THE WORD AS SWORD: SCIENTIFIC APOLOGETICS AS PRE-EVANGELISM

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The writer to the Hebrews assures us that the Word of God is 'sharper than any double-edged sword' (4:12), giving us our conference theme in a word-picture whose familiarity must not diminish its vivid and stark nature. Yet in an age which is sceptical of any absolute truth, let alone biblical truth, a loss of confidence in the effectiveness of that Word can have a deadening effect on evangelism. The sword has too often become something of a museum piece, endlessly studied, polished, admired and analysed behind the closed doors of the like-minded. The sword can too easily remain in its scabbard.

The prevailing scepticism in the public square about both the veracity and the authority of the scriptures has resulted in a renewed emphasis on the place of apologetics in evangelism. And of the various branches of apologetics, once has come into prominence over the past decade due to the rise of the so-called 'New Atheists'—that of scientific apologetics and its relation to the doctrine of Creation. That doctrine has always been something of a lynch-pin in Gospel proclamation, particularly when trying to reach those who have not inherited a respect for the scriptures. Before one can discuss the God who in Christ is the solution to the human plight, it must be established that there is in fact a God in the first place. Thus Paul, in his encounter with the Greek thinkers of Athens in Acts 17, famously does not start—as he did with his Jewish audiences—by reasoning from the Scriptures that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. Rather he begins further back, talking about 'the God who made the world and everything in it' (v 24). Thereafter, from the Creeds through to Calvin and beyond, it has been standard practice to appeal to the natural world as pointing to a wise Creator, this evidence forming vital preparatory work for Gospel proclamation. General revelation thus sets the scene for the special revelation of the scriptures.

Yet nowadays, if we try to appeal to the witness of Creation, we very soon encounter a major difficulty that did not trouble either the Church Fathers or the Reformers: the widespread perception of an inherent conflict between science and religion and the belief that cosmology and biol-

ogy have between them explained God away. The challenge that science poses to religious faith in the western world is of course not a new one, although it is by no means as old as is usually claimed. Whatever Darwin's own views on religion may have been, in the late 19th century his theory was used by others to wage a largely successful assault on the credibility of Christianity in intellectual life. Thus by the middle years of last century we have a situation described as follows by Roderick Finlayson: 'There are men who rule God out of his universe, and who claim that God did not act as Creator. Things have happened by chance, or by an inherent force in Nature; things have evolved without the controlling hand of God.'

In the present century this view has become consolidated as the default position of western society, the creation myth of our media-driven secular culture. And its impact on wider society has been devastating, with a newspaper columnist who knows next to nothing about science being able to write that morality is what you make it, since human beings are merely dancing to the music of their DNA.

SCIENCE, SCIENTISM AND SCRIPTURE

Many individual scientists today may be Christians—or other varieties of theist—but these are not the ones we usually hear about. Scientists who are Christians are usually under considerable pressure to keep their religious views to themselves. Meanwhile atheistic scientists face no such constraints about their beliefs. Indeed, they are regularly paraded in the media as members of a new infallible priesthood, sometimes appearing complete with vestments and temple: the white coat and the laboratory! But to call into question even their most tenuous speculations about, for instance, ultimate origins or human bioethics, is to be contemptuously dismissed as 'attacking science' or 'trying to smuggle religion into science'. This effectively hobbles us from any meaningful public engagement, since the debate is rigged from the start. So how can we break out of this impasse?

It is crucial to realise that this is not necessarily a specialist endeavour. The root of the conflict is not so much in the details of the various scientific findings, but rather the way in which the scientific enterprise has been hi-jacked to bolster a total materialist worldview, that is to say one where God and the spiritual realm are by definition ruled out of court from the start, no matter how contorted the resulting theorising may turn out to be. One example of this is the classic statement by Richard Dawkins: 'The universe is nothing but a collection of atoms in motion, human beings are simply machines for propagating DNA, and the propagation of

DNA is a self-sustaining process. It is every living object's sole reason for living.' [1]

The words 'nothing but', 'simply' and 'sole' give the game away. Of course the universe is a collection of atoms in motion, and human beings do propagate DNA. These are statements of science. But as soon as the words 'nothing but' are added, the statement moves beyond science and becomes an expression of *scientism*—the materialist or naturalist belief that only science can lead to truth. The author simply asserts what he purports to prove, that matter and energy are all that there is.

