

THE DEBATE OF THE CENTURY

by D.W. Cloud

My wife and I watched the February 4 Ken Ham/Bill Nye debate a few days after the February 4 event, and we thought that Mr. Ham did a good job. He was well informed, candid, gracious, stayed on target, and answered all of his opponent's challenges as far as time allowed. He didn't back down or apologize for his stance on the Bible as the infallible Word of God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

I have four observations about this debate:

It was a very important debate.

It was a debate that was won hands down by the creationist.

It was a lopsided debate that didn't go far enough.

It was a debate that exhibited the ignorance of the evolutionist.

It was a debate that dealt with the most fundamental questions of life.

AN IMPORTANT DEBATE

I say that this is the debate of the century because of its august subject, its high visibility, and the general unwillingness of evolutionists to go toe to toe with creationists.

In fact, I believe that this debate was the most public defense of the Bible in my lifetime.

The issues at stake are the most fundamental ones conceivable: *the issue of the origin of life* (with blind, non-directed "naturalistic processes" on one side and the Creator God of Scripture on the other), *the issue of the purpose of life* (with ultimate meaninglessness on one side and the glory of God on the other), and *the issue of authority* (with man on one side and God and the Bible on the other).

These subjects have been debated many times, but the visibility of this particular debate was unprecedented. Answers in Genesis has estimated that a minimum of 5 million people in 190 countries watched the debate live. The number who will continue to watch it in whole or in part and who will read reviews of it and discuss it with others will be incalculable. The debate was discussed on practically every major news outlet in the United

States and in many international forums, and in many cases, interestingly, the reporting was balanced.

This debate has spread phenomenally because of the global technology of our times.

There have been many excellent debates between creationists and evolutionists since Darwin's day. Hundreds of debates were held on university campuses and elsewhere in the 1970s and 1980s between highly educated men on both sides of the issue. I attended one in about 1974 at a university in Florida when Henry Morris and Duane Gish took on a couple of evolutionary professors. Dr. Gish was a great debater.

That was until the evolutionists started hiding behind the smokescreen of "let's not give creationists legitimacy by debating them." Actually, evolutionists had discovered that they can't go head to head on the facts alone. They have to flee for refuge in their secular religion and its presuppositions.

Thus the debate on February 4 at the Creation Museum could very well be the only debate of its kind in the 21st century or until Jesus comes.

(The John Lennox/Richard Dawkins debate in Alabama in 2008, while interesting, was not of the same substance. Dr. Lennox doesn't believe the Bible's teaching on origins, so the debate was actually between a secular evolutionist and a theistic evolutionist. In that context, the issue of authority is muddled. Further, the Lennon/Dawkins debate didn't have anything like the worldwide attention of the Ham/Nye debate.)

By means of the Ham/Nye debate, the merciful God who would have all men to be saved, gave a vast number of people an opportunity to hear a reasoned defense of His Word. Considering the signs of the times and the obvious lateness of the prophetic hour and the imminent return of Christ, this debate was a very significant event.

I believe that a defense of the faith is important and necessary. The Bible purports to be an historical book. It purports to be a book that gives God's revelation about all of life, including creation. It's not a science book, but it touches on science in many places and in many ways. The truth of the Bible's theology stands or falls on its historical and "scientific" accuracy.

The Gospel of Luke was written specifically to give EVIDENCE for faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were EYEWITNESSES, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, THAT THOU MIGHTEST KNOW THE CERTAINTY OF THOSE THINGS, WHEREIN THOU HAST BEEN INSTRUCTED” (Luke 1:1-4).

Elsewhere, Luke said that the evidence for Jesus’ resurrection, an historical event, is “infallible” (Acts 1:3).

Biblical faith is not blind religious faith. It is faith in the words of a God who cannot lie and who has demonstrated the infallibility of His words in countless ways. It is an objective faith that is testable by evidence that would stand up in an honest court of law (which are few and far between in this present world).

Apologetics is important to prepare people to listen to the gospel. That is what happened to the first friend God gave me after I was saved in 1973. Richard Tedder had grown up in a skeptical, non-church environment and was educated at a secular university. He assumed that evolution is true. It was after he read a booklet exposing some of the scientific errors of evolution that he began to rethink his philosophy of life. He decided to read the Bible, and there he found truth and salvation. He told me, “The first thing that impressed me about the Bible was that its statements have the ring of truth. Its teaching fits what I can observe in the world.” The exposure of evolution was a step in his conversion.

