have no problem with the paraphrase: “In the initial period, God created the heavens and the earth [and this is how he did it].” If 1:2–2:3 supplies “and this is how He did it,” then I have no problem with 1:1 standing as a summary of what took place in the first six days of the new creation. Young’s Literal Translation, “In the beginning of God’s preparing the heavens and the earth, the earth was . . . .” or the translation, “In the beginning when God created . . . .” which make 1:1 part of the setting for 1:2 is not permissible, even though both correctly recognize that the ‘beginning’ relates to the six-day period itself.

5 For some unknown reason Walton has omitted 17 occurrences of BARA’ in Table 1 (p. 42). The true total is 48.

6 Walton manœuvreurs scholars into a meaning for this word which many would not agree with. He says, “the term has been consistently translated as a reference to the absence of material form” (p. 49). But most regard it as referring to an uninhabitable place, which is a condition of the material earth. In other words, the earth at that stage is not fit for purpose, but it soon will be.
Note that ‘forming,’ ‘making,’ and ‘doing’ are in parallel with ‘creating.’ Now try substituting “assigning function” for ‘creating’ in the above and it does not make sense.

“Forming light, and assigning function darkness; 
making peace, and assigning function evil, 
I Jehovah, am doing all these things.”

The verb BARA’ occurs 48 times in the OT. Twice the LXX omits to translate it (Isa 57:19; 65:18). Seventeen times the LXX translates it with ktivein;² fifteen times with poie’i’n;³ three times each with katadeiknuvnai (Isa 40:26; 41:20; 43:15); katasekuvzein (Isa 40:28; 43:7; 45:12), and givynesqai (Gen 2:4; Exod 34:10; Isa 48:7); once each with deiknuvein (Num 16:30); a’rciein (Gen 2:3); diatevenin (Ps 84(85):5); genna’n (Ezek 21:30(35)); and ejmi (Isa 4:5).

It is clear from this that the LXX translators reserved ktivein (which occurs only 28 times in the OT) to translate BARA’. The Greek verb, ktivein, means “to bring something into existence,” but oddly, it is used only once in the Pentateuch at Deut 4:32. Elsewhere in the Pentateuch, poie’i’n (‘to do, make’) is used to translate BARA’. This verb is associated with man, and man does not “bring something into existence” out of nothing. He works with the raw materials that God has already created for him. The LXX obliterated the distinction between BARA’ and ASAH when it came to translating the creation narrative, and the translators used poie’i’n (‘to do, make’) throughout to translate both Hebrew verbs. What may have swayed them to adopt this policy was the image that God adopted throughout the narrative—that He was like a human workman. The workman works only during the daylight hours, and so does the Creator. The workman takes a daily rest, sleeping between ‘evening’ and ‘morning’, and this the Creator imitates. The workman grows weary over the course of six days of hard labour, and needs a full day to rest and recuperate, and this, too, the Creator imitates, except everything is the other way round, for man’s pattern of: work, followed by a daily rest, repeated six times, followed by a sabbath day’s rest, was set by the Creator Himself for Man to imitate while he is on this Earth.

The use of ktivein at Deut 4:32 is instructive:
Hebrew: אַל תַּעֲשֵׂה מִצְרַע יָדוֹ אֵלֶּה אִם יִרְדֶּעֶה מִצְרַע יָדוֹ אֵלֶּה אֲלֵיהֶם הָאָדָם אָנֵהוּ וְאָלָּמָה
LXX: ἐκτίσεν οὖν τὸ νεών ἁγνοποιήσας εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπον τοῦ κτιστοῦ.
“from the day that God created man on the earth.”

‘Created’ or ‘brought into being,’ is captured in the forming of man’s body out of the dust of the ground, and then breathing into him the breath of God. This gives us a good idea of what lies behind ktivein. One moment Man does not exist on the earth, and the next moment he does, because God has brought him into being.

In Psalm 51:12 David’s request to God to ‘create’ a clean heart in him, is paralleled with the request to ‘make new’ a right spirit in his midst. The two verbs complement each other, in that David wants a new heart to come into being within him, and a new spirit to be established within him, presumably with the desire that he would never repeat his sin, which was the fruit of his old heart and his old spirit. He wanted to be rid of them and have them replaced with brand new ones. In Jeremiah 31:22 Yahweh ‘creates’ a ‘new thing’ in the earth. This linkage between something brand new and God’s activity is conveyed through the use of BARA’.

In Psalm 104 (LXX 103):30 we have the same two verbs of ‘create’ and ‘make new’ complementing each other.

“You send out Your Spirit — they are created, And You make new the face of the ground.”

In the preceding verse we read:
“You gather their spirit — they expire, And unto their dust they turn back.”

This is the reverse of the creation process in Genesis 1, where God takes the dust and ‘sends out’ His Spirit into it to create Adam, from whom all human beings are descended (Mal 2:10).

Psalm 148:5 also sheds light on Genesis 1. “For He commanded, and they were created.” In Genesis 1 nothing comes into being except it is commanded to come into being, and the Psalmist picks this up here. Nothing ‘ evolves’ at a random, purposeless rate. Everything in God’s world has purpose, design, and intelligence behind it. God is as focussed on the insignificant sparrow’s first flight as it leaves His creative hand, as He is on its fall to the ground dead. He is not a distant God. Evolution is a denial of the creation order: dust + Spirit = Man, and his extinction is: Man - spirit = dust (i.e., Man minus spirit = dust). If science can verify Psalm 104:29 to be literally true, why can we not accept that 104:30 is also literally true? Why is the first a fact, but not the second?

² These are: Dt 4:32; Ps 51:12 (LXX 50:12); 89:12 (88:13); 89 (88):48 (man’s distinctiveness); 102 (101):19 (persons being in the process [nif. ptc] of coming into being); 104 (103):30; 148:5; Ecc 12:1; Isa 45:7; 45:8 (reference back to Day Three); 54:16(2x) (creates the craftsman); Jer 31(38):22; Ezek 28:13; 28:15; Am 4:13; Mal 2:10;
³ These are: Gen 1:1, 21, 27(3x); 5:1, 2(2x); 6:7; Isa 42:5; 43:1; 45:7; 48:18 (2x); 65:18.
By avoiding the simple exercise of substituting ‘assigning function’ (or, ‘functionate’?) for ‘create’ in this and the other 47 cases of BARA’ in the O.T., Walton may have hoped that his semantic shift would be taken as fact. Like the seed sown on stony ground, which sprang up quickly, promising to bear fruit, but withered through lack of moisture, so this ‘seed’ will wither through lack of linguistic credibility.

Walton takes a huge leap when he contends that, “These primal cosmic waters are the classic form that non-existence takes in the functionally orientated ancient world” (p. 49). This is a huge claim, and it would require a thorough investigation of the evidence for it before any scholar of repute would accept it, because, as it stands, it is nonsense. Logically, before the vegetation and the animals in the water, in the air, and on dry land can have a function they must first be created, but Walton believes that this stage is not referred to in the Genesis account (p. 50). The effort to manoeuvre scholars into thinking of creation only in terms of material origins is false and misleading, he claims. However, scholars work with both material and function origins at the same time, because they are inseparable in the account itself. God is a God of order, and purpose precedes execution.

The discovery that BARA’ had a secret meaning, undetected by any previous linguist, was purely fortuitous, announced the author. He explained: “If the Israelites understood the word bârâ’ to convey creation in functional terms, then that is the most ‘literal’ understanding that we can achieve.” Note the ‘it’. But, lest he might be accused of making a fortuitous discovery that helps his evolutionary thesis, he added: “Such an understanding does not represent an attempt to accommodate modern science or to neutralize the biblical text.” (Sarcasm:) No right-thinking, objective reader, would ever accuse Walton of doing such an underhand thing.

No doubt this skimpy, popular book will be followed by a serious academic presentation of all the linguistic arguments, with full references to serious academic textbooks on each section filling the footnote area. Only then will scholars be able to assess the competence and qualifications of the author to handle this ‘new’ breakthrough in his new approach to the semantics of the Hebrew language.

PROPOSITION 10. The Seven Days of Genesis 1 Do Not Concern Material Origins

GOAL: To divert the reader away from the natural, face-value understanding of Genesis One.

STRATAGEM: Propose to the young, naïve Christian that Genesis One is not an account of material origins but an account of functional origins (p. 162). Then go on to convince him that really the account is focusing on the functioning of the cosmos as God’s temple. Bring in all the ancient Near East parallels to make this point. The analogies should leave him confused and floundering, and the sheer weight of scholarly speculation (but do not use that word in case it becomes a lifeline to him) will, hopefully, induce him to give up his right to make his own judgment, and go along with the crowd. If there is any hesitation, remind him (but gently) that he does not know the Semitic languages as you do, nor is he familiar with the vast literature surrounding Near Eastern literature, as you do; that this literature has been thoroughly investigated by you, and the idea of the creation being the temple of God is endemic in it, but more importantly, you can claim that the idea is also found scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible.

COUNTER: Ask questions: Where is the word ‘temple’ in Genesis One? Where is God presented as entering into His temple? Is the temple the whole of the universe, the whole of the earth, or the whole of the Garden of Eden, or none of these? And if His temple is one of these how would I recognise which one it was, from the text of Genesis One?

Isn’t the idea of a cosmic temple imported from ANE literature? Isn’t the idea that the seven days refer to the seven days of cosmic temple inauguration, a denial of the reason for keeping the Sabbath day holy, which is firmly embedded in the creation week (cf. Exod 31:17)?

Walton is keen not to give the impression that he is running away from God performing acts resulting in physical creatures, as part of His operations during the creation week, but he is convinced that this is secondary (if that) to the functional use of the verb BARA’. He states: “Viewing Genesis 1 as an account of functional origins of the cosmos as temple does not in any way suggest or imply that God was uninvolved in material origins—it only contends that Genesis 1 is not that story” (pp. 96, 153). This statement makes it clear that the ‘face value’ (as Walton calls it) understanding of the vocabulary of Genesis 1 never refers to the material origins, only to functional origins. If you want to find texts relating to the creation of the material world you must go outside Genesis One to find it, he concluded.
To allay the readers’ fear that he has manipulated Hebrew terms to exclude a material creation, and come down exclusively for a functional creation, he hastens to add: “This is not a conclusion designed to accommodate science—it was drawn from an analysis and interpretation of the biblical text of Genesis in its ancient environment.” It is purely coincidental that his conclusion does accommodate science, but he did not set out to find a meaning for BARA’ that would accommodate science. It just so happens that it does—a pure coincidence, but a happy one (for his theory). “To the author and audience of Genesis, material origins were simply not a priority. To that audience, however, it would likewise have been unthinkable that God was somehow uninvolved in the material origins of creation. Hence there wouldn’t have been any need to stress a material creation account with God depicted as centrally involved in material aspects of creation” (p. 96).

Is non-functional the same thing as nonexistent? (See p. 97, second line from the bottom.)

QUESTION: If the original author wanted to communicate an account of the origin of the material world, as distinct from an account of its functional activity, how would he word the present account of creation to convey just the origin of the material world?

