

8. REPLIEK
8.1 COMMENTS ON "A VIEW OF EVOLUTION BY A CHRISTIAN
BIOLOGIST"¹

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ABSTRACT

Die Ou en Nuwe Testamente van die Bybel vorm 'n eenheid, en Christene wat uit laasgenoemde lewe, moet die uitsprake van die NT oor die OT aanvaar. Christus se eie woorde was dat man en vrou in die begin geskape is. Dit laat geen ruimte vir 'n lang evolusionêre geskiedenis nie. Bowendien het Jesus gesê dat as mens nie glo wat Moses geskryf het nie, jy ook nie Sy woorde kan glo nie (Joh. 5:46,47).

Verder word aangetoon dat geologiese ouderdomsbepalings onbetroubaar is en dat geen Christen nodig het om evolusionistiese sienings onkrities te aanvaar nie. Dis veel belangriker om die historiese juistheid van die Bybel te aanvaar, en dan waarnemings in die lig daarvan te interpreteer. Menslike evolusie word verwerp as verdigsel. Enkele aanduidings dat die aarde en die sonnestelsel "jonk" is, word verstrekk.

The paper by Jordaan and Loots in Koers (Vol. 49 No.4, 1984, pp.426-472) presents a totally one-sided view. Practically everything said and written by evolutionists is accepted and expounded uncritically. In their introduction they state that the Bible and the concept of evolution are two completely different ways of interpreting something that man can neither prove or disprove. I support this statement. But the rest of the paper is devoted to explanations of the evolutionary edifice, even going so far as to say "it is directed by God".

¹ Response to an article by E.M. Jordaan and G.C. Loots (KOERS, 1984, 49(4)).

Their view then, is that of theistic evolutionism. In their conclusion they say: "All these theories are but speculations". And these speculations should now serve to strengthen the religious beliefs of the Christian scholar. I find this rather far-fetched. In addition they state that "... evolution may help him (the Christian) to understand more about God and his love and his work, and also then to have more security in the belief in God ... Evolution ... is not a matter of hard fact ... (it) is like a book with most of the pages gone".

Curiouser and curiouser.

How can security of faith be obtained from speculations, from fragments of a "book" as interpreted by (mostly) atheists? For the Christian there is one God-given Book which provides sufficient security for the faith of millions. This Book is full of facts from beginning to end, facts provided by the Almighty Creator, Christ Himself. There are no speculations in the Bible; there are no pages missing. The Holy Scriptures provide all that is necessary for a secure faith in Him, the originator, and it is an inexhaustible source of information on his love and his work. First and foremost, the Christian accepts the Bible as the Word of God; he accepts Christ and his Saviour; he studies the acts and the words of Jesus. And then, subsequently, he studies the universe, the stars, the sun, the earth, the sea, the mountains, the rocks, the plants, the animals, the fossils, the genes and the molecules, and interprets what he observes, in the light of God's Word.

For many centuries, since before the Greek philosophers, materialists have attempted to find naturalistic explanations for the origin of the cosmos and of life. Neo-Darwinists are only the last in a long line of willfully anti-miracle, so-called scientists. Evolution is not a science; it is not even a scientific theory, as Karl Popper asserts. It is a "religious philosophy - a system of personal beliefs to justify the exclusion of God" (3, p.45).

There are many definitions of evolution, but in the English-speaking world "evolution" is regarded as a synonym for "the (current) theory of evolution" which purports to explain the origin and development of life on earth.

To avoid confusion, it is necessary to distinguish between macro-evolution and micro-evolution. The latter is evident in nature. There are readily observable changes in the genetic composition of populations. A case in point is the large variation in shapes and sizes of dogs, most of which were brought about by selective breeding. About micro-evolution there can be no doubt.

But proponents of "the" theory of evolution want to carry the observable changes that occur within populations, a large step further. They claim that many trivial changes may eventually lead to new types of organisms. This is where the speculations start, and they persist even after being negated.