What light does this distinction between science and scientism shed on our understanding of those scriptures traditionally cited as demonstrating the divine origin of Creation? The traditional translation of first verse in the Bible is 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth'. Is that a true statement, uncontradicted and even confirmed by science? Or is it merely a faith-statement—theology rather than science? And when we read in Psalm 19:1 that 'The heavens declare the glory of God', is that merely poetry seen through the eyes of the believer, or is it a claim about reality to which appeal can be made to the unbeliever?

Certainly the apostle Paul was in no doubt as to the value of the natural world as evidence for belief in God. In the first chapter of Romans, in a passage whose significance was been widely acknowledged, he builds his case for the accountability of the whole human race to the Creator, whether or not they have the Scriptures or whether or not they have even heard of the God revealed there. He surely had Psalm 19 in mind when he penned verse 19 of Romans 1: 'What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse'. This accountability stems from the fact that the 'proclamation' of God's glory by means of the heavens transcends the limitations of individual human languages: 'there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world' (Ps 19:3).

Paul knows perfectly well that such arguments are not universally persuasive. Yet he argues that the problem lies not in the evidence, but the wilful rejection of that evidence by some individuals. Thus in Romans 1:18 he talks about the suppression of a truth that is perfectly plain. This is a theme to which we will return to more than once below, whether we're dealing with the history of science, or with some evidence from science—especially that from cosmology and biology.

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[1] Richard Dawkins, *BBC Christmas Lectures Study Guide* (London: BBC, 1991).

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Most of us are familiar with the view that there has been a fundamental conflict between science and religion during the last few hundred years of western science. This view is very widely accepted, although not by academic historians of science as we shall presently see. Proponents of the 'conflict' model are fond of citing examples such as Newton's discovery of gravity dispensing with the idea of God driving the planets, Galileo's trial and imprisonment illustrating the fundamental conflict of religion and science, and of course Darwin's account of natural selection as a substitute for special creation. Darwin is a special case to which we shall return in the final section, but the point to emphasise here is that the 'conflict' model does not arise from the generality of the historical record, but rather from a vigorous and highly successful campaign waged in the late Victorian period and boosted in the mid-twentieth century by Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy*.[2]

There were two influential Victorian books in this field: J.W. Draper's *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, published in 1874, and A.D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* from twenty years later.[3] Both books were part of a movement designed to discredit the Church (especially the established Church of England), and to replace it with what Thomas Huxley called 'the church scientific'. Scientists were, in the words of Francis Galton, to be termed its 'scientific priesthood'. Its cathedral was the Museum of Natural History in South Kensington.

The books by Draper and White continue to this day to have an enormous impact, either directly or indirectly through the influence of Bertrand Russell, who adopted their arguments with gusto in his *A History of Western Philosophy*. They view the entire history of western science through the prism of a conflict. Where there was no evidence to support the thesis, White didn't scruple to make it up.

A case in point is the religious opposition that James Simpson allegedly faced in using anaesthesia to relieve the pain of childbirth, which he did from 1847. White thunders as follows: 'From pulpit after pulpit Simp-

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2 Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1946).

3 See P.J. Sampson, *6 Modern Myths about Christianity and Western Civilization* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), especially chapters 1, 2, and 5; J.W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York and London: D. Appleton & Co, 1874; 24th edn London: Kegan, Paul, Trench and Traubner, 1904); A.D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1896).

son's use of chloroform was denounced as impious and contrary to Holy Writ; texts were cited abundantly, the ordinary declaration being that to use chloroform was to avoid one part of the primeval curse on women."[4] Yet detailed investigation of both the medical and religious literature of the day has shown that religious opposition to Simpson's use of anaesthesia in childbirth was virtually non-existent. Such opposition as did exist was, more prosaically, on medical or physiological grounds.