PROPOSITIONS 12. Other Theories of Genesis 1 Either Go Too Far or Not Far Enough

GOAL: Scare the young believer away from a creationist approach to Genesis One

STRATAGEM: Avoid presenting your young reader with a plausible interpretation which recognises that information gleaned from God’s Word and God’s world will and must be compatible. Instead, pick on a straw man, and set him up as the only alternative view to your own, and then pillory it. Tear it to shreds with incisive logic and ‘zeal with knowledge’. Make it appear that you are defending the integrity of the Genesis One account. That should disarm your impressionable hearer/reader that you are not one of these ‘literary critics’ who are so distrusted by evangelicals. You must come across as an ‘evangelical,’ if you are going to win evangelicals, because they are sharp at recognising anyone who does not believe in the inspiration of Scripture as an enemy.

I suggest you go for the Concordist interpretation. There are a lot of cranks among them, and if you can expose their more extreme position, this will put your young hearer off them for life. In the vacuum that follows your critique, the hope is that they will gravitate toward your ‘more biblical’—don’t forget to add that phrase as often as you can—position and exegesis of the text. But whatever you do, do NOT draw attention to the fact that you are the only scholar in the world who holds to a ‘functional’ reading of the text of Genesis One. At all costs, keep this hidden in the background, otherwise you will draw attention to your quirky, linguistic, principles of interpretation, because a young Christian might bring your bizarre interpretation to the notice of his pastor or minister, who may not be slow to recognise a ‘strange doctrine’.

(Walton to his young disciple:) When countering Young Earth Creationism (YEC), you must exaggerate their ignorance, such as I do in the following accusation: “It is not that they have considered the merits of a nonmaterial understanding of these words and rejected it. They are not even aware that this is a possibility and have therefore never considered it” (p. 109).

COUNTER: Ask if there are any reputable Hebraists who have endorsed his unique principle of interpretation. Ask how far his unique principle applies to the other 47 occurrences of BARA’ scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible. Are there any cases where BARA’ refers to the origin of something material? If so, how can the ‘functional’ and the ‘material’ meanings of BARA’ be differentiated in any given context?

Walton denied that Genesis One was a straightforward account of the emergence of the material universe. “This book has proposed, instead, that Genesis 1 was never intended to offer an account of material origins and that the original author and audience did not view it that way” (p. 113). Who is the author? Since no human being was around at the time as an eyewitness, is this the composition of God or man? If it is from God, then was He influenced by the fictitious concoctions of unregenerate men who lived many centuries (or millennia) later? (See p. 106 for Walton’s acceptance of the human authorship of Gen 1.)

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9 Such an interpretation is found on my web site: www.btinternet.com/~lmf12. My view is that Gen 1:1 is a summary statement, and then God goes directly into the state of the Earth just before Day One. This has the advantage that it allows the universe and the earth to be extremely old, and the creation in the days of Genesis very ‘young’. There is no ‘gap’ as such between 1:1 and 1:2, so much as complete silence. God has nothing to say about the ages before Day One.
PROPOSITION 13. The Difference Between Origin Accounts in Science and Scripture Is Metaphysical in Nature

GOAL: To do away with the distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ in order to make room for evolution.

STRATEGEM: If you can do away with the miraculous element in the creation of all living things, then you will remove a significant obstacle that stands in the way of evolution, which requires that all living things developed from a single-celled organism. Get rid of the obstacle and you get a level playing-field. Theologically, we can push through our idea that there can be no such thing as the ‘miraculous’ in God’s world, because everything He does is ‘normal’.

The next step is to lay claim to all scientific research in our goal to establish that evolution was God’s method of bringing all living things into being. In case this raises alarm in some weak minds, you must quickly smoother this statement with a reassuring statement that all creation is the direct work of God. Make sure you inject this reassuring word each time that you strengthen the case for evolution. By balancing your statements in this way, it will be hard for the young and the naïve to see what you are up to. It is important to keep up the appearance of being ‘evangelical’.

But I will show you an even more cunning stratagem. Start criticising the more extreme scientists who claim that they have found no empirical evidence for God in their laboratories. Point out that ‘science,’ by current definition, cannot explore the truth that all creation is the work of God. This is the sort of thing the naïve evangelical likes to hear. They like to hear a scientist say that they are strong in some areas, and they are weak in other areas, especially where God is concerned.

Consequently, state that science is concerned only with that which is physical and material. Anything metaphysical and spiritual is outside its remit. Tell them that science has deliberately restricted itself to investigate the material realm and what is falsifiable, because of this science cuts itself off from an investigation into the realm of divine activity. This will allay the fears of your hearers that you were going to use science to prove evolution. You must never say that, but you must always assume it. Saying it would instantly condemn your book to the bin, so never come down firmly on the side of evolution. Pretend to stand on the sidelines and say that however God brought the material creation into being, even if He used some form of evolution, it is still all attributable to Him, and to Him alone. If you can stress that first, then this will give the impression that you really are on their side, and that is a very desirable goal to achieve if you are to soften them up to consider the possibility that evolution may have happened, or it may not have happened in the way that Darwin thought, because science has moved on since his day, and there are few scientists who would go along with Darwin’s first presentation of evolution.

By cleverly down-playing the out-of-date stuff, you achieve two things. First, you get rid of Darwin’s evolution but, do not state where it went wrong; there is no need to, since no modern scientist any longer believes it happened the way Darwin said it did. He lived in a pre-scientific age. Secondly, by ditching old Darwinism, you give the impression that Christians were right all along to oppose him, and that will look good for you. But do not at this stage mention that old Darwinism has been replaced with Neo-Darwinism. You must introduce new Darwinism through the backdoor, not through the front door.

Give the reader time to absorb the impact of knowing that evangelicals were right to ditch old Darwinism, and agree that Darwin was wrong, but do not state in what way. Keep them on your side. Do nothing to offend them at this stage. You will need to do a lot of waffling and clever talk to prepare them for the introduction of a new brand of Darwinism to replace the old, discarded one. So spend a chapter or two waffling on and on about how God is the Creator of all things. Put great stress on GOD as the true Creator of all that we see. This is what they want to hear. They are fed up with hearing that evolution is the true ‘creator’ of all living things. This is not what they want to hear coming from you, if they are to go along with your new theory about what the human author of Genesis One was struggling to convey when he used the verb BARA’.

COUNTER: Ask repeatedly until you get an answer: Who conveyed the account of the creation of the universe to man? Was it God, or was it man? Walton has assumed that it is the work of a fallible human being who is indistinguishable from the humans who wrote the fictional accounts that belong to Near Eastern mythology. He believes that by making this identification, and then exposing the ANE myths for what they are, that this will give him a huge advantage to shape the Genesis One account after the mythical models, but ‘cleansed’ of their objectionable, mythological elements.

What he cannot agree to, is that this account could only have come from God’s mouth to man. That is not allowed. It is not possible. It is for this reason that Walton makes no mention of this
possibility. It would deal his carefully constructed scenario a devastating blow. He claims that he has carefully researched the mind of the ancient authors of these ANE myths, and their audiences, and he knows exactly how their minds worked, and it is exactly as he has stated it: they had no interest at all in the origin of animals, fish, and birds. Their sole, and only, interest was in the function of what they saw with their own eyes. It would never have crossed their minds to ask where these came from. And it is this same mindset that he has discovered, or rather, recovered, in the original Hebrew author, and in the original Hebrew audience.

Jesus threw down a challenge to the religious teachers of His day. He asked them, “Was John’s baptism from heaven or from men?” They could not say it was from man, otherwise they feared they would be stoned by the people. They could not say it was from heaven, otherwise Jesus would have asked them why they did not submit to John’s baptism. Like many Christians in science they dishonestly answered that they were agnostic; that they didn’t know. They did know the truth, but they chose to hide behind a denial to avoid the consequences of facing up to the truth.

Walton is not alone in denying that Genesis 1-2 came directly from God. It is the Achilles’ heel of all theistic evolutionists. Atheists have no interest in the Bible, but someone claiming to be an evangelical would be expected to believe 2 Timothy 3:16. If they do not, then they are no longer evangelicals. And if they are no longer evangelicals then they lose their evangelical audiences. They are caught in a dilemma, just as Jesus caught the religious leaders of His day in a dilemma over John’s baptism. They did not see it coming, and were stumped.

Theistic evolutionists have had time to evade the dilemma posed by Jesus’ acceptance of Genesis as history. Some argue that God’s Word does not contain only what comes from God’s mouth, because the words of Satan are recorded in it. Others attack the date of the composition of Genesis 1-2, in the belief that if they can put its origin after the Babylonian exile then the Hebrews had the opportunity and means to commit the deception of purloining (plagiarising) ancient Mesopotamian myths and parade them as original to themselves. But this attack ends up as an attack on the veracity of Scripture itself, which no self-respecting evangelical can be part of (though in his heart of hearts the theistic evolutionist would like to, just to get rid of Genesis 1-2).

Theistic evolutionists are embarrassed over (1) the longevity of the patriarchs; (2) the immortality of the body and spirit of Adam and Eve; (3) the origin of Eve’s body; and (4) that disobedience in the Garden of Eden brought about the reduction in longevity, loss of mortality, pain of childbirth, thorns and thistles, shame of their bodies, the sweat of man’s brow, feared by animals, and an offspring who would commit murder, etc. The ingenuity of man has found ways to evade all these truths, and these evasions become life-lines to all who will not accept God’s own account of how He brought all things into being. There is no truth in Scripture which does not have its anti-truth. The anti-truth to creation is evolution, because the natural man has no alternative for it.

Even Walton has agreed that the seven days in Genesis One were 24-hours long (pp. 45, 109; cf. pp. 122, 163), but as we shall see, he has quietly forgotten about this important fact in his next proposition.


GOAL: To play down the method God used to bring life into being on this earth.