In October 1980 a large meeting of geneticists and palaeontologists convened at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The central question was whether the mechanisms of micro-evolution (mutations and natural selection) gradually produce enough small changes to make the big changes of macro-evolution (over millions of years). According to Roger Lewin the answer can be given as a clear "No!" (quoted in 4, p.16). Also at this conference, Francisco Ayala, a leading evolutionist, acknowledged that the palaeontologists had convinced him that small changes do not accumulate, and Gregory Bateson said about natural selection: "Wonderful theory, it demonstrates that if things are the way they are, they tend to remain the way they are. It's about as stupid as that". Marshall Sahlins added: "Natural selection is all bunk". These confessions appeared in "Darwinism: A time for funerals" by Norman Macbeth, *Towards*, Vol.2, California, 1982 (cited in 7, p.117).

Leslie and Pallaghy confirm that the origin of life on earth by evolution has no scientific foundation (3, p.44).

But Jordaan and Loots insist: "Life began, in scientific terms, when somehow, somewhere a combination of chemical reactions produced ...". They don't know how, they don't know where, but they state that life began in this fashion, and they proclaim that such speculations are scientific.

Methane and ammonia are supposed to have been present in the primordial atmosphere. But there is no geochemical evidence for such an atmosphere. In fact, all rocks, including the earliest sediments, contain oxides, so that oxygen must have been present all along and the atmosphere could not have been reducing. Eventually, they theorize, ozone was formed; "... from then on the story of life - and of evolution, then - has been one of competition between various life forms ... "

The evolutionistic interpretation rests on an endless series of suppositions - hardly any ground for security. What we find in the Bible, is in sharp contrast: And God said ... and green plants and trees sprouted from the earth. Everything happened just as God commanded.

It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's Word (Hebr. 11:3). And everything that He had made, was very good. This pronouncement contains not the slightest hint of the mutually destructive competition between life forms required by evolution, nor is there any indication of incompleteness or change.

At a conference held at Hobart College in February 1980 (in honour of Mary Leakey), the world-famous evolutionist, Stephen Gould, said that most species don't change. "They may get a little bigger and bumpier, but they remain the same species and that's not due to imperfection and gaps (in the fossil record), but stasis. And yet this remarkable stasis has generally been ignored as no data". He also emphasised that "You don't make a new species by mutating the species ... A mutation is not the cause of evolutionary change" (7, p.106).

Sunderland concludes that "Frank statements like these by Dr. Gould are censored from school materials" (7, p.107).

But Jordaan and Loots say: "The whole process of evolution rests on a change from one form into another ... Most of the mutations are harmful and the organism then dies ... When a mutation occurs, it does so entirely without purpose".

How does one reconcile the above with the following?

"Without God, there can be no meaning in all this, and no purpose". The theistic evolutionist invokes a "deus ex machina" to provide the purpose in random mutations. But this "deus" cannot be the God of the Bible. According to the Scriptures God is love. For Christians Jesus is the absolute pinnacle and essence of absolute Love. Through Him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without Him (John 1:3).

According to Jordaan and Loots "Anyone ... who dogmatically accepts the literal meaning of the words of Genesis, will miss not only the actual course of events, but also everything that Genesis tries to explain". This statement is really far-fetched. Allow me to paraphrase: Anybody who (dogmatically) rejects the literal meaning of the New Testament, will miss everything that the Gospel explains (apart from dreams and visions).

The New Testament asserts that not one thing was made without Christ. It is unthinkable that our beloved Master would allow, tolerate or require even one harmful mutation to create a very good universe and earth, let alone the painful deaths of uncountable millions of organisms in the vicious struggle for survival during very long ages. It is totally unacceptable that He would have "created" by such evolutionary processes, and then afterwards regarded everything as very good. Death and corruption entered the world after the fall of Adam (Romans 5:12), so there could have been no death and harmful mutations before that time. But even now God takes care of the birds (Matt. 6:26) and not a single sparrow falls without His consent (Matt.10:29).

This picture of God Who cares, in no way corresponds with a cruel evolutionistic struggle for survival. Why do so many Christians bind our merciful, loving God to merciless ages-long evolutionary processes? Merely because proponents of a science falsely so called, require a materialistic explanation for everything in this wonderful universe?