A second example involves the use of entirely spurious quotations, and will be of interest to scholars of John Calvin. Regarding the impact of the heliocentric theory of Copernicus, Bertrand Russell attributes this direct quotation to Calvin: 'Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?'[5] Significantly, Russell doesn't give a reference. But Thomas Kuhn, in his 1957 book *The Copernican Revolution*, attributes the Calvin quotation to White, who adds for good measure that the quotation can be traced to Calvin's commentary on Genesis. [6]

But Calvin makes no mention of Copernicus in that commentary, or indeed anywhere else. Recent debate tends to the view that the quotation was simply invented in the late 19th century to bolster the threadbare case for the conflict model.[7] Like restorers of paintings by old masters, modern historians of science have done a great service by stripping away the dark veneer of the conflict model invented by the two Victorians and cheered on by Bertrand Russell. The glowing colours of the true picture of the relation of religion and science over the last 500 years have been laid bare for all to see. After all, Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Pascal, Boyle, Newton, Faraday, Babbage, Mendel, Pasteur, Kelvin and Maxwell were all theists, and most were in fact practising Christians. And it wasn't that these luminaries just 'happened' to live at a time when a religious outlook was culturally respectable and indeed the majority view in society. It is clear from their writings that it was their own faith in a Creator that drove them to make discoveries about the works of the One they believed in.

This is sometimes called the Whitehead thesis, and sometimes the Merton thesis, but as is often the case it took C.S. Lewis to sum it up in a nutshell: 'Men became scientific because they expected law in nature, and they expected law in nature because they believed in a Lawgiver.'[8] This is

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4 White, *A History of the Warfare of Science*, vol. 2, p. 63; cited in Sampson, *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

5 Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 550.

6 T. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 192; cf. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science*, vol. 1, p. 127.

7 P.J. Sampson, *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

8 C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (London: Collins, 1947), p. 110.

why it is so outrageous when secular revisionists say that religious faith is a 'science-stopper'. History shows that it's quite the opposite: a science-*motivator*. No wonder that James Clerk Maxwell, the first Director of the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge—workplace over the years of no less than twenty-nine Nobel prize-winners in Physics—had a Latin inscription of Psalm 111:2 carved over its doors as a motto: 'Great are the works of the Lord, sought out by all who take pleasure therein.'

And what of the so-called conflicts? When Newton discovered the laws of gravity, he didn't then conclude that he could dispense with God as sustainer of the planetary orbits. Rather, he found that his sense of awe and wonder at the wisdom of the Creator only increased with this new understanding. In the case of Galileo, his famous disputation with the Roman Catholic Church had many contributory causes. The main one was because the Church was at that time wedded to the view of Aristotle that the earth not the sun was at the centre of the universe, and tried to shore up the theory with selective quotations from Scripture in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary. Galileo also stoked up the controversy by authoring a popular work exposing the pope to public ridicule—not perhaps the wisest game plan for a quiet life. Yet after his trial he did not languish in a dungeon, but was subjected to benign house arrest. Galileo believed in God and the Scriptures before his trial, and he believed in God and the Scriptures after his trial. So to have him featuring as he so often does today as a poster boy for atheism and materialism really is quite absurd.

It is clear, then that the testimony of history not only does not support the conflict model of the relations between science and religion in the western world, but rather offers strong historical support for a general picture of *harmony* between the two. This is a truth which was deliberately suppressed in the late 19th century, and which remains suppressed in popular understanding today.

FINDINGS OF SCIENCE: FROM THE STARS TO THE CELL

Turning now to some of the findings of science, we find here too that the conflict model is also quite misleading. Let us first consider the fact that the universe had a finite beginning. Paul Copan and William Lane Craig have written a fascinating account of this doctrine, in which they integrate the biblical, philosophical and scientific case for *Ex Nihilo* creation.[9] The first verse in the Bible is clear enough in most translations, but

[9] Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing* (Grand Rapids: Baker and Apollos, 2004).

as many of us will know, if only from the footnotes found in certain versions, the very first word in the Hebrew has occasioned some debate as to whether or not it really does signify an absolute beginning at which time creation out of nothing occurred.[10] We note merely that after an earlier fascination with alternative readings such as that in the footnote of the NRSV ('When God began to create…)', the more familiar translation has been rehabilitated by much recent scholarly opinion.