STRATAGEM: It is absolutely necessary to achieve the above goal. The young Christian must not be allowed to think that God created all life on this earth in a period of six days, because that would rule out evolution. Walton’s thinking is: “I am persuaded that evolution was God’s method, but I mustn’t appear to be saying so too strongly or dogmatically, because this could harm my primary agenda to impose my new meaning for the verb BARA’ on the Church. I must protect that new meaning, so I can’t afford to open up too many fronts in my battle with the Creationists. I can afford to lose a battle in order to win the war. It is only necessary to create a situation which opens a door to evolution, and then I can let the scientists do the rest for me. In any case, I can frighten the young Christian by asking him if he, in his ignorance, is going to challenge the most prestigious, biological institutions in the world that they are wrong and he is right! Of course he won’t! We own those arsenals. They are on our side. This should put him on the back foot. So I must keep my eye on two things. First, I must protect my new meaning for BARA’, because if that is conceded then I have won the war. And secondly, I must begin the task of pushing the young believer away from a six-day creation, even though I conceded that the Hebrew text clearly implies a literal day of twenty-four hours. But my new meaning for BARA’ will neutralise the impact of that fact.”
Walton’s proposition is that “scientific explanations of origins can be viewed in light of purpose, and if so, are unobjectionable.” This proposition relies heavily on his view that “Genesis 1 recognizes that it was never intended to be an account of material origins. Rather it was intended as an account of functional origins in relation to people in the image of God viewing the cosmos as a temple” (p. 132; cf. p. 72[10]). Walton is confident in his statement: “I have proposed here that Genesis is not metaphysically neutral—it mandates an affirmation of teleology” [purpose, so far so good, but then comes the bait], “even as it leaves open the descriptive mechanism for material origins” (p. 117, square brackets are mine). Walton is adept at mixing the acceptable and the unacceptable to confuse the unwary. He advances the argument that “God creates each human in the womb, but we do not object when embryologists offer a natural cause-and-effect process. We believe that God controls the weather, yet we do not denounce meteorologists who produce their weather maps day to day based on the predictability of natural cause-and-effect processes.” Then comes the subtle bait, “Can evolution be thought of in similar terms” (p. 136). He throws out another subtle bait when he argues, “We can accept the results of embryology and meteorology (regardless of the beliefs of the scientists) as processes that we believe describe in part God’s way of working. . . .” and here comes the bait, “Why should our response to evolution be any different?” (p. 136). The short answer is that embryology and meteorology deal with facts, whereas evolution deals with personal beliefs and philosophy. It deals with a creatorless creation.

COUNTER: In the case of all other advocates for evolution, the key stumbling-block has been the clear statement of God Himself that He created the present, organic world in six days. All other TEs have taken advantage of the fact that ‘day’ (YOM) can also mean a ‘long time’ and they have used this as a shield to ward off the arrows of creationists. But in the case of this theistic evolutionist he has conceded the argument of the creationists that YOM in this context can only mean a 24-hour day. So he has cleverly side-stepped the force of the YOM argument. However, this is good news for the Creationists who can play-up this concession when arguing with other TEs. That the battle in this area was always won by the Creationists has niggled theistic evolutionists for the past one hundred years and more, but they had no option but to hide behind the latitude in the term YOM (outside Genesis 1) and exploit it to give them the millions of years that evolution demanded. TEs could never afford to admit defeat in this area.

Experience teaches that once an evolutionist, always an evolutionist. Once deceived, always deceived. It is easier for an evolutionist to go through the eye of an needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. It is a disease of the brain, that once it gets a firm hold, there is no way of loosening its grip. Even after some become ‘Christians’ they carry over their unregenerate ‘learning’ and mindset, which, like leaven, distorts their view of God’s power and His Godhead, and they can never worship God in the same way that Creationists can. They need to be renewed in their minds. Years of acceptance of evolution before they became Christians, has damaged their perception of Scripture, which was, that it was composed of Mesopotamian myths which had been ‘cleaned up’ by the Hebrews. Or they had been told repeatedly that Genesis was not a textbook on science or cosmology; that it was primitive; and that it reflected mythological views. Negative views of Genesis 1, held for so long before becoming a Christian, cannot be shaken off in a single, ‘Damascus-type’ experience. The damage is deep and detrimental to a full recovery. It will leave a deep scar in every evolutionist. They will be scarred for life, and will hardly ever make good leaders or expositors of God’s Word, because they will always be liable to revert to evolution with the next issue of a reputable, scientific journal article. They will always be vulnerable and weak when it comes to God’s claim to have created all things in a direct, hands-on experience. God will give no credit to any power outside Himself, such as angels or arch-angels. The one God—the trinity—reserves the right to the praise and thanks of all His creation. Nothing has come into being without His absolute control over it.

Now that Walton—one of their number—has broken ranks, and admitted that in the context of Genesis One, YOM can only mean 24-hours, because that is the only meaning that the first hearers of the story could have inferred from its common use, this should be used to strengthen the faith of every young Christian. They can take comfort from the fact that from the earliest Church Fathers (with the odd exception), through the Reformers, and into the twenty-first century (including many reputable scientists), the Christian Church has never wavered in its understanding that the days of creation were ordinary days, and now they have TEs at last conceding that the Church was right all along. This should strengthen every Christian not to give up this core truth.

Now the reason why Walton conceded that the days of creation were 24-hour days was because he thought he had an even better argument for supporting his hidden agenda of introducing

[10] Walton wrote of Genesis 1: “Without hesitation the ancient reader would conclude that this is a temple text and that day seven is the most important of the seven days.”
evolution by the back door, and so he could afford to concede the high ground that the Creationists have occupied throughout history. It was also a disarming move. The young Creationist, reading Walton’s book, and finding that he was not trotting out the old Day-Age theory to support his (at this point non-explicit) evolutionary theory, might think that Walton was on the side of the Creationists, especially when Walton came across as ambivalent at this stage over the method that God used to bring about life on this planet. (Clever move.)

Walton softens up the young reader with the following argument. “. . . if the Bible does not offer an account of material origins we are free to consider contemporary explanations of origins on their own terms,” and here comes what looks like a sop to the Creationists, “as long as God is seen as ultimately responsible.” He goes on. “Therefore whatever explanation scientists may offer in their attempts to explain origins, we could theoretically adopt it as a description of God’s handiwork” (p. 133). Note, God is ‘ultimately’ but not ‘immediately’ responsible. Why? because evolution has thrown up some nasty bugs and viruses, and most of nature survives by killing the weaker members, much to our disgust and revulsion when we see it on our TV screens. Somehow a loving God must be shielded from being the immediate Cause, but He can be relegated to the backroom as the ‘ultimate’ Cause of all things—good and bad, but not directly.

Notice also the clever use of ‘theoretically adopt’ anything that the scientists discover. The young Christian is not being asked to accept the rigorous, hard, factual ‘evidence’ for the scientists’ projections. He is only being asked to commit himself to the ‘theoretical’ possibility that science may provide the answer. This commitment, the young Christian is assured, would never put him on a collision course with the Bible because the Bible does not commit itself to give an account of how life came to exist, but only its function after it came into existence. Theoretically, God could have created all things in six days (but Walton will not even say this), but he gives it as his considered opinion that science is firmly against this as a possibility. “If geological strata were laid down eon by eon, God is at work. If various life forms developed over time, God is at work” (p. 133).

Point out that Walton has fallen for the old trick of using the evidence for life before the present life, to argue that the present life is in unbroken continuity with the fossil life. This is not so. Genesis 1:2 makes it clear that the Earth’s geology existed in the state we know it today and that its continents were already in existence before Day One. But on Day One there was absolutely no life on Earth. There were no sun, moon and stars to give light and heat to the earth. The condition of the earth was ‘waste and void,’ which means ‘uninhabitable’ and ‘uninhabited’. God started from scratch again. The first three days were spent making it habitable. The next three days were spent filling it with inhabitants. We see something of the awesomeness of God’s previous creation(s) when we view the life embedded in the rocks (fossil life), but these rocks were laid down in previous eons or ages. They existed before Adam set foot on the ground. We know this because we are told that in the Garden of Eden, gold and precious stones existed (Gen 2:11, 12) and outside the Garden bronze and iron could be forged (Gen 4:22), and we know that these are the products of geological forces.

God, who knows all things, and has made provision for all eventualities, prepared a world in which Adam could live in, whether he was obedient or disobedient. If obedient, he was provided with the Garden of Eden, where he was immune from physical death, and all life within the Garden was vegetarian. If he was disobedient, he was provided with the area outside the Garden of Eden, where he became vulnerable to death. Through Adam’s sin we all now live outside the Garden of Eden.

In the wisdom of God He did not make two earths. One without death at any stage in its life, no fossils, and no evidence of death anywhere, and where all animals were vegetarian. And another earth where death was evident at every stage in its life, so fossils everywhere, and evidence of death everywhere one looked, and where all animals preyed on the weaker forms.

When God formed Adam He did not take him to the paradise Earth, wherein no death reigned, and warn him that if he was disobedient He would transfer him to the other Earth wherein death reigned as a natural thing. No, in the wisdom of God, He created the two conditions on the same planet Earth. The Garden of Eden represented the paradise Earth, and the area outside the Garden represented the world fit for those who disobeyed Him. Consequently, it was a simple task for God to transfer Adam from the condition of Paradise to the punishment of being thrown into a condition of death and disease and decay outside the Garden.

God in His foresight—if not also according to His foreknowledge—prepared the Earth to take account of Adam’s decision (made on behalf of all his offspring) be it to obey Him or to disobey Him. Both eventualities were fully covered well before Day One dawned. The whole of earth’s geological history was made with a view to how God would respond to Adam’s free moral choice. Every aspect of Adam’s existence outside the Garden was thoughtfully and carefully planned through. The fossil
fuels he would need were pre-planned and brought into existence over millennia of growth and vegetation. God provided in advance coal, oil, gas, iron ore, chemicals, metals and every conceivable thing that would enable Man to maintain an existence outside the Garden. And it is into this pre-planned, second choice, world that we are called upon to live out our brief day, and in that brief day come to a reconciliation with the God of Adam, and lay hold on eternal life offered through the life and death of Jesus.

The subtle bait, “Can evolution be thought of in similar terms” (p. 136), is not in the same class as embryology or the weather. Science is blind, because it omits to take into account the most important factor in examining creation—the Creator, which it must do when it considers the purpose behind the creation. Embryology and meteorology follow their law-like quality because God acts so consistently in the operations of the cosmos. When He made each new creature He sent it away from His presence with the empowering words, “Go forth and multiply, and fill the earth.” Because He has endowed each creature with an autonomous nature suited to its purpose in His world, science is severely handicapped in making sense of God’s creation if it refuses to take all the relevant data into consideration. Only the Christian in science who acknowledges that the things which are seen come directly from the One who is not seen, is a true scientist involved in pure science.

Those who do not take the Creator into account, or deny His existence, are, in the words of the Psalmist, “a fool,” and not a scientist. It is a cop-out to claim that pure science is one where God must be left out because He cannot be proved to exist. One is reminded of the scientist who refused to interview the watchmaker because he could not find evidence of the watchmaker in the watch he made! Yet the watchmaker’s wisdom and intelligence is written all over the watch he made.

Can you prove a painter existed from an ‘objective, scientific investigation’ of the painting itself? Can the most powerful microscopic examination of the paint itself reveal the painter? Of course not! What kind of evidence emerging out of the painting itself would convince the scientist that a painter painted it? Maybe the painting just happened without a painter. Maybe the watch just happened without a watchmaker. Maybe the creation just happened without a Creator. It is a pseudo-scientific position to leave out the painter, the watchmaker, and the Creator, when examining their creations. Walton wrote: “science is incapable of affirming or identifying the role of God” (p. 135). Science is incapable of affirming or identifying the role of the painter in his painting. Science is incapable of affirming or identifying the role of the watchmaker in his watch. But this dichotomy shows how stupid this kind of ‘science’ is. It is blind, and incapable of coming to a knowledge of the truth about the painter, the watchmaker, or the Creator. It pretends to be ‘objective’ by dismissing the creators of the objects it examines. This is dysfunctional science. This is pretend science. As the Psalmist would say, ‘This is fool’s science.’