According to Jordaan and Loots "the actual course of events" (of creation) is known. Yes, I am glad to say, it is known, described by the Creator Himself and handed down to us through His providence. The first Chapters of Genesis, just as the rest of the Bible, do not "try to explain" anything. God never "tries" to do or say anything. He says and does with absolute authority. Surely, this is not difficult for

Christians to accept. I see no reason why anything in the Bible should not be accepted at face value. The Bible is perfectly clear whenever actual history is described; certain passages are unmistakably prophetic, others are poetic, and one is never in doubt when dreams or visions are described. Idioms like the sun standing still, are self-explanatory, and whenever Christ tells a parable, it is stated clearly. Some seem to regard the first chapters of Genesis as allegorical. If so, then where does allegory stop and history begin? There is no hiatus - Genesis is one continuous chronicle, and if one accepts the historicity of later chapters, then why not the first? If the literal truth of some part(s) of Genesis is rejected, then Exodus 20 verse 11 must also be rejected, there it is explicitly stated that God created everything in six days. And there is no indication that these days were not literal, earthly days. One must then also reject all passages in the New Testament referring to Genesis, some of which are: Mark 10:6, Luke 3:38, Coloss.1:16, 1 Tim. 2:13, 2 Peter 3:5,6.

Another far-fetched statement of Jordaan and Loots is that the universe is not a finished artefact, but in the process of evolving and that biological evolution is still taking place. I tried to count the number of times they use expressions like "might be", "may be", "may form", "may become", "may acquire", "perhaps", "thought to be", "supposed to", etc., etc., in the space of about 36 pages, but I gave up. In so many pages they off-handedly repeat the speculations of evolutionists and even refer to these speculations as "evidence". They concede that man's biological history is still largely a matter of guesswork and that the evidence of human evolution is rarer than diamonds, but, nevertheless, they state that man is supposed to have gradually shifted from the status of animal.

In contrast, Jesus said that God made them male and female, in the beginning, at the time of creation (Mark 10:6). It should not be difficult for a Christian to accept Christ's words at their face value. Why should any Christian be bothered by the speculations of evolutionists like Dart and Leakey? A picture is painted of Mary Leakey on her knees in front of a human footprint supposedly 3,6 million years old. The footprints found at Laetoli are described as "entirely human", although their supposed age surprised all concerned.

Speaking of time and age, Jordaan and Loots seem to accept uncritically the calculations of geochronologists. They regard radio-active dating techniques as "most reliable". It is, however, well known that these methods are based on a variety of assumptions regarding the original composition of the rock. "... the presence of any contaminant or non-radiogenic daughter atoms will virtually guarantee a rock age of some hundreds of millions of years" (1,p.119). Andrews continues by citing more than a dozen cases of anomalous results, one age determination even amounting to 34 000 million years. He concludes that it is "... totally misleading to claim, as many do, that isotopic ages provide an absolute time-scale against which the standard geological column and its fossils can be checked ... If the present concentration of argon were taken as this universal, non-radiogenic content, K-Ar dating would give ages close to zero for most rocks" (1,p.122,123).

Similar doubts were expressed by geologists as long ago as 1954: "In the instances where it has been possible to date a rock by more than one method, serious discrepancies between the various results are observed in some cases ... the Pb: Th ages are usually different from the Pb:U and Pb:Pb ages of the same rock" (2,p.257). "Most of the geologic time scales that have been published, are based on uncritical compilation of a wide variety of data, so that the overall figures are necessarily very rough" (p.259). "A rather large error may be introduced by the uncertainty in the composition of the original lead. This error may exceed the measured value ... Redistribution of elements by ... hydrothermal activity may be a serious source of error in all lead methods. Most of the ages obtained by the Pb: Th method disagree with the ages of the same minerals computed by other lead methods" (2,p.295).

Geochronologists also assume the constancy of cosmic radiation, ignoring the possible effects of temporary surges. If just one supernova explosion occurred in our galaxy in the past, the resultant neutron flux would have played havoc with all radioactive processes on earth, leading to much larger ratios of daughter elements, and, consequently, to much greater ages.

There are quite a few anomalies on earth and in the solar system which evolutionists cannot explain, and which indicate a youthful age. Some of these are:

The thickness of deep-ocean sediments is orders of magnitude less than would have been the case if the oceans really were as old as some claim. The same holds for the quantity of dust on the moon. Age calculations based on moon dust are not published. There are rings revolving around Jupiter, as discovered recently. Because of its very strong gravity field, any ring fragments should have fallen to the surface or clumped together ages ago. But there they are.