But what of the science? As noted above in the case of the history of science, here again we encounter a most interesting tale—an extreme reluctance on the part of some to accept unwelcome scientific data. The currently accepted view in cosmology is that the universe had a definite beginning: the so-called Big Bang. But until a few decades ago, this wasn't accepted; the view among cosmologists was that the universe had always existed—the 'Steady State' theory. Intriguingly, when the Big Bang theory was first proposed it was stoutly resisted, not on grounds of the evidence—which is what most people think science is all about—but because it sounded too like the first verse in the Bible. Thus Sir Arthur Eddington declares in his Presidential Address to the Mathematical Association, published in the journal *Nature* in 1931: 'Philosophically, the notion of a beginning … is repugnant to me. ... I should like to find a genuine loophole.'[11] As recently as 1989, the then editor of the same journal, Sir John Maddox, writes: 'the idea of a beginning is thoroughly unacceptable, because it implies an ultimate origin of our world, and gives creationists ample justification for their beliefs.'[12]

But a beginning was and is the way the evidence points. Although the timescale involved has been modified quite considerably over the years with the discovery of new information, the fact that there was a beginning seems is generally accepted. So no matter how philosophically uncongenial some people may have found it, the Big Bang was eventually accepted because that was the way the evidence led.

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10 For a defence of this translation of verse 1 against the view that it is a temporal clause subordinate to the main clause in verse 2, see Gordon J. Wenham *Genesis 1-15* (WBC, 1; Waco, TX: Word, 1987), pp. 11-13.

11 A. Eddington, 'The End of the World from the Standpoint of Mathematical Physics', *Nature* 127 (1931), 447-53, quotation on p. 450. This and the following quotation are cited in John Lennox *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion, 2007).

12 J. Maddox, 'Down with the Big Bang', *Nature* 340 (10 August 1989), 425. We can note in passing that the term 'creationists' is apparently used here to refer to any who believe that the visible universe had a transcendent cause, not just so-called 'young earth creationists'.

Before we leave the stars, we come to the highly significant but often controversial concept of *design* as an argument for the existence of God. It is interesting to note, given the elevation of David Hume to be a kind of patron saint of atheism in modern Scotland, that neither he (nor, later, Bertrand Russell) rejected the argument from design, although Hume did rightly reject the over-extended application of that particular argument directly to the specific Trinitarian God of the Bible, as some before him had done). In his 1751 book *The Natural History of Religion*, Hume writes as follows: 'The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author, and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion.'[13]

Further evidence from cosmology highly suggestive of design has come to light in recent decades in the form of the uncanny fine tuning of the fundamental constants of physics. By this is meant that the values for gravity and for several other constants are all 'just so', amazingly finely-tuned in their various values. Physicist Paul Davies has helpfully called this the 'Goldilocks Enigma': as with Baby Bear's porridge in the traditional tale, the fundamental forces in the observable universe are 'just right' for solid existence and carbon-based life. The late Sir Fred Hoyle was startled by this unexpected evidence into claiming that 'It looks as if a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics as well as with chemistry and biology.'[14]

Those who argue against this obvious pointer to design (and hence a Designer) in these findings propose that there are multiple universes, with our observable universe just happening to look finely tuned. That of course, would not in itself logically remove the need for a Creator for any other universes that might exist. But might the 'multiverse hypothesis' not simply be another case of queasiness in the face of evidence that is philosophically uncongenial? Professor John Polkinghorne[15] is clear that the simpler explanation of *one* finely-tuned universe is more in accord with scientific principles and hence to be preferred. After all, surely science is about explaining what we *can* observe, rather than postulating what in principle we cannot observe.

This evidence for a cosmic beginning and for fine-tuning really is pretty overwhelming. Arno Penzias, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics

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13 Cited in Thomas S. Torrance, 'Paley, Hume, Naturalism and Intelligent Design', unpublished conference paper, October 2006.

14 F. Hoyle 'The Universe: Past and Present Reflections', *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics* 20 (1982), 1-35, quotation on p. 16.