The man who glories in his empirical science and his objective approach, but who forgets God, is like a one-eyed scientist. The one who glories in the same but remembers his God, is like a two-eyed scientist. What Walton omits to say is that any scientist who examines God’s creation without taking God into account is a fool. This is because he has plucked out one of his eyes in the mistaken belief that his empirical science and his objective approach will lead him to the truth.

The fool is like the scientist who examines a painting without taking the painter into account. The painter has a purpose in the way he spreads the paint on the canvas. He has a picture in his mind of the finished article. The final result is achieved by going through many unfinished stages. So it was with God’s creation. When He finally put down His paintbrush, He declared that His work was finished, and in His eyes, ‘it was very good’ as regards the object or purpose He had in view for each thing He created. This is unlike evolution, which is, by definition, unending and always incomplete.

Note that Walton comes out explicitly on the side of evolution when he realises that it will be offered in schools as an account of origins that explicitly denies God a role, thus setting up a conflict between the Bible and science and demanding a choice between them (p. 136). “Such a choice is unnecessary and unacceptable . . . but should lead to adjustments in how the subject is taught, not in the total rejection of the principles and role of biological evolution” (p. 136f.). Here, at last, he comes down off the fence to defend the teaching of evolution in schools, or so it appeared, but then he soft peddles and argues, “I am not suggesting a wholesale adoption of evolution, merely suggesting that neither Genesis 1 specifically nor biblical theology in general give us any reason to reject it as a model as long as we see God as involved at every level and remain aware of our theological convictions” (p. 137). Try telling that to a primary school child! But first, the school child must be primed to understand that Genesis One is not about the origin of all things we see around us, but it is only about the functions of what we see around us, and then, and only then, may the creation story be read to him, otherwise he might get the wrong idea about the story! This is a dangerous manipulation of the child’s mind to ensure that evolution is presented as the only scientific explanation for all things in the universe. At no point will Walton permit a creationist reading of Genesis One to school
children. And this is the typical reaction of all theistic evolutionists when it comes to the origins of what we see around us.

Walton woos the unsuspecting Christian to go along with the scientists with the seeming evangelical defence of God’s involvement. “It would be unacceptable to adopt an evolutionary view as a process without God” (p. 136). This sounds like ‘good news’. You can have evolution and God, which gives you the best of both worlds. It keeps you from confronting the hordes of scientists arrayed against their tiny group of diehards (which you do not want to be associated with), and it allows you to attribute evolution to God.

Walton is aware of the danger of presenting evolution to school children because it will be offered as an account of origins that explicitly denies God a role thus setting up a conflict between science and the Bible. He regrets that this might happen but he can tolerate this provided that the principles and role of biological evolution are not dismissed out of hand (p. 137).

Walton makes out a case for evolution being the only scientific explanation on offer, but then back-peddles softly; “I am not suggesting a wholesale adoption of evolution, merely suggesting that neither Genesis 1 specifically nor biblical theology in general give us any reason to reject it as a model,” and here comes the bait, “as long as we see God as involved at every level and remain aware of our theological convictions” (p. 137). But any scientist would make mincemeat of this position. In their eyes this is nothing more than an excuse— a ‘God of the gaps’—in their rigorous study of cause-and-effect results. There simply is no God present in any laboratory experiments. If there is a God then He has to be parachuted in from the outside. He has to be imposed on evolution, as Walton suggests; but evolution abides by laws that do not come from nowhere. Scientists can trace the origin of all things (or are on their way to doing so) back to genes, enzymes, atoms, molecules, or whatever. They will never be stuck for a plausible scenario and these will not involve God.

The stratagem is to manoeuvre the young Christian away from direct creation and into evolution, where their God will be thrown out as an unnecessary crutch in carrying out experiments on what has sprung up of itself out of the ground. Walton tries to reassure the wavering Christian that this problem can be overcome “by an affirmation that whatever evolutionary processes may have taken place, we believe that God was intimately involved in them” (p. 137). An ‘affirmation’ is no match for the ‘hard evidence’ of evolution that he will be bombarded with, and the relentless bombardment will whittle away, if not demolish, something as airy-fairy as an ‘affirmation’. In any case, this ‘affirmation’ will end up putting the Christian in conflict with the six days of creation, over against the millions of years required by evolution, so that in the end his trust in the Bible is thoroughly undermined.

But Walton, as you will have twigged, has a way of getting round a six-day creation. He falls back on his new meaning for BARA’, or rather his recovery of the lost meaning of BARA’, and argues that the “question of the age of the earth can only be addressed from Genesis 1 if it is an account of material origins” which it is not, according to this lost meaning of BARA’ (p. 138). Everything hinges on his belief that “the Bible offers no information on the age of the earth” (p. 138), and with that I would concur, because the origin of the present geology of the Earth pre-dates Day One. But the present ordering of the cosmos around the Earth, and in subservience to Man’s needs on it, post-date Day Three. But that is not to say that the sun, moon, and stars were created on Day Four. They, like the Earth, show evidence of being very ancient, and no doubt played their part in the previous creations on the Earth. But Walton’s book is replete with ‘ifs’. “If Genesis 1 does not require a young earth and if divine fiat does not preclude a long process, then Genesis 1 offers no objection to biological evolution” (p. 138). Why preclude ‘evolution’? Why not change it to, ‘offers no objection to direct creation’?

When it comes to the tricky question regarding the origin of the bodies of Adam and Eve, Walton first presents us with the solution of others. “A solution that some offer suggests separating the material issues in human origins from the spiritual or metaphysical ones. In other words, they propose considering that humans develop physically through a process and somewhere in that process, undetectable by science, the image of God becomes part of the human being by an act of God” (p. 138f.). Why this convoluted scenario when the Creator Himself has told us how He created Adam, and then created Eve from Adam’s rib? What more do we need to know? Or can God not be trusted to tell His people plainly how and why He created us and our ‘home’ planet?

Walton’s own solution is interesting. I summarise his view.

Whatever evolutionary processes led to the development of animal life, primates and even prehuman hominids, my theological convictions lead me to posit substantive discontinuity between that process and the creation of the historical Adam and Eve. Rather than cause-and-effect continuity, there is material and spiritual discontinuity, though it remains difficult to articulate how God
accomplished this. . . . If the theory proposed in this book is on target, Genesis 1 does not offer a descriptive model for material origins. In the absence of such a model, Christians would be free to believe whatever descriptive model for origins makes the most sense (p. 140).

And when you leave it to the ‘natural man,’ will he choose God’s account or the scientist’s account? The scientific case is loaded against God’s word. There is no contest. God cannot win if His word cannot be trusted. Walton has committed himself to the belief that science can connect the evolution of life “up to and including the creation of the first human beings” (p. 140), and there is nothing in Genesis 1 or the entire Bible which precludes this scientific probability, he claims.

Walton falls back on his ‘lost’ meaning for BARA’ as the lynch-pin to promote his theory of evolution. The promotion of evolution is the goal behind the ‘lost’ meaning of BARA’. It is this single goal that is driving everything forward. Remove this ‘lost’ meaning, and Walton would be left closer to the Creationist’s position, because if Genesis 1 is an account of material origins, he has said enough to establish that evolution cannot be fitted into six literal days.

Walton makes the point that “biological evolution can acknowledge no purpose, but likewise it cannot contend that there is no purpose—it must remain teleologically neutral” (p. 153). But he also maintains that Genesis One “leaves the descriptive mechanism for material origins undetermined” (p. 153). He would say that, wouldn’t he? is the Creationist’s response. Indeed, one can predict how Walton will respond to any given text once he has given up on Genesis 1 being a straight-forward account of the origin of life on Earth. His ‘exegesis’ is predictable.

Walton has nothing to lose by accepting that the ‘days’ in Genesis 1 are literal days. These are not days of creation, but days assigning functions to things already in existence. A similar theory was put forward by Hugh Miller, who took the ‘days’ to be days of optical visions. The best advocate of this interpretation was P. J. Wiseman, who wrote: “I submit that the only reference to time in connection with creation are those relating to the six days of revelation of the narrative, and that there is no reference whatever to the time occupied by God in creating the universe and all things in it.” He also wrote: “The first chapter of Genesis . . . does not say anything about the period taken by God in creating the universe, but it does tell us about the period taken in revealing to man the account of creation. . . . we have a God-given record of the origin of things imparted to man in simple language” (p. 206). Wiseman discounts the idea that the Seventh Day was a sabbath rest for God. The sabbath was made for man, not for God, he argued. “Consequently there was one thing our Lord was not doing on those six days, He was not creating the heavens and the earth and all life on it” (p. 203). The reason for this is because at the moment of revelation the creation was already in existence.

God rested (lit. ceased) on the seventh day not for His own sake but for man’s sake, and because this revelation about Creation was finished on the sixth day, not because on that day (or period) the creation of the world was finished (p. 110) . . . .

The time occupied in the events described may well be as long as the geological interpretation asserts (p. 207). 12

Walton’s interpretation achieves the same result by a different route. The interpretations of Wiseman and Walton fail to do justice to the Hebrew verbs ‘rested’ and ‘refreshed himself’ (Exod 31:17), because no activity on the part of God is involved in their interpretations.

PROPOSITION 17. Resulting Theology in This View of Genesis 1 Is Stronger, Not Weaker

Science restricts reality to that which is material. God is Spirit, not material, but He is more of a reality than the material universe. Therefore because of the restriction that science has imposed on itself, it can never arrive at the truth, because purpose belongs to God, and infuses everything coming through His mind. Because science can neither refute or prove the existence of a deity or deities, it must be silent on religious matters. It must stay out of the debate if it is going to limit itself to empirical methods. Science education can promote naturalism, that is, refusing to resort to a ‘God did it’ explanation, in their empirical research. Even when a divine hand cannot be observed through scientific methods, that is insuficient reason to conclude that a divine hand does not exist or is not active (p. 155). Science is designed only to operate within the closed system of a material universe—it ought not therefore to pass judgment on whether or not there is anything outside the material


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universe. It therefore should not draw ‘no purpose, no goal’ conclusions if it is seeking to restrict itself to valid science. But that is not how evolutionists view the purpose of science. And when you get scientists who are also confirmed evolutionists, then you have a new religion—a new philosophy of life. I am all in favour of attributing all the insights of empirical science to God, because empirical science is the study of His creation as it is.

Walton is in favour of keeping Genesis out of the classroom when it comes to science. Only empirical science must be taught, he says (p. 158). I object to the notion that something that belongs intrinsically to its Maker can be isolated from Him and the purpose why He made it ignored.

Walton believes that empirical science need not favour teleology (purposeful) or dysteleology (purposeless) and should remain neutral on the issue as much as possible in the classroom. I object, because if a science teacher—teaching biology—connects the evolution of Man to an ape-like ancestor, he is teaching his belief system, and not teaching empirical science. It is impossible for an evolutionist not to reveal his belief system. Because of this ever-present inevitability this should rule out teaching evolutionary biology in schools. According to the revelation given by God to Man, evolutionary biology is a false teaching, or else God’s revelation is false. Both cannot be right.