And very recently it was discovered that Neptune also has a ring. "... these bits of matter should have clumped long ago. Why haven't they? So far it's a mystery" (6,p.22). All satellites are supposed to have "cooled off" aeons ago, but recently volcanic activity was discovered on one of the satellites of Jupiter.

The strength of the earth's magnetic field has declined exponentially over the past 150 years. If this curve is extrapolated, one gets an upper limit of a few thousand years for the age of the earth. Beyond this limit the field would be absurdly strong. To obtain the time required for evolution, geologists extrapolate the rates and types of current geological processes into the past. But the uniformity principle of geology "... is completely inadequate for interpreting fluviatile plains, enclosed lake basins, raised river terraces, incised meanders, mountain building ... huge lava plateaus ... The geologic time-table involves circular reasoning, for it assumes the truth of total organic evolution to arrive at the dates assigned to index fossils and the rocks that contain them. It hardly seems necessary, therefore, to mold Genesis into conformity with a scheme that has failed both logically and experimentally" (9,p.68).

"... uniformitarian geology is based upon a less secure scientific foundation than is normally admitted. Radiometric dating is far more problematical than most people appreciate and the old geological column (based upon arbitrary sedimentation rates) remains the touchstone of geological time. This time-scale is, on scientific considerations alone, likely to be greatly exaggerated" (1,p.127).

Jordaan and Loots refer to Archaeopteryx as a bird-like reptile. However, Sir Fred Hoyle, the renowned astronomer (and evolutionist), recently claimed that "a forger made a cast of crushed limestone and then used chicken feathers to make imprints of the reptile's wings ... the fossil showed feathers had been imprinted twice and that one of them is actually a fingerprint" (British Journal of Photography, March 1985: quoted in 3). This was Hoyle's conclusion after examining the famous Archaeopteryx specimen in the British Museum with the latest photographic techniques.

In any case, feathers are unique to birds, and any animal with feathers is per definition a bird. Moreover, some birds do have "teeth" in their beaks and others have claws on their wings. There is therefore no reason for regarding archaeopteryx as a reptile or a transitional form.

Another much-vaunted "transitional form" is the lung-fish. But most evolutionists keep thunderingly silent about whales. How gullible must one be to swallow the story that mammals appeared after aeons of evolution (from fish to amphibian to reptile), but then certain (unspecified) quadrupeds took to the water for unknown reasons to evolve into 100 ton whales? "This theory is not only completely lacking in genetic and paleontologic evidence, but is logically absurd" (9,p.69).

Similarly, some tree-dwelling apes were supposed to have taken to the plains and evolved into human beings.

"If Neanderthal man were placed in a busy New York street, neatly shaven and in a suit, he would probably pass unnoticed", say Jordaan and Loots. With this I can heartily agree, and I assert that similar remarks would apply to all the other much vaunted "hominids". The smaller ones will be unnoticed in a pygmy or bushman encampment. And vice versa: Stand on any busy street corner in any city from Johannesburg to Tokio, or from San Francisco to Calcutta, and you will see people with skull sizes and shapes from subnormal to supernormal, and with posture and gait from nearly simian to athletic. Recently I saw a man in Pretoria with no forehead: the front of his skull sloped at an angle of about 30 degrees straight back from his eyebrows - but he was a perfectly normal specimen of homo sapiens. Imagine the excitement among anthropologists

if his skull were to be found in some out-of-the-way place - at last the real missing link!

And visit any orthodontic clinic: You will find dentures ranging from parallel/sharp to square to round.

"A stone tool may have lain undisturbed for more than a million years, but we may be certain that the hand that made it, differs hardly at all from the hand that picks it up today". Again I am in hearty agreement with Jordaan and Loots. On page 447 they concede that "... three hominids existed at the same time ... The puzzle ... remains". Rather than speculate about hominids, why not just call them Homo sapiens?

"It is the privilege of these men (people who reject the veracity of the first chapters of Genesis) to dispense with an historical Adam if they so desire. But they do not at the same time have the privilege of claiming that Jesus Christ spoke the truth. Adam and Jesus Christ stand or fall together, for Jesus said ..." (9,p.111) that if you had really believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how can you believe my words? (John 5:46,47).

"If Genesis is not historically dependable, then Jesus is not a dependable guide to all truth, and we are without a Saviour" (9.p.111).

(See also Luke 3:38, Romans 5:14 and 1 Tim.2:13).

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