

A brief response to anti-creationist books

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What about the anti-creationist books? I can't possibly deal with all of them, but I will highlight some of the typical tactics and distortions used in such books by addressing some of those in the Selkirk and Burrows book, *Confronting Creationism: Defending Darwin*.¹ Such books normally present a distorted account of the creationist position, which is then made to look silly. They erect a 'straw man', set him alight, and then gloat over how stupid creationists can be to believe such things. Of course, creationists are not above criticism; we are human, fallible creatures. And sometimes the more 'flakey' fellow travellers of the creation movement give the sceptics cause to blaspheme. I have no wish to defend the indefensible. This response deals with deliberate distortions of mainstream creationist thinking by much anti-creationist literature.

The Flood

No creationist scientist that I know of claims that all the Earth's sedimentary rocks were laid down in the Flood, as claimed in anti-creationist literature. The book also claims that creationists

'are, of course, looking for evidence of a "creation week" and they clearly suggest that this is to be found in the rocks of the Cambrian period.'

I expect that all creationists would regard all the Cambrian strata as Flood deposits. Furthermore, both these supposed beliefs of creationists could not be held together — since there are a lot of 'pre-Cambrian' sedimentary strata, if all sedimentary rocks were laid down in the Flood, then the 'creation week' could not at the same time be in the Cambrian! The authors seem to be ignorant of both secular and creationist geology.

The amount of water calculated to cover the Earth's mountains (p. 132) assumes the mountains were at the height they are now, and the sea basins were also unchanged. All creationist Earth models that I know of propose that major mountain-building occurred during and at the end of the Flood. Psalm 104:8, speaking of the waters

of the Flood moving off the Earth, says 'The mountains rose and the valleys sank down to the place which you established for them. You set a boundary that they [that is, the waters] may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth' (NASB).²

The book claimed that the Ark had to contain amebas to guavas (page 134). It is stated a number of times in Genesis that Noah only had to accommodate land-dwelling animals that breathed through their nostrils, i.e. land vertebrates (for example, in Genesis 7:21-23). Amebae are water-living and hardly needed to be on the Ark. Plants and insects, etc. could survive on floating vegetation mats and pumice, and *via* seeds, pupae, etc. Other critics find as many 'species' as they can and then claim that it would be impossible to fit them all in the Ark. In this exercise they irrelevantly count all the insect species, for example, and also make no allowance for speciation since the time of the Flood. The original kinds would have been species, but most would now be the ancestors of several species within a genus or even within a family. For example, the dog/wolf 'species' that now exist are clearly derived from an original dog kind. See John Woodmorappe, *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, for answers to all sceptical attacks on the Noah's Ark account in Genesis.^{3,4}

The creationist position on the general order of fossils in geological strata is caricatured. Hydraulic sorting and mobility are only two of several possible mechanisms. Creationists consider ecological zonation to be a major factor in the positioning of the fossils. Remember that many creatures buried in the bottom of the column tend to be aquatic bottom-dwelling, relatively immobile creatures. More mobile land-dwelling creatures are buried at the top of the stratigraphic column. There are examples of apparent out-of-place fossils, but these are dismissed by the

evolutionary establishment and given labels such as 're-worked' or 'stratigraphic leaks' to supposedly explain why they are out of place, or the accepted evolutionary order is adjusted appropriately. For example, pollen and wood fragments of more than 60 species of woody plants have been found in Precambrian rocks in the Grand Canyon.⁵ These

findings are seen as being impossible by evolutionists and therefore dismissed out-of-hand.

The book also grossly overstates the consistency of evidence for the evolutionary view of Earth history. For example, a trilobite found in Lower Devonian strata in Australia is like that found in the Appalachian Mountains in the USA, but unlike those found in Africa and South America, which are 'simply not found' in Australia.⁶ When peddling the evolutionary story such problems are



overlooked. Things which fit are talked about; things that don't fit are omitted, especially in undergraduate courses in biology and geology, and in anti-creationist publications.

The fossils

The authors' claim that the gaps in the fossil record are due to imperfection of preservation or incompleteness of collection simply does not hold up to scrutiny. See, for example, Gould and Eldredge and their arguments for the punctuated equilibrium concept, where they admit that the fossil record is not seriously incomplete, and that the gaps are systematic and real.⁷ Take, for example, the mammals, which are supposed to be a monophyletic group (descended from a common ancestor). The neo-Darwinian model requires that every one of the groups has descended from a single, unidentified, small land mammal. Huge numbers of intermediate species in the direct line of transition would have had to exist, but the fossil record fails to reveal any of them. Of all the thousands upon thousands of intermediates that should exist, a mere handful of questionable examples — such as the 'mammal-like reptiles' for the mammals, and *Archaeopteryx* for the birds — are held forth as 'proof'.