**WALTON’S CONCLUSION**

Walton claims that he has a clearer and better understanding of what was important to the ancient civilisations of the Ancient Middle East, than any other scholar living or dead. Consequently he can speak with great authority on certain matters to do with the origin of the universe. He claims that they had little concern for the origin of the life around them. The functions of the created world were more important to them, and they cared little for the material cosmos. Because Genesis One is an account of functional origins, it offers no clear information about material origins (p. 163).

Walton claims to have discovered the original (and lost for millennia) meaning of BARA’ which concerns assigning functions to things, and does not refer to creating brand new things. He believes—

The Genesis account begins with 1:2 with no functions (rather than with no material).

The first three days pertain to the three major functions of life: time, weather, and food.

Days four to six pertain to functionaries in the cosmos being assigned their roles and spheres.

The recurring comment that “it is good” refers to functionality (relative to people).

The account can be seen as a seven-day inauguration of the cosmic temple in which God has taken up His residence on earth, and from where He runs the cosmos. This world is His headquarters (p. 162).

Walton advocates that all Christians should not use Genesis 1 to account for the origin of life on this planet. They should leave this for the scientists to decide for them. They know best. He is dogmatic that Genesis 1 offers no explanation for the origin of life. *It never had that function from the moment it was written*, he claims. He has given the matter his most careful and responsible assessment; he has expert understanding of ancient literature, and he has discovered what the author of Genesis 1 truly intended to communicate. He has also a near perfect understanding of what the audience of Genesis 1 would have clearly understood when they heard it read to them, and he can assure us that it is far different from what has been traditionally understood about the passage by all non-Hebrew audiences ever since (p. 162). He admonishes his readers, “We may find the theories proposed by scientists to be convincing or not, but we cannot on the basis of Genesis 1 object to any mechanism they offer” (p. 163f.). Walton’s position can be called *Teleological Neo-Darwinism* (see p. 164). This is a contradiction in terms because Darwinism *under any label* is random mutation nurtured by natural selection. It is purposeless. By contrast, teleological creation involves purpose. Once evolution is swallowed as God’s means of creating all life on this planet, Genesis One becomes an untruthful account, and God becomes a liar.

The strength that Walton sees in his new theory is that he can embrace any and every finding of science (except direct, six-day creation) with the words, “Yes, but there is no reason God could not have been involved in the process” (p. 164). If you leave the means of creation with science to determine, and that science has deliberately excluded the Creator, then you get a creatorless creation. It is the old computer axiom of ‘Garbage in, garbage out.’ Science can never find the painter in his painting. Science can never find the watchmaker in his watch. And science can *never* find the Creator in His creation. We need a new definition of ‘science’ that can examine the painter and his painting; the watchmaker and his watch; and the Creator and His creation. *All the data*, not a selection of it,
should be taken into account in science. It is like an anthropologist refusing to take the spirit (because he cannot see it) as well as the body into account when assessing what a human being is. Man is not just a physical body. He is body, soul and spirit.

Walton advocates submitting our Christian children to the teaching of evolution; that Man evolved from a pre-existing non-human animal, since that is the consensus of the vast majority of scientists (and he must go along with whatever they decide). This involves surrendering the right of every Christian parent to have a teleological-oriented education in the sciences delivered to their children. Parents should firmly reject evolution under any label or guise being taught to their children. Children need to be protected from a godless and soulless teaching about God’s creation. The psalmist could exult in the power, wisdom and the sovereignty of God in creation. If he were a modern day teacher, he would be the same in the classroom as in the cloister. He would not be surrendering anything to anybody. He would be himself at all times. It is unnatural for a Christian not to credit God with the creation of all life on Earth in the space of six days. It is unnatural for the non-Christian not to credit Evolution with the creation of all life on Earth in the space of billions of years. Walton wants to ally the Church with the latter accreditation: “whatever aspects of evolution that continue to provide the best explanation for what we observe should not, in most cases, be objectionable for Christians” (p. 166). What lies behind “in most cases”? Is there any case where the Christian (in Walton’s world) should not follow science irrespective of where it takes us?

Science, by definition, cannot see anything that is attributable to God, or to the painter, or to the watchmaker. So if the scientific community concludes that there was no painter, no watchmaker, and no Creator, then shouldn’t Walton follow the scientists ‘wherever they take us’? It is a very dangerous policy to hand over one’s understanding of origins to a community that deliberately excludes the Creator from His own creation. This is a community of God-less scientists, but not necessarily composed of godless scientists. This is an important distinction. Most will end up being godless because that is where evolution is headed at all times, because it can only handle the ‘body’ and not the ‘spirit’. This kind of science is deliberately loaded against finding God in His creation. Ever learning, it can never arrive at the truth. This community has permanently castrated itself and it can never bring forth fruit to God’s glory. It can never praise God. It is dangerous because it is God-less. It takes great pride in being God-less. That is its badge of honour.

Walton believes he has found the middle ground where neither Creationists nor Evolutionists need give ground, but both must be willing to let go of their polemical antagonism (p. 167). This is a cloud cuckoo-land scenario. To ask evolutionists to give up evolution is not on. Likewise to ask creationists to adopt evolution as God’s means of bringing life into existence is not on. So where is the middle ground? It is this. Evolutionists are required to stop promoting a purposeless creation. This is not possible, because, by definition, scientists are not allowed to bring the creators (be they painters, watchmakers or gods) into their laboratories. They are also required to stop-acting as if Neo-Darwinism has no flaws and no need of modification. Evolutionists could easily concede this as it is conceding nothing.

What compromises are the Creationists to make? Firstly, they can pass off, or preferably embrace, evolution as evidence of God’s total involvement in creation. So long as God is given the credit they should not worry. Secondly, they can accept Walton’s book as the true understanding of how the Genesis One account ought to be read because what it “proposes is precisely what the Genesis author and audience would have understood” (p. 167). So there you have it! Follow Walton and the long era of antagonism between Evolutionists and Creationists will dissipate like the morning mists, and usher in a new dispensation of harmony and goodwill among all men.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Here we have some answers to Creationist’s questions. For my convenience I have abbreviated some of Walton’s replies to their core answer.

QUESTION 1: When and how did God create the material world?

WALTON’S ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us, so we are left to figure it out as best we can with the intellectual capacity and other tools that God gave us.
REPLY: A straight denial that Genesis One is God’s account of how He made the present heavens and the Earth is not sufficient to destroy God’s testimony.

It is my understanding that Adam and his descendants, right through to Moses, were unaware of the implications of the geology beneath their feet. I also hold that God reveals information on a need to know basis. Therefore, the only way that His revelation in Genesis One could make sense to its first readers/hearers is that Genesis 1:1 was the summary and title of the contents of Genesis 1:2—2:3. This being so, the curtain of revelation opens with the planet Earth already in existence but it is uninhabitable and uninhabited. What follows is God’s work of making it habitable for inhabitants. The ‘beginning’ consequently, refers to what God created between Day One and Day Six.\(^{13}\) In this period He *made* (not created) the already formed Earth to be inhabited (after it was totally submerged under water). I hold that planet Earth was not created on Day One.

God *made* (not created) the heavens *as we now see them* on Day Four. Their substance existed, along with planet Earth, before Day One. I believe that the entire universe (including planet Earth, all the other nine planets, and all the galaxies) pre-existed Day One. What we see in the latest creation is a new heavens and a new Earth. What was already in existence is reordered to serve planet Earth. In this sense the sun, moon and stars were *made* (not created out of nothing) on Day Four.

If we go back to the summary statement that, “In a beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” this is a statement referring to both objects as they then existed at the end of Day Six. The finished work, taken as a whole, could rightly be described as a new thing, and therefore the term BARA’ would point to a work which did not exist and now exists. This is the essential meaning of BARA’. BARA’ has reference to the beginning, origin, or the emergence of a new thing. ASAH has reference to the result of making something. It does not necessarily exclude ‘newness,’ but neither does it put the focus on the coming into being of the thing made. The focus is on the result and not on how it got there.

Walton is right, in one aspect, but for the wrong reason, in stating that God does not tell us how the ‘material world’ came into existence. I would limit this to cover the substance of planet Earth and the stars. We do not know how these were formed. What we have learned about the stars has been gleaned through human exploration, not through revelation. Genesis One begins with the assumption that planet Earth is in existence, and that there is no direct reference to the core and its various mantels having been created by God. I agree that the creation of the sun, moon and stars, were already (as regards their substance) in existence before Day One. What Day Four reveals is a reordering of the universe for the benefit of the Earth and its inhabitants. In other words, a new function (using ASAH, not BARA’) has been given to the universe vis-à-vis the Earth, which is the centre of God’s activity. The Earth is the centre of the entire universe as far as God is concerned. Everything is made subservient to the Earth and to Man upon it.

QUESTION 2: Why don’t you want to read the text literally?

WALTON’S ANSWER: I believe my way is the only possible way to read the text, once you understand the language in which it was written and the background against which it was written.

REPLY: Walton does not grant that his way of reading the text is unnatural. The guide to the natural reading of the text is to see how it was translated into Greek by Jews before the New Testament era. It is undeniable that the LXX reads it just as we have it in any English translation. This must have been its ‘natural’ or literal reading three-hundred years before Jesus was born. Also, the rest of the Old Testament writers are in agreement with the LXX’s literal translation of the Hebrew text.

The idea that the cosmos was understood as the temple of God is not a natural, or a literal reading of Genesis One.

QUESTION 3: Why can’t Genesis 1 be both functional and material?

WALTON’S ANSWER: Theoretically it could be both. We cannot demand a material account, just because that is most natural to us. We must look to the text to inform us of its perspective. In my judgment, there is little in the text that commends it as a material account and much that speaks against it. (See pp. 93-94.)

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\(^{13}\) Walton concurs with this interpretation, see p. 45.
REPLY: The LXX is proof that the Jews in the third century BC read it as a material account, because this was the natural understanding of the words. It is the natural understanding of every Hebraist that has ever written on Genesis One. The fact that God presents Himself as a daily workman, who works hard during the daylight hours, and then sleeps between evening and morning, is evidence enough that the account speaks of physical creation, even if God presents Himself under the figure of a workman. When He completed a week of work, He rested from His exertions for one whole day to be refreshed (cf. Exod 31:17), which is again a figure of labour. If God was only assigning new functions to things which already existed, where would the exertion come from? Assigning new functions is a cerebral activity, which would not explain the need to rest.

The inability of Walton to realise that all his life, prior to writing his book, he understood Genesis 1 as a material account, but now he can no longer read it as such, shows the delusional world that he alone has entered and cannot escape from. The logic of grammar and the plain meaning of words is against his delusional reading of the text.

QUESTION 4: If this is the “right” reading, why didn’t we know about it until now?

WALTON’S ANSWER: The worldview of antiquity was lost to us as thinking changed over thousands of years. It was only with the decipherment of the ancient languages and the recovery of their texts that windows were again opened to us. This has made it possible to recover the ways of thinking that were prominent in the ancient world and has given us new insight into the Genesis account.

