

EDITORIAL

ONE LONG ARGUMENT

Over the course of recorded history, the idea of a Creator God has been constantly called into question. A millennium before the birth of Christ, David declared that: “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” Four centuries later, the Chavarka philosophers of India were boldly denying the existence of the supernatural; “There is no heaven, no final liberation, nor any soul in another world”¹ according to Brihaspati, the founder of Charvarka philosophy. Shortly thereafter in the west, Epicureanism emerged from earlier atomistic philosophy and blossomed into a complete denial of divine action. Cicero put these words into the mouth of an exponent of Epicurean philosophy:

For he [Epicurus] who taught us all the rest has also taught us that the world was made by nature, without needing an artificer to construct it, and that the act of creation, which according to you cannot be performed without divine skill, is so easy, that nature will create, is creating, and has created worlds without number. You on the contrary cannot see how nature can achieve all this without the aid of some intelligence....²

At around the same time, during the century before Christ’s birth, the Roman poet and popularizer of Epicurean philosophy Titus Lucretius Carus sketched an outline remarkably similar to the modern Darwinian view of history:

The atoms did not intend to intelligently place themselves in orderly arrangement, nor did they negotiate the motions they would have, but many atoms struck each other in numerous ways, carried along by their own momentum from infinitely long ago to the present. Moving and meeting in numerous ways, all combinations were tried which could be tried, and it was from this process over huge space and vast time that these combining and recombining atoms eventually produced great things, including the earth, sea, and sky, and the generation of living creatures.³

The formula for denial of the Creator God is simple and evolved little: First deny the possibility of design in nature, then substitute blind laws interacting under unguided conditions over an incredible period of time in a really big universe. In more recent times, the Darwinist apologist Richard Dawkins put it this way:

Given infinite time, or infinite opportunities, anything is possible. The large numbers proverbially furnished by astronomy, and the large time spans characteristic of geology, combine to turn topsy-turvy our everyday estimates of what is expected and what is miraculous.⁴

From the beginning, Christians have consistently affirmed the reality of design in the creation. For example, the Apostle Peter says:

[T]here shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.⁵

Scientists working at the interface of science and the Christian faith need to be aware of the long history of disagreement over origins. The apostles were probably personally aware of the kind of mockery and the general outline of the opposition faced today by those who believe the Biblical creation account. In fact, the New Testament tells us that the Apostle Paul debated with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens.⁶ It is hard to imagine that the other apostles avoided interaction with the prevailing philosophies of their day.

It may appear ironic that when Christians make the Bible their standard, their view of reality achieves a previously unresolved clarity. Understanding nature through empirical observation becomes more rational when Biblical revelation provides the premises of our logic than when human logic, reasoning from false premises, is relied on alone. All the answers are not yet in, perhaps they never will be; that is why scientists still have jobs. We may have to wait to ask the Creator himself why He allowed so much evil in nature, why tigers are such beautifully perfect instruments of death to other equally beautiful creatures, or why certain snakes have fangs that fold away when their mouths are closed and then swing out and forward when they open to strike. In the mean time, current debate over Intelligent Design is simply the latest installment of one long argument.⁷

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ENDNOTES

1. Brihaspati is quoted in: Mádharma Áchárya. c1360. *The Sarva Darsana Sangraha or Review of the Different Systems of Hindu Philosophy*. Cowell EB, Gough AE, translators. 3rd Ed. 1908. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., p 10.
2. Marcus Tullius Cicero — *De Natura Deorum* <http://www.epicurus.net/en/deorum.html>.

3. This is my own translation of the original Latin as printed in Titus Lucretius Carus, circa 55 B.C., *De Rerum Natura*, Book 5, lines 419-31. *Lucretius: On the Nature of Things*. 1992. Rouse WHD, translator, Smith MF, rev. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. The Latin text is reproduced below:
 - 419 nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
 - 420 ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
 - 421 nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto,
 - 422 sed quia multa modis multis primordial rerum
 - 423 ex infinito iam tempore percita plagis
 - 424 ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri
 - 425 omnimodique coire atque omnia pertemptare,
 - 426 quacumque inter se possent congressa creare,
 - 427 propterea fit uti magnum volgata per aevom,
 - 428 omne genus coetus et mortus experiundo,
 - 429 tandem convenient ea quae convecta repente
 - 430 magnarum rerum fiut exordia saepe,
 - 431 terrain maris et caeli generisque animantum.
4. Dawkins R. 1989. *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design*. NY: W. W. Norton and Co., p 139.
5. 2 Peter 3:3-5 KJV.
6. See Acts 17:18.
7. Darwin stated that he viewed *The Origin of Species* as, “one long argument.” See: Darwin CR. 1872. Recapitulation and Conclusion. Chapter 6 in *The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Sixth Edition. Markham, Ontario, Canada: Penguin Books, p 426.