

ANNOTATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

CREATIONISM

Pun PPT. 1987. A theology of progressive creationism. *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 39:9-19.

Summary. A recent article (JASA 38:11-18) discussed theological problems with theistic evolution and progressive creation. In this response, Dr. Pun outlines a theology of progressive creationism, summarized in the following three arguments: 1) God is continuously involved in His creation, using natural selection and other processes; 2) Adam and Eve are historical figures, and the Fall was an historical event; 3) God is revealed in both nature and scripture. Pun criticizes contemporary creationism for allegedly not accepting scientific evidence supporting natural selection and the antiquity of the earth, and for allegedly implying that God is no longer actively involved in His creation. Theistic evolution is faulted for not taking Genesis seriously and for not adequately explaining the origin of evil. Neo-orthodoxy is criticized for allowing God to interact with individuals, but denying His action in a historical creation.

Comment. By outlining some aspects of the theory of progressive creationism, Dr. Pun has made it easier to evaluate this theory. In this respect, the article is useful, although as an answer to the criticisms leveled at progressive creation it is quite unconvincing.

Van Dyke F. 1986. Theological problems of theistic evolution. *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 38:11-18.

Summary. The author, a wildlife biologist, raises both theological and scientific objections to theistic evolution. Theological objections center around the biblical view of death. Evolution cannot operate without death and replacement of individuals. Natural selection, the generally accepted mechanism of evolution, cannot operate without competition, which requires resource scarcity, and death. Yet the biblical view of death is that: 1) it is a curse resulting from sin; 2) it was opposed by Jesus Christ; and 3) it will be abolished in the Kingdom of God. Thus it is inconsistent with the biblical record to postulate death before sin. The same argument can be applied to the theory of Pro-

gressive Creation, in which death and speciation of animals supposedly preceded the creation of man.

Scientific objections to theistic evolution concern the effectiveness of competition and natural selection. Competition itself has been somewhat controversial and notoriously difficult to demonstrate. Van Dyke argues that such a mechanism is too weak to be effective in creation of new adaptations. Natural selection is seen as opportunistic but not creative. The author ends with an appeal to creationists to conduct research within a paradigm in which natural selection operates on previously created life forms to produce variation.

Wilcox DL. 1986. A taxonomy of creation. *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 38:244-250.

Summary. The most important conceptual difference between world views is the relationship between God and matter. Five different views of this relationship are discussed, ranging from “full theism” to “materialism.” These differences are explored from four considerations regarding matter: origin, intervention, existence, and direction. The author identifies four of the most frequently discussed positions: atheistic evolution, recent creation, progressive creation, and theistic evolution, which could also be called “continuous creation.” The problem with theistic evolution is “not that it concedes too much to materialism, but that it refuses to concede so much as the spin of a single electron.” In conclusion, Wilcox accepts the usefulness of materialistic explanations “within the limits set by their simplifying assumptions.” It is acceptable to rule out scientific explanations based on the activity of God, so long as one realizes such limitations are only a model, and not reality itself.

EVOLUTION

Godfrey LR, editor. 1985. *What Darwin began: modern Darwinism and non-Darwinism perspectives on evolution*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 312 p.

Summary. This collection of essays embodies a discussion of Darwinian and post-Darwinian evolutionary ideas mixed with anti-creation arguments. A few of the essays are excellent; most betray an unsatisfactory degree of unsupported argumentation.

Comment. The book gives a good general overview of current evolutionary thought and may serve to comfort the confirmed

evolutionist, but will do little to convince one who has serious questions about evolution.

PALEONTOLOGY

Blinderman C. 1986. *The Piltdown inquest*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books. 261 p.

Summary. *The Piltdown Inquest* is a comprehensive review of science's "most sensational and influential hoax." The author takes the reader through a historical review of the observed and inferred complexities of the fabrication of the Piltdown skull. The fossil, which for a while gained a respectable place in man's evolutionary tree, has been found to consist of a human skull and an ape jaw. It has been facetiously described as the first human being to have false teeth. The writer also discusses at length a number of possible suspects and includes his own solution. Though the book reads like a detective story, conjecture is well-separated from the facts, which are well-documented. In his concluding section Blinderman discusses the reaction of creationists to this ingenious fabrication, as well as the merits of the recognition and correction by evolutionists. He leaves the reader with some anticipation concerning the possibility of other undiscovered falsehoods.