REPLY: Walton claims that his reading was initially based on observations from the biblical text, and that it was only later that he found confirmation when he understood the backdrop of Genesis in the lost literature of the ancient Near East (p. 171). One has to question whether his initial reading of the Hebrew text of Genesis 1 could have suggested his present reading (see his statement on p. 54). But that is for him to chronicle accurately for us. Personally I do not believe him. I believe that his present reading arose from his acceptance of evolution as God’s means of creating all things, and that the natural reading of the Hebrew text did not support this view. Like many others before him, he set about viewing the Hebrew stories through the lens and filters of Mesopotamian myths and legends. He claims that these myths of creation have nothing to say about the material origin of the universe, and that their focus was on the functions of what had been created. It was a simple task, he claims, to transfer this new background to the Bible and to Genesis 1 in particular. Throughout his work he is continually drawing on Mesopotamian parallels to establish his theory, yet he claims to have got his solutions directly from reading the Hebrew text itself, but his new ideas are only found in the Mesopotamian parallels! You cannot find them in the Hebrew text, because they are not there.

The claim that his present reading came directly from reading Genesis 1 on its own was made to avoid the criticism that he has come to the Hebrew text from a Mesopotamian direction, and imposed a foreign culture on God’s Word. Biblical scholarship has gone through many impositions. It passed through Pan-Arabic, Pan-Babylonian, Pan-Sumerian, Pan-Ugaritic, pan-this, pan-that, phases, by men hoping to make a name for themselves by using the marketplace to air their latest innovation. These fads have all come and gone, as will this one, leaving the Hebrew still intact, speaking for itself. No amount of pulling it this way and that way, will destroy it.

Walton’s renewed Pan-Mesopotamian imposition is just another misguided attempt to preempt the natural reading of the Hebrew text, which is of an order not matched by any other literature, ancient or modern. It also has the unique distinction of having been brought together under the authorship and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which no other literature of any civilisation can claim. It stands unique and does not need knowledge of Mesopotamian myths to understand it. Genesis does not say that God made a solid dome to hold up the waters above the earth, as Walton claims (p. 57). He has read this into the text from ANE parallel stories. And this is typical of his methodology.

QUESTION 5: How can this [your] view of Genesis be taught in Sunday School and Christian elementary schools?

WALTON’S ANSWER: The teacher would not need to get into the issue of Genesis 1 not being an account of material origins. That could come at later levels of study. It would be important, however, not to criticise evolution as contradictory to the Bible.

REPLY: It is unavoidable for the children in any culture under the sun to ask questions about origins. God has anticipated this natural enquiry and given us Genesis 1. It shows the strength of Walton’s delusion that he will not permit the teacher to read Genesis 1 to answer the child’s question,
when he has conceded that theoretically Genesis 1 can be read as either the origin of material or the origin of functions. He also concedes that, “Theoretically, the verb [BARA]’ could be broad enough to include either material or functional activity. For that matter, we might conclude that it involves . . . both material and functional” (p. 41). This refusal to accept the possibility that the verb and the account could be read as an account for material origin, shows the depths to which Walton will go to protect Genesis One from being read as an account of origins.

Almost the last word of this book is to protect evolution. That is very significant.

McFALL’S SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This book is like the curate’s egg—good in parts, but rotten in most. Because the leaven has been mixed in with the unleavened flour, the whole has become contaminated. When ‘truth’ and ‘anti-truth’ are jumbled together, as they are in this work, there is great danger that the anti-truth might be mistaken for the truth. Those who are unfamiliar with the wiles and stratagems of getting round the ‘face value’ of God’s Word may not know which parts are good and which are rotten. Therefore this book could become a snare to the unwary and the inexperienced.

As regards understanding Genesis One, I benefited nothing from reading this book. It is hoped that by reading my criticisms of this book, the reader will discern what to look out for in future, when theistic evolutionists, under the name of ‘Christian,’ so pervert the plain reading of Scripture that parts of it are regarded as obsolete—and so non-functional—in their day-to-day living to please God.

Basically, this book is an exercise in deception. Rarely, very rarely, are all the words of a speaker or writer completely misunderstood by an entire audience. Yet Walton believes that he can read the entire story of Genesis 1 without it ever occurring to him that he is reading an account of the origin of the material universe. But this is the goal that Walton has set for himself to manoeuvre the entire Church into. He has convinced himself that unless a person has first read his book they will not understand Genesis One, because they will assume it is an account of the origin of the universe. This means that from the moment Genesis One was written it has been misunderstood by everybody, except John Walton. A new era has dawned with his discovery, it would appear. Have the masses been deceived for millennia, or has one man been deceived?

The reason for mass understanding can be put down to a common currency between the speaker and the audience. If that common currency is not present, then there can be no effective communication between the two. Walton believes “that if we are going to interpret the text according to its face value, we need to read it as the ancient author would have intended and as the ancient audience would have heard it” (p. 103). He believes that he alone knows what the ancient author intended the ancient audience to get from his creation account. This is a big claim. And there are big ‘ifs’ in the following statements: “If the Israelites, along with the rest of the ancient Near East, thought of existence and therefore creation in functional terms, and they saw a close relationship between cosmos and temple, then those are part of the face value of the text and we must include them in our interpretation” (p. 104). “If the text is interested in functional origins, it need not be evaluated against material claims and material knowledge” (p. 111). The trouble with this set-up is that the text gives the Hebrew reader no clue that it is not to be read as an account of the origin of the material universe. That would be the default way to read any text: that is, take the words in their normal (or literal), everyday meaning unless some clue is given by the speaker that he is using metaphorical language, or some other non-normal use of the same terms. Walton turns the Hebrew language on its head, and assumes that the default reading is a non-normal use of the language, such as metaphor, symbolic, poetic, or figurative language, in the case of Genesis One.

In the case of Genesis One as a whole, if one were to read this to a public audience how many of them would come to the conclusion that this account of creation says absolutely nothing about the material creation of the world? But Walton believes that when this account was read over the millennia to millions of Hebrews and Jews they understood that it said absolutely nothing about the material creation of what they saw around them. Apparently they all understood “Genesis 1 as an account of functional origins” (pp. 103, 153), and, presumably, not even a minority understood it at its ‘face value’ as an account of the origin of matter, dry land, vegetation, marine, aerial and land animals, because this was not the ‘natural’ way of reading/hearing the text. How daft can you get?
I did not believe an intelligent man could brainwash himself into believing that Genesis One is not an account of the origin of the material universe, until I read this book. If this is a serious sample of how Walton interprets the Hebrew text then no young Christian is safe reading his works.

Scripture was not written just for the age in which it was communicated. It was written with a view to guide all men in all ages into the truth. God sent His word into the world through the operation of His Holy Spirit. Many have added things to it which have altered its meaning. They have the advantage of coming later, and so their alteration will have a ring of plausibility about it, especially if a string of academic degrees give ‘authority’ to the alteration. But I am reminded of the unnamed prophet who was given a personal message from God to deliver a message and return by a different route. The unnamed prophet noted: “For I was commanded by the word of Yahweh, ‘You must not eat bread or drink water, or return by the way you came.’” (1 Kgs 13:9). He did everything according to the letter and was returning to Judah by another route when an older prophet caught up with him and claimed that he had been given a new message for him from Yahweh. The new message, in effect, cancelled the one he had been given directly. Unfortunately, the unnamed prophet heeded the additional instructions and died as a result. The man who deceived him was an older man, and he was also a prophet in his own right. He claimed, “An angel said to me by the word of Yahweh, ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’ But he was lying to him.” Paul noted that even if an angel were to appear to a Christian and gave him another, different Gospel to preach, he should not be heeded (Gal 1:8). Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor 12:7). The deceiver was a prophet in his own right. This made it harder for the unnamed prophet to see through the deception. But he should have stuck by the original message he had been given. It is thus with the original message of Genesis One. Many plausible ‘cancellation’ messages have been proposed by ‘prophets’, Christians, and older men, who might appear to carry the reputation of the academic world behind their statements, with the aim of cancelling out the face-value reading of the direct word of Yahweh. The young Christian would do well to stick to the ‘old paths’. There is nothing implausible in a face-value reading of Genesis One as it stands.

Despite coming down hard on Walton’s central thesis, he does manage to lift the lid a little on the presuppositions that control scientific investigation. To some extent this must be seen in the context of his overall stratagem to go in for a bit of give-and-take, in order to woo his audience to accept his central thesis. Nevertheless, his insights into the conditions under which scientists undertake their experiments are worth noting.

On page 115 he notes,

“Though scientists have their beliefs, those must be seen as distinct from their scientific work. It is unconvincing for a scientist to claim that he or she finds no empirical evidence of God. Science as currently defined and practised is ill-equipped to find evidence of God. . . . we also believe that God works with a purpose. Neither ultimate cause nor purpose can be proven or falsified by empirical science. Empirical science is not designed to be able to deduce rationally that purpose is logically the best explanation. As the result of an empirical discipline, biological evolution can acknowledge no purpose, but likewise it cannot contend that there is no purpose outside of a metaphysical conclusion that there is no God. It must remain neutral on that count. . . . Science cannot offer access to God and can neither establish his existence beyond reasonable doubt nor falsify his existence. Therefore science can only deal with causation sequences— it cannot establish beyond reasonable doubt that a purpose governs or does not govern that which they observe. . . . the presence of a purpose cannot be falsified.

I have read a number of full-length treatments of evolution by Christians in science (professors and other specialists) doing a hard sell for it and in the course of doing so masterfully dismissing God’s account of creation as a total irrelevance because the Bible does not ‘do science’. It is categorised as a religious textbook, and thus safely shunted off-stage, claiming that it is dangerous to draw scientific conclusions from the Bible. Walton’s book is the first I have read by a TE who exposes the weakness of the scientific method, and it is very revealing.

What it means is that the scientist barricades himself inside his laboratory and refuses to take anything into account except the material object in front of him. He is like the scientist who carries a watch into his fortress laboratory and pulls up the drawbridge after him. He uses all his skills to dismantle and work out how it was constructed. No facet of the watch’s construction is left unexplored. When he is asked who he thinks might have manufactured it, he replies, “That is none of my business.” Later on, when he is informed that the creator of the watch is standing on the other side of the drawbridge and can help him understand the purpose for its construction, he replies, that as a scientist, he has no interest in the purpose of the watch, nor in meeting its manufacturer. As a scientist, he emphasises, his only interest lies in the material of the watch sitting in the palm of his hand. After all he is a scientist. He can find no evidence of purpose in any of the individual parts of the watch and, he adds, he has stripped it down to its individual parts, and not a single component convinced him that anything had a purpose. Likewise, he found no evidence of a creator in a single component. He could not detect any intelligence or design in any of the materials. He pointed out that all the materials found in the watch could be found in the fully-equipped workshop in the
basement of his laboratory. When he was told he was a fool, he went to the basement and brought back samples of all the components that he found in the watch and laid them in front of his accusers, and asked them to find ‘purpose,’ ‘design,’ or ‘intelligence,’ in any of them, offering to reduce any of the materials to its constituent atoms just in case there was a molecule which had ‘purpose’ written all over it, which he had overlooked. When his exasperated friends asked him to meet the manufacturer and learn first-hand from him, how and why he made the watch, he stoutly refused on the grounds that as a scientist, he was only interested in the ‘how’ because that was testable and falsifiable. He was not interested in the ‘why’ because that could not be determined from a minute examination of the materials that went into the watch.