15 J. Polkinghorne *One World* (London: SPCK, 1986), p. 80.

for the discovery of cosmic background radiation, the so-called echo of the Big Bang, is quite clear about the design dimension, in this memorable quotation: 'The best data we have (concerning the Big Bang) are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms and the Bible as a whole.'[16]

But when we turn our attention from telescopes to microscopes, from the stars to the cell, matters are very different indeed. I remember sitting in a first year undergraduate biology class 40 years ago, when the lecturer paused and said 'Avoid teleology, because it makes bad science.' Like many 18 year olds, the term was unfamiliar to me but I did go and look it up in a dictionary afterwards and I remember being very puzzled. For the lecturer was known to be an evangelical Christian, in the leadership of a well-known local church. And his warning to the class about teleology struck me as very odd: why would a Christian want to deny purpose and design?

Of course I soon learnt why—that Darwin's theory has rendered design thinking impermissible and indeed redundant. Or has it? The *prima facie* impression of design is clear to all, atheist or theist. Hence Richard Dawkins defines biology as 'the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose'; so he stakes all on the deceptiveness of appearances. Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the DNA double helix, says this: 'Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.' So we have as it were to keep pinching ourselves when peering down the microscope: 'Not designed!'

What is to be made of this? Well of course in principle the presence of a *mechanism* does not in itself disprove agency, including divine agency. Knowing about the process of internal combustion does not render invalid the idea that a car engine has a designing engineer. It is certainly true that many respected writers on science and theology are persuaded that the process of random mutation and natural selection is simply the mechanism God adopted in creating the living world, invoking design in cosmology, but not in biology.[17] Tim Keller for example in *The Reason for God* makes a distinction between evolution on the one hand as a 'scientific biological hypothesis' and on the other hand as a 'worldview of the way things are,' accepting the first but rejecting the second. The difficulty here is that none of the key players in the discipline of evolutionary biol-

[16] In Malcolm Browne 'Clues to the Universe's Origin Expected', *New York Times*, 12 March 1978, p. 1, cited in Lennox *God's Undertaker*, p. 74.

[17] I am thinking of the work of Alister McGrath, John Polkinghorne, Denis Alexander, Francis Collins, and Tim Keller.

ogy would accept the distinction that he and other theistic evolutionists like to make.

Darwin's theory is too often portrayed in this way as theologically neutral. Thus initiatives like the campaign a few years ago to 'Rescue Darwin' (supposedly from both atheistic fundamentalists and religious ones) by the Think Tank *Theos*, or the bizarre push by another religious Think Tank *Ekklesia* to promote 'Darwin Day' in churches each February.

It is indeed true that small-scale micro-evolution, such as changes in finch beak characteristics through successive generations, is observable and may be regarded as theologically neutral. But the same cannot be said about the inherently non-observable macro-evolution, those inferred large-scale differences that distinguish one species from another. Indeed the mathematician and philosopher of science John Lennox has noted that biological macro-evolution is in a very unusual situation in science, since it stands in such a close relationship to naturalistic philosophy that it can be deduced directly from it—that is, without even needing to consider any evidence. So to its advocates it simply must be true, because what else could possibly account for biological diversity?

The standard neo-Darwinian account with which many of us will be familiar is now being questioned on philosophical grounds. Four years ago, philosopher of science Thomas Nagel—significantly, not a theist—published *Mind and Cosmos*, in which he boldly defends the 'untutored reaction of incredulity to the reductionist neo-Darwinian account.'[18] He writes: 'It is prima facie highly implausible that life as we know it is the result of a sequence of physical accidents…' Rightly anticipating a strong reaction to his book, he adds this: 'I realize that such doubts will strike many people as outrageous, but that is because everyone in our secular culture has been browbeaten into regarding the reductive research program as sacrosanct, on the ground that anything else would not be science.'[19] So the really interesting question is not the usual one of 'Couldn't God have used this process in creating?' (for God can do anything) but rather a scientific question: 'Does random mutation and natural selection actually possess the fabulous creative power that is usually attributed to it?'

We find mysteries that material explanations alone are struggling to explain. For example the DNA in our cells—that which makes us unique individuals—has been described by Bill Gates as 'like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any we've ever created'. But where

[18] T. Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 6.