The fossil record, rather than showing change from one kind to another, shows stasis — things remaining the same. You only have to look at the so-called Cambrian sea and you'll find jellyfish, starfish, snails, sea urchins, brachiopods, clams and sponges — things you'll find in the seas today, essentially unchanged after supposedly 500 million years or more. And yet the genetic system is supposed to be so plastic that, in this time, all the amphibians, reptiles, dinosaurs, birds and mammals, plus all land plants and angiosperms in the sea, fish and arthropods evolved, yet other things remained the same. How is it so? There are thousands of examples of 'living fossils'. Dr Joachim Scheven in Germany has a museum of hundreds of living fossils. Dr Scheven's living fossils feature in his documentary video, *Living Fossils: Confirmation of Creation*, available from *Answers in Genesis*.

Page 139 says that the creation science model predicts that every kind of organism '*should have a fossil record as old as the oldest known organism*'. I know of no creationist who says such a thing. One would expect that a global cataclysmic flood would bury bottom-dwelling sea creatures well before birds, for example. This is exactly what is found. The fossil patterns could result from a combination of ecological zonation, sorting action of water, effects of mobility, tectonic movements, and erosion at the end of the Flood.

Second Law of Thermodynamics and origin of life

In their arguments for the evolutionary model, Selkirk

and Burrows are very misleading in many places. For example, they present an incorrect account of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and its relevance to the origin of life and the origins of new structures (this is almost universal in anti-creationist literature). Comparisons with snowflakes forming are, at the least, irrelevant and, at most, deceitful. Snowflakes are actually low energy, low-informational repetitive structures. The small amount of information required for the formation of snowflakes is present in the water molecules — their directional forces determine the hexagonal symmetry of snowflakes. All that is required is the removal of heat, not the addition of energy. The growth of a child from an embryo, or a plant from a seed, does not contradict the Second Law of Thermodynamics because all the information required for this process is present in the genomic 'blueprint'. This, with the cellular machinery to harness energy, causes the formation of the complex organism, just as an automobile is made in a factory by machines which direct energy (with information) to construct a car. The **machinery** in the living cells drives the living organism to grow, directing energy to do it. Energy will not produce specified complexity unless it is harnessed by a machine to do so. Energy + matter alone will not produce a machine, or a cell. It needs information (a blueprint) and machinery to direct energy to arrange matter according to the information. And such information comes from intelligence, not energy and matter.⁸⁹

There is nothing about the information in DNA or in proteins which is self-constructing. The information does not lie in the amino acids or in the nucleic acid bases, but in the **order** in which these are strung together. This order is not inherent in the chemicals themselves. Take, for example, the supposed evolution of the hemoglobin molecule. Selkirk and Burrows argue that there are over 200 variations on the hemoglobin molecule which are all functional. Let's just, for the sake of the argument, be generous to the evolutionists and assume that 85 % of the protein can vary in any way at all (a gross overstatement). What is the probability of the other 30 amino acids aligning themselves in the correct sequence? The probability is $(1/20)^{30}$ — since there are 20 different amino acids. This is a probability of 1 in 10^{39} , which is impossible for all practical purposes. And this is only one of at least 100,000 different essential proteins in a human being, most of which are a lot bigger than hemoglobin. It has been estimated that the information in human DNA would take 1,000 books each 500 pages long just to record it (not explain it!).

On page 107, Michael Archer says that creationists use an analogy about the probability of a cell forming from the raw materials being like a tornado in a junkyard spontaneously producing a jumbo jet, and he criticises this analogy. However, creationists did not invent the analogy — it was Sir Fred Hoyle, then Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge University.¹⁰ Hoyle is a mathematician, understands this topic, and is candid about

the insurmountable problems for all naturalistic theories for the origin of life. For a very thorough treatment of chemical and thermodynamic objections to evolutionary origin-of-life theories, see *The Mystery of Life's Origin*, by Thaxton *et al.*¹¹ An excellent and up-to-date summary is provided by Aw.¹² Sarfati refutes a few currently fashionable theories.¹³

Michael Archer is either very ignorant of the biochemical nature of life (he has no qualifications in this field) or he is being deliberately misleading in what he says in the chapter 'Squaring off against evolution'. For example, his talk about '*microspheres growing, budding and dividing in a singularly bacterium-like manner*' has about as much relevance to the origin of life as the formation of soap bubbles in a bathtub. His statement, '*While experiments of Fox and others have not so far produced life precisely as we know it*', seems to imply that they've come close, which is absolutely wrong. Of course, the old argument of 'given enough time anything can happen' is implied in what Archer says, which is ridiculous, because the thermodynamics of polymerisation of proteins and nucleic acids are such that they fall apart faster than they come together under realistically natural conditions (they need the protective environment of the cell). It's only under very artificial laboratory conditions that it's possible to form even small polymers of nucleotides or amino acids.