When, in exasperation, his friends tell him he is a fool, he replies that he is a scientist. When at last he is prevailed upon to meet the creator of the watch, he reluctantly agrees to do so provided he can remove his white coat and not meet him in his laboratory, as there is no direct evidence of a relationship between the creator and his creation. They are two distinct entities and there is no material link between them. Indeed, nothing to link them, but a claim. But that claim cannot be verified because there is no part of the creator inside the created thing. The creator is ‘outside’ the thing he created, and there is no way of physically linking the creator with his creation, even if he brought both into his laboratory.

So, as far as he is concerned, as a scientist, there is no proof that the creator did create the watch; there is only his word that he created it. But words cannot be translated into physical evidence, so he holds up his words and declares, that as a scientist, he can only comment on the watch which he can handle and dismantle, but he cannot handle words in the same way in his laboratory. It is not equipped for this sort of airy-fairy ‘evidence.’ So as far as he is concerned he must remain strictly neutral about the alleged connection between the creator and his creation. He may or may not be the creator. He cannot comment on that issue, and must leave that to some court to decide, but in the meantime, as a scientist, he must restrict his horizon to looking at the physical objects brought into his laboratory and leave claims and texts to those who are interested in such things.

Just as the creator of the watch shakes his head in unbelief at the scientist’s refusal to meet him and discuss with him how and why he created his watch, so God shakes His head at the Christian in science who refuses to accept His written statement that He created the entire visible universe in six twenty-four hour days.

Imagine a week later the scientist is presented with another watch for analysis and he goes through the same procedure that he adopted for the first watch (because he is a scientist), and comes to the conclusion that the second watch is an improvement on the first watch, and he can put his evidence for coming to that conclusion in a written form so that his colleagues can test his results and verify or falsify them. He refuses to comment on who made them or why they were made because there is no material residue of evidence to help him.

When he is informed that the two geniuses who created the watches are standing on the other side of the drawbridge and would like to have his opinion on which watch is the best, he replies that he could not possibly comment on the number of creators behind the two watches. Nor could he comment on how many intermediate watches there were to connect them, because there is no evidence from the watches themselves. There may be two geniuses outside making a claim to be the creators, but he could not possibly comment on their competence because he is a scientist, and scientists only deal with facts, not with metaphysical possibilities, such as claims to be their makers. The nearest he would come to a ‘maker’ being responsible for the watches is his observation that both watches have the ‘appearance’ of having been designed (see p. 126), but that this could not be proved, since ‘design’ is a metaphysical issue, not a scientific one.

Now this severe dichotomy between ‘creator’ and ‘creation’ is foreign to all the men who were moved by the Holy Spirit to record God’s revelations to mankind. This is an unnatural way to view the ‘home’ in which God placed Man in to tend and care for it, and rule over it. From the very beginning of human life on the earth, Man has been in a headship relationship with his Maker. There never was a time when he was not locked into such a relationship, because it was initiated by God. He remains in continual control of His world, even after he has devolved the governance of it to Man. The scientist, therefore, who thinks he can play the game of pretending not to know who created the universe is a fool. And the universities of our land are full of them. Paul made the spiritual observation that ‘love edifies, but knowledge puffes up.’ And puffed up aptly describes the strutting of the evolutionists who thinks he knows more than God regarding the manner in which He brought all things into being. The puffed up scientist is just a little boy knowing a fraction of information more than another schoolboy. This slight edge deludes him into believing that he has discovered the secret of the origin of the universe.
But it suits Walton’s purpose to present this bizarre dichotomy in the scientist, because he can then say to the scientist, “You keep strictly to an examination of the facts of the material world, and allow us to educate you on the metaphysical dimension of the physical world.” And this is where he creates the opportunity to sneak in his preferred option of evolution as God’s preferred means for bringing all things into being. He creates a metaphysical possibility that random mutation coupled with natural selection might account for the physical universe. He then takes this to the scientist and asks him to test his metaphysical hypothesis. Instead of the scientist being strictly neutral and refusing to enter into the metaphysical debate, he loses his neutrality and becomes an ardent believer in a metaphysical dogma when he has no hard evidence to prove or disprove it. At this point he ceases to be a scientist and becomes a protagonist against revelation.

Once the majority of scientists have joined the bandwagon and handed over their neutrality to their peers, Walton can play the game of saying that no matter what solution scientists come up with for the origins of life on this planet, their solution is still part of the work of God. By conceding that God is the ultimate author of all that comes to pass, he is able to downplay the significance of the actual means that God used. In effect he says to the young Christian, “You do not have to choose between the competing means that God may have used, just so long as you credit God with the outcome, that is all that is necessary to avoid a clash between science and Genesis One.” The young believer is encouraged not to come down in favour of any one theory of origin, because no one really knows for sure how the material universe came into being because Genesis One says nothing about it. It was designed only to tell us what the function of each created element was designed to fulfil in the wisdom of God. The existence of matter is a given; it is assumed to be in existence, hence there is no reference at all to the origin of its existence. Believe me, he adds.

Walton reassures the young Christian that his faith in God as creator is safe because he—Walton—believes in a creator God. He is careful not to blame the scientists. He assures the believer, “As a result of an empirical discipline, biological evolution can acknowledge no purpose [in the existence of any animal], but likewise it cannot contend that there is no purpose outside of a metaphysical conclusion that there is no God. . . . Science cannot offer access to God and can neither establish his existence beyond reasonable doubt nor falsify his existence. . . . it cannot establish beyond reasonable doubt that a purpose governs or does not govern that which they observe. . . . the presence of a purpose cannot be falsified” (p. 116). In other words, he argues, if the scientist stays within the parameters he has chosen to set for his discipline, then that discipline has nothing to say about the existence or non-existence of a God. “Science is not capable of exploring a designer or his purposes. It could theoretically investigate design but has chosen not to by the parameters it has set for itself” (p. 127). So you are safe. Your belief in a creator God can never be challenged by science. Science is neutral when it comes to the unseen things of life. But, should science come up with a solution for the origin of the things which are seen, and handled, and dissected, and probed, do not worry, because the Bible has no revelation about the origin of the things which are seen, therefore the Bible can never be in conflict with any solution that science might discover. The possibility of conflict can never arise, because there is no competition with science anywhere in the Bible. The Bible is neutral with respect to the origin of the material universe, although in the overall scheme of things, all things ultimately are under the control of God. But you do not need to worry about the details. Stick to the big picture, and let the scientists get on with their work.

Because the Bible has nothing specific to say about the origin of the material universe it leaves open the possibility of any mechanism for its material origins, and if this involves the possibility of evolution by natural selection, then so be it, says Walton. It doesn’t matter, because God is in control of whatever mechanism was used. The lesson is: if Scripture is open about the mechanism, then you should be open too. Do not shut off any option unless it flies in the face of scientific discovery. His advice is:

Affirming purpose in one’s belief about origins assures a proper role for God regardless of what descriptive mechanism one identifies for material origins. . . . Genesis . . . is not interested in communicating the mechanisms . . . . Instead of offering a statement of causes, Genesis 1 is offering a statement of how everything will work according to God’s purposes. In that sense the text looks to the future (how this cosmos will function for human beings with God at its centre) rather than to the past (how God brought material into being). . . . The mechanisms that he used to bring the cosmos into material existence are of little consequence as long as they are seen as the tools in his hands. (p. 1171)

Another area where Walton at first sight appears to be helpful concerns Proposition 15. Here the debate centres around the Intelligent Design approach to creation. Walton appears to be an advocate for ID. He accepts that there is purpose behind the creation, and that purpose implies a mind, and mind implies a Creator. He notes that all “creation is, by definition, intelligent, and likewise, all of it is designed” (p. 125). He notes that the problem the scientist faces is one of his own making. He could choose to investigate design but he has chosen not to do so because of the artificial parameters he has imposed on himself. In other words, he has imprisoned himself behind walls which
shield him from seeing something which he may have to take into account in his investigation but which he would prefer not to see, because he knows instinctively that it would alter the outcome he has predetermined to find, or which he would prefer not to see. We are back to the scientist who scuttles off into his underground laboratory and shuts out all non-material matters from having a direct input into his investigation, so that he can produce empirical evidence for whatever conclusion he might reach. Walton correctly observes that “empirical science would not be able to embrace Intelligent Design because science has placed an intelligent designer outside of its parameters as subject to neither empirical verification nor falsification” (p. 127).

ID identified microscopic structures that require a multitude of parts that need to be functional all at once, or simultaneously, for the structure to continue to exist and do its job. This logically meant that the structure could not have evolved one piece at a time, any more than a watch could evolve one piece at a time. These discoveries in nature caught the Neo-Darwinists napping. The knee-jerk reaction to this scientific observation was to produce a scenario—any scenario would do in the meantime—to lessen the impact of this devastating blow to biological evolution. With no science to back up its response it was instantly proposed that components might have come together somehow to produce what now appears to be an irreducible organism. The use of ‘might’ and ‘somehow’ shows how desperate is the situation.

There is no doubt that irreducible complexity is a huge blow to evolution as defined in school textbooks. For the Christian this is just what one would expect if God created all life forms within the space of six literal days. When Jesus healed the man who was born blind all the components needed to achieve that goal were instantly brought together to give the man back his sight. Only instant creation can explain the phenomenon of irreducibly complex organisms. The components cannot be created through random mutation and exist without a function until the very last component is randomly created, and then why would thirty or forty such randomly produced components come together to form a vital part of a cell, such as the tail of a male sperm? No doubt better theoretical scenarios will be attempted by evolutionary biologists to replace the mouse-trap analogy that was quickly wheeled into position to shore up the dyke wall with it gaping hole.

Consider the case of Lazarus. He was dead for four days, and, in the heat of the Middle East, ‘he stank,’ as Martha put it. This mass of putrefying flesh and bone, with a dead brain stem and a stony heart, at the command of the Son of God, instantly became a healthy, human being. How different is this from the command that God made in the beginning to produce Adam and all living matter. “He commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:5; cf. 104:29, 30). Jesus’ words lasted no more than seconds, but the power in those words was no less powerful, and wonder-working than that in the voice of His Father, Yahweh, during the six days of creation. As Jesus noted, “With God all things are possible.” Remember the scientist is no more than a grown-up schoolboy. He is no match when it comes to God or the Lord Jesus Christ, who are vastly superior in knowledge to anything man can store on a battery of computers. They know all things from the beginning, and what they say about their creation is in a different league to what man can attain using empirical methods alone, which is such a handicap. Compared to the Lord Jesus, every scientist remains a perpetual school-boy in his knowledge of the universe. He can never know something that was not already known to God from the foundation of the universe. The school-boy scientist thinks he has gathered enough information to come to a conclusion about the origin of the universe! The gulf between God and Man is on a par with the gulf between man and an ant. The ant is more capable of understanding the origins of the universe, than man is. Man, if he is to understand the universe in which he, as a fallen, unregenerate being, lives, must live on every crumb of knowledge that God has revealed in His Word. The superiority of God to speak on a topic He knows from beginning to end is recognised by the born-again Christian. The unregenerate scientist, and the theistic evolutionist, despise God’s superiority to speak on the origin of the material universe. They think they alone have this right because Genesis One is pre-scientific, and based on Mesopotamian myths.