[19] Ibid., p. 7.

did the software that drives the cell come from? Those who have bought computer games for our children or grandchildren have no doubt often wondered why we pay up to £50 for a small piece of plastic. The answer of course is that we are paying not just for the physical medium, but for all the hundreds hours of work put in by software engineers. So with DNA it is legitimate to ask if the software can really have arisen spontaneously from purposeless, random processes. Does the evidence not instead point to a Mind behind matter? If it takes a human to write an essay or a book, what are we to say about the authorship of the longest word in the universe, the 3.1-billion-letter word of the human genome?

The philosopher Antony Flew, who died a few years ago, was certainly persuaded by this evidence—persuaded to stop being an atheist. When he considered the language-like code that is DNA, he felt he had no alternative. Here is how he put it: 'All my life, I've taught my students to follow the example of Socrates, and follow the evidence where it leads.'[20] Some commentators suggested that Flew was becoming senile in the face of approaching death (he was over 80 at the time), not the kindest of conclusions. But perhaps he was simply doing what he said he was doing.

These arguments of Intelligent Design are frequently criticised as being 'God-of-the-gaps' reasoning: when we are confronted with something for which we have no material mechanism, we say that God has done it, only to retreat ignominiously once our knowledge increases. But the 'God-of-the-gaps' criticism does not apply here, since we are discussing an increase in knowledge rather than a lack.[21] And the *more* we find out about the wonders of the cosmos and the living cell, the *more* these things do indeed display the marks of design.

To permit such reasoning in cosmology but to exclude it from biology seems to be both inconsistent and unjustified. As in the case of the finite beginning of the universe and the associated controversy, it may be that here, too, philosophical queasiness about the implications of biological design will just have to be overcome because of the way that the evidence increasingly points.

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[20] Interview with ABC News, *Famous Atheist Now Believes in God*, www.abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=315976. See also Antony Flew & Gary R Habermas, 'My pilgrimage from atheism to theism: A discussion between Antony Flew and Gary R Habermas', *Philosophia Christi* 6 (2004), 197-212.

[21] In many discussions on this matter, I have noticed that most of those sceptical about Intelligent Design have only read online critiques and 'refutations', rather than having read the arguments at first hand from the leading ID proponents.

SOME CAVEATS AND SOME CONCLUSIONS

The first caveat is a reminder, as if we needed it, that this is not the Gospel but rather an exposition of the limited approach of general revelation which can only be a springboard for the special revelation of the Scriptures. Of course as well as the Old Testament texts considered above, we will want to take people to the first verse in the Gospel of John, and beyond into the New Testament. We will want to introduce them to the One who Himself it the Word, the One through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that has been made. We will want to exalt the One who is the image of the invisible God; to assure people that all things were created by him and for him; to urge our fellow men and women to bow before the Person through whom God made the universe, the Son who is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

The second caveat is that we do not need to be experts in science to engage people on this issue. That may surprise you, but consider the fact that people often have an inbuilt sense of design in the natural world. As we have seen, denial of that design is largely a worldview issue, and when we grasp this it will be much easier for us to stop being defensive and instead offer some kind of meaningful challenge to God-denying theories, whatever our grasp of the scientific detail may be.

And in conclusion: why does all this matter? It matters because when we lose sight of God as Creator, and humanity made in his image, then society is all at sea, not only in regard to ethics but with the very distinction between animal and human breaking down. Genesis may be a polemic against pagan accounts of creation in the Ancient Near East, but it is more than that: a statement about where we come from and to whom we are all accountable. Some 3,000 years after David first penned Psalm 19, and hundreds of years of scientific discoveries about the heavens, what do we find? Far from us having *less* reason than the Psalmist to believe in God as Creator, we in fact have much, much *more*—from the stars to the cell. Far from it being proved that 'matter is all there' is . . . there are in fact many pointers that Mind came before matter. Far from it being shown that impersonal forces alone caused both the origin and the development of life in all its fabulous diversity, it looks increasingly as if such claims are at the very least overblown, and that attempts to deny the clear evidence for design in nature are just what Paul always said they were: a conscious and deliberate suppressing of this God-given truth.