Archer also glosses over the problem of the steps of evolution. There can be no natural selection until you have fully functional, reproducing cells. The simplest conceivable cell which can reproduce itself must have some 400 or more different enzymes or proteins. *Mycoplasma genitalium* codes for 482 proteins.¹⁴ This is by far the simplest genome known for a self-reproducing cell, and it is from an obligate parasite (hardly a model for the first cell when there is nothing to parasitise!). From the bacteria that have now been decoded, it appears that free-living bacteria need to code for some 2,000 or more proteins. Fred Hoyle has estimated the probability of the proteins for a hypothetical minimum cell coming into being by natural processes¹⁵ as something like 1 in $10^{40,000}$. It's impossible to conceive of such a low probability. Just consider that the number of atoms in the universe is something like 10^{80} , or the number of seconds in the commonly supposed evolutionary history of the universe of 15 billion years is 10^{18} . Each new capacity which evolution is supposed to have produced would require numerous new genes, new enzymes and proteins to be added at each stage. Just consider that a human being has 100,000+ enzymes and proteins, compared to the 2,000 or so in a bacterium. All this new information has to be added by accidents (mutations). Just take, for example, the formation of one very small protein of 48 amino acids. This requires 150 bases to be lined up in the DNA (including a start and a stop codon). The probability of this happening: 1 in 10^{90} . This is just one very small

protein. We're talking about 98,000 or more extra proteins on top of the bacterium.

Evolutionary apologists such as Richard Dawkins argue that mutations and natural selection produced all the extra information. Mutations are accidental copying mistakes in the information contained on the DNA of living things. However, accidents could never generate the new information required. See some refutations of Dawkins works,^{16,17} and Dr Lee Spetner's book *Not by Chance* for a thorough debunking of Dawkins' claim that mutations can produce new enzymes.¹⁸ With what is now known about the cell's biochemistry, it is clear that there is no mechanism by which microbe-to-man evolution could conceivably occur. Walter ReMine's book *The Biotic Message* is also excellent for showing that mutations and natural selection cannot generate new complex specified information.¹⁹

Cheating with chance

Archer tackles the analogy of monkeys on typewriters typing a Shakespearian sonnet. To follow the analogy properly, the monkeys would have to type something which was meaningful and approaching the sonnet before it would be possible to 'select' what they've done. There is no selective advantage in having one, two or three amino acids lined up in the right order. There's no selective advantage in having four or five or 10 or 20. You have to have 100, 200, 300, depending on the protein, lined up in the correct order before it can have **any** function which can be selected by natural selection. And then that has to be contained in a system which can reproduce it, otherwise natural selection cannot select it.²⁰

Age of the cosmos

In dealing with the age of the cosmos, Archer ignores all the evidence that the cosmos is young and just glibly states that scientists have proven that it's old. Please see the pamphlet, written by nuclear physicist Dr Russell Humphreys, *Evidence for a Young World* and the references therein. A more thorough treatment, mainly of other evidences, can be found in *The Young Earth* by geologist Dr John Morris. *The Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe* by geologist Dr Steve Austin provides a case study of the Grand Canyon, showing that it can be better understood in a young Earth/Flood context. There are many other videos and papers on the subject.

Theological responses

It seems that few anti-creationist books are complete without input from a 'man of the cloth' (preferably), or academic 'theologian'. It seems to me the epitome of hypocrisy for ordained clergy to take the stand with Christ-hating atheistic evolutionists, to attack the very Bible many of them have sworn an oath to defend! Selkirk and Burrows

have included a chapter claiming to be 'the scholarly Christian position', by one Ian Falconer. But this chapter is neither scholarly nor Christian!



For example, in this chapter, Falconer claims that there is hardly any reference to the Genesis record of creation in the New Testament. But there at least 200 quotes or allusions in the New Testament, with at least 44 in the Gospels. For example, Jesus Christ himself cited Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 as historical to teach on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:3-9. He clearly accepted that Noah's Flood and the Ark were real events in Luke 17:26-27. Paul based his teachings about the significance of the bodily death and resurrection of Jesus on the historical facts of the existence of the first man, Adam, and his sin bringing the curse of death and suffering into God's perfect creation (I Corinthians 15:21-22; compare Genesis 3).

So how can Falconer's position be 'Christian' when he ignores what Christ taught? But we shouldn't be surprised — Falconer seems to believe that religious belief itself is the product of evolution rather than divine revelation. He claims that Teilhard de Chardin and A.N. Whitehead were 'Christian scholars', but neither of them were 'Christian', unless the description has lost all meaning. Teilhard claimed blasphemous things like 'Christ himself is saved through evolution'. If a label could be put on Teilhard de Chardin, it would be 'pantheist'.²¹ Whitehead was a founder of 'Process Theology' which makes God into a finite, evolving being — hardly the God of the Bible.

There is no evidence that Falconer has read any theological arguments put forward by creationists, so his comments do not address the issues creationists think are important, in particular, sin/death causality and the perspicuity of Scripture.²²⁻²⁵

Further reading

For a more thorough treatment of the usual criticisms of creationist scientists, I recommend *Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics* by Dr Duane Gish (ICR, 1993, 451 pp.), which is available from *Answers in Genesis*.²⁶

References

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26. For our response to anti-creationist book, *Telling Lies for God*, by Ian Plimer, use the search function on our website <<http://www.answersingenesis.org>>