Great empires have come and gone on the earth. In their heyday they dominated the world. Their emperors strutted the great highways of their conquered territories. They seemed invincible while they were at their peak. Evolution now dominates the world. Its empire stretches from shore to shore around the globe. It is in its heyday. But a day will come when it will vanish away. In that day Christians will look back and be amazed at the roll-call of professors and specialists, who professed to believe in God, but who refused to believe God’s own composition as recorded in Genesis One. They will ask, How could they live out their lives openly despising the Creator’s own words? How did they manage to empty His words of any meaning, so that they could follow the unbeliever’s ‘empirical science,’ which openly stated that it would not look into the possibility of ‘purpose’ behind the created matter of the universe? The roll-call will be comprehensive. Maybe God still has His ‘seven thousand’ among the scientific community who have not bowed their head to worship the idol
of evolution. If so, they are keeping their heads down, because this empire will not tolerate any competition to its dominant position.

Evolution will die the death that all untruths do eventually. It might seem to be vibrant, and dominant, and rampant, and the whole world might seem to be in the iron-like fist of its strongest advocates, which are predominantly atheists, but as surely as Nebuchadnezzar’s 60-cubits high idol came crashing down to the earth, no more to be seen again, so also the stranglehold of this theory will suddenly go limp, and the world will be able to breathe freely once again, and all men coming into the world will see God’s power and His Godhead in the things He has made. But shame awaits all those Christians who bowed down to this idol while it was in its heyday, and when it dominated every higher institution in the world. Their shame is magnified because they despised the Word of God, which they claimed to be the infallible Word of God. Great will be their embarrassment when it turns out that evolution was not “the only theory we have got to explain the universe.” It is the “only theory’ after you have ignored God’s own account.

What ID has done for science is that it has torn down the artificial barriers that they had been hiding behind for centuries, claiming to be empirical in their search for the origins of the material world. Fortress-science is a thing of the past. ID will compel the open-minded scientific community to come to terms with teleological possibilities, that is, that all things have been designed with a purpose in mind, and purpose can be seen in each micro-component that goes to make up an indispensable part of an organism.

The scientist has to come across the drawbridge and meet the maker of the watch and learn from him how and why he created it. The watch-maker has all the answers, because he has seen it through from start to finish. Similarly, the Christian must go to Genesis One to learn from God how and why He created the universe that He has placed Man in. God’s how and why may not satisfy the godless scientist who has limited his horizon to look in only one direction for his how, but Yahweh has revealed sufficient to satisfy the sons and daughters of God that He created all things in a very brief span of time. All men coming into the world are instantly immersed in, and surrounded by, the works of His hands, so that they are without excuse, for the things seen reveal His power and His Godhead, which leaves all men everywhere without excuse on the Judgement Day.

Walton senses that, “Mainstream science contends that dysteleology [purposeless] must be retained in its self-definition. At this point they are not willing to rewrite the current rules of science to allow for either intelligence or design. . . . The stricture remains against making any explicit appeal to purpose in scientific explanations. . . . If scientists simply threw up their hands and admitted that a metaphysical, teleological [purposeful] explanation was necessary, they would be departing from that which is scientific” (p. 129f.). They are trapped in a bunker of their own making. They have handcuffed themselves to the pillar of old-style Darwinism, and have thrown away the key. It would seem that the fortress mentality of the majority of the old-style Darwinists—carried forward into the new-style Darwinists—is not yet ready to let down the drawbridge and engage with the freedom and license that ID scientists are presently enjoying as they peer further and further into the things made by God’s own hands. The old-guard scientists are in danger of fast becoming reducibly irrelevant in the new era of scientific awareness of the complexity of nature, which mirrors the mind of the Creator who produced it. The old-guard can only follow the ID people around in the background hoping to plug all the holes that are springing up wherever they look in the dyke of nature. They are in a no-win situation.

Where once the scientist could retreat into his windowless laboratory and from behind closed doors issue his ‘empirical results,’ now he forced out into the open and must debate in open forum the phenomenon of irreducible complexity. He has no hiding place any more, and he is in for a hiding. Conjuring up scenario after scenario to plug the gaps in their ‘theory of evolution’ cannot last. Some day the penny will drop, and the scientific community will be the better for it. The long, dark night of Darwinian madness will be past, and a new reality dawn on mankind that there is a God in the heavens who will not be robbed of the praise and glory that is due to His name.

A point made by Walton without any bait attached to it this time is the observation that scientists refuse to allow God into their laboratory because He cannot be proved to exist. He notes that the same phenomenon applies to writing history. He notes,

We believe that God is in control of history and shapes events moment by moment. It is all subject to his sovereignty. Despite that theological affirmation, no historian is able to see God’s hand clearly, though depending on one’s presuppositions one may conclude that God is at work. Some of those conclusions would be the result of incredible coincidences, while others would be the result of that which is otherwise unexplainable. We might notice that these are the same issues that drive Intelligent Design in their assessment of science. (p. 135)

When we read the historical books of the Bible, God is presented throughout as the prime mover, yet He is invisible. God chose prophets to convey His words and His written assessment of
each king’s reign, so that we are not left to guess how good or bad they were. The secular historian, like the secular scientist, scoffs at this kind of revelation. They do not believe for a moment that an invisible God (who cannot be proved to exist in a laboratory) spoke to human beings. They are convinced that these writings are the result of well-meaning do-gooders, and cannot be foisted on an invisible, non-existent entity. They are human assessments, written by humans: end of story.

The parallel between writing an account of creation and writing an account of a king’s reign is instructive. In the Bible, both are true because both come from God. Yet no man would be able to imitate these accounts, because they emerge from the mind of God and not from man. Hence the secular historian, who does not have the mind of God or have the Spirit of God in him, will never agree with God’s assessment or with His accounts. He will make his own assessment according to his own severely limited knowledge of all the factors involved. But his account will have enormous plausibility about it because it will be read by men who are similarly severely handicapped to reach the conclusion that God reached.

The natural (i.e., unregenerate) man and God will always come to different judgments, and the natural man dominates the biological institutions of the world, therefore he will never agree with God’s account of anything, not even the most mundane thing. He will oppose God at every level. It is for this reason that science will always result in a God-less assessment of anything connected with the Creator. If the Christian in science is aware that science will never ever, on principle, acknowledge God in what He has created, then he stands a fair chance of always being on his guard against this latent atheism that pervades every scientific article handling what belongs to God. His ownership of it will never ever be acknowledged, but the young Christian in science will daily counter this in his mind and not allow himself to be lured into agreement with his peers or his so-called superiors. It is a well-known fact that any scientific journal article that makes reference to God is automatically refused publication. Self-censorship ensures that God will never be honoured in any godless and God-less scientific journal. The tyranny of Darwinism will dominate all research into the things that belong to God. He will get no glory from that quarter. It is time for evangelicals to go it alone and produce high quality investigations into the things that belong to God in a journal that is clearly God-honouring. He will honour those who honour Him. And that may come in the form of guidance into all truthful assessments of His hand in His own works, and insights into the mind of God, in whose image they are being daily transformed into.

Richard Dawkins in his work, The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution (London, etc: Bantam Press, 2009), has an Appendix, provocatively entitled, “The History-deniers,” pp. 427-437, in which he notes with regret that 44% of Americans reject evolution. There is good reason for this, which is, that evolutionists talk much but deliver little. The reason for scepticism over evolution is the lack of any unambiguous evidence for it. People demand hard evidence. Evolutionists present the same old approach of, “Here’s the theory and this example fits the theory, therefore it happened according to the scenario dictated by the theory.” This is not evidence but a story to keep the theory alive. Intelligent Christians are not taken in by talk alone. They demand hard evidence for evolution before they will move away from their Bibles. Present the hard evidence and then they will begin to question their Bibles. Unfortunately, there is no hard evidence of one species changing into another species going on anywhere in the world today. Talking-up evolution by producing plausible scenarios to fit the theory is seen as weak, conjectural, untestable, off-the-cuff, signs of desperation, and just generally unconvincing when there is a better alternative, namely, God created all things by the power of His might, and that design and intelligence infuses the whole of creation. It cannot have come about through sheer chance. Every scientist knows that evolution is still a theory. They also know that for the unbeliever and the atheist, it is the only one on offer to explain the presence of life on Earth. The alternative—creation by God—is unacceptable to them, and therefore science will be invoked to keep it out of their thinking. For every truth there is an anti-truth; and the anti-truth to creation is evolution.

Despite the fact that every scientist knows that evolution is still a theory, they never correct any blurs which claim that their book presents evolution as a fact. Jerry A. Coyne, Why Evolution is True (Oxford: OUP, 2009) has allowed a blurb to appear in the flyleaf of his work stating: “His primary object in writing this book is to present the incontrovertible evidence that evolution is a physical fact of the history of life on Earth.” Yet this book presents no “incontrovertible evidence that evolution is a physical fact of the history of life on Earth.” What meagre evidence there is, is controvertible.

Coyne’s book is limited to ‘nature red in tooth and claw’. Presumably, the strategy is to show that this could not be the work of a loving God. But the Christian knows that this is not the world that God designed for Adam and Eve to live in. God placed them in a world free from ‘nature red in tooth and claw’. The world of ‘nature red in tooth and claw’ was created for the disobedient, and the
enemies of God. It is a world fit-for-purpose for those who usurp the headship of God. In the afterlife, hell is the counterpart of this world—‘a nature red in tooth and claw’, but on a grander scale; and heaven is the counterpart of the Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, the scientist is left only with the creation of ‘nature red in tooth and claw’, which lay outside the Garden of Eden. He does not have access to the creation of ‘nature lacking tooth and claw,’ lacking death, lacking thorns and thistles, and lacking human mortality. Because this is the only creation he has access to, plus more of the same in the fossil record, the wiseacre thinks he has all the data at his disposal to make a judgment about the whole of creation, including its origin. The wise man knows better who knows the Scriptures and the power of God.

Unfortunately, once the wiseacre has scientific data which, he thinks, dispenses with the need for a Creator, he becomes a victim of this data. The data becomes a mantrap to him, and imprisons him in its incompleteness, which he had taken for completeness. The true wise man will never assume that he has all the data available to him. Only God has all knowledge. By trusting God when the data is incomplete, the Christian will avoid the traps that await those who lack this initial trust in God.

END OF CRITIQUE