Dr. Jobe Martin, who was once an evolutionist, became a creationist after some of his students challenged him to study the design of nature.

Arguments against evolution are effective for those who are willing to listen (and nothing can help those who aren’t willing to listen).

I believe, though, that the first use of apologetics is not to convince the unbeliever but to protect believers. When we are grounded in the vast evidence undergirding our faith, we are not confused when we hear arguments by evolutionists, atheists, new agers, and cultists, either in person, in print, on the radio or television or Internet. When we visit natural history museums we can see through the error of the displays. When we listen to debates, we can properly weigh the statements.

Churches must prepare their people to face the onslaught of end-time skepticism and apostasy. Many have become confused and have even lost their faith in God's Word after being confronted with theological modernism, atheism, and evolution.

The experience of Edward O. Wilson is all too typical. He is a prominent evolutionist, a professor in Entomology at Harvard University, a Fellow of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, and a Humanist Laureate of the International Academy of Humanism. He grew up in Alabama in the "Bible Belt" and joined a Southern Baptist congregation at age 15 with "great fervor and interest in the fundamentalist religion." But he "lost his faith" at age 17 when he "got to the University of Alabama and heard about evolutionary theory" (Wilson, *The Humanist*, September/October 1982, p. 40).

An *ABC World News* report in 2010 focused on two Southern Baptist ministers who are agnostics. They "lost their faith" when confronted by the writings of the "new atheists" such as Richard Dawkins. The minister identified as Adam said, "I realized that everything I'd been taught to believe was sort of sheltered, and never really looked at secular teaching or other philosophies ... I thought, 'Oh my... Am I believing the wrong things? Have I spent my entire life and my career promoting something that is not true?'" ("Atheist Ministers Struggle with Leading the Faithful," *ABC World News*, Nov. 9, 2010).

This type of thing happens because, first, churches are often careless about trying to make sure that young people are genuinely born again as opposed to just going through the motions of "believing" and "praying a prayer" and "receiving Jesus."

Then, too, young people are being coddled and entertained with a Christianized version of the world, but they are not being seriously disciplined.

The average Baptist church, whether Southern, Independent, or whatever, is simply not preparing young people to face the skepticism of the hour.

(Seeing this need and being deeply concerned about the next generation, including my own grandchildren, compelled me to publish the following serious discipleship materials during the last three years: *Keeping the Kids: How to Keep the Children from Falling Prey to the World*, *The One Year Discipleship Course*, and *An Unshakeable Faith: A Christian Apologetics Course*. I will give you your money back if these materials do not help your home and church, assuming that you actually use them.)

A DEBATE THAT WAS WON HANDS DOWN BY THE CREATIONIST

The debate was won hands down by the creationist Ken Ham, because he devastated Bill Nye's fundamental premise that creationism is a hindrance to science.

It was this premise that led to the debate in the first place. In August 2012, Nye stated in a video that creationism is dangerous to science and should not be taught to children. He believes that creationism harms America's scientific viability.

Nye is a demagogue, a brazen promoter of censorship, both in schools and in homes. He doesn't want to allow creationism or even "intelligent design" principles to be taught. He doesn't want the fundamental elements of evolution to be challenged. He would not grant anyone with Ken Ham's beliefs the liberty to state his or her views in a government school. In fact, if he had his way the teaching of creationism would apparently not be allowed in private homes since he has made blanket statements that it should not be taught to children.

Mr. Ham refuted Nye's fundamental premise in his opening five-minute statement. He showed that many Ph.D. scientists are creationists and that their worldview has in no wise hindered their scientific research. He

showed actual video statements from some of these men, including the following:

Stuart Burgess, Ph.D., professor of engineering at Bristol University, who received the Turners Gold Medal for the design of the solar array deployment mechanism on the \$2.5 billion ENVISAT satellite and has designed parts for NASA spacecraft. He has published over 130 scientific papers on the science of design, engineering, and biological systems. Dr. Burgess said on a video clip: “From my research work I have found that scientific evidence fully supports creationism as the best explanation to origins.”

Danny Faulkner, Ph.D., astronomy, Indiana University and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Faulkner said, “There is nothing in observational astronomy that contradicts a recent creation.”

Dr. Raymond Damadian, biophysicist and inventor of the MRI. Dr. Damadian’s original MRI was on display at the Smithsonian for many years. Dr. Damadian said: “The idea that scientists who believe that the earth is 6,000 years old cannot do real science is simply wrong.”

Mr. Ham also dynamited Nye’s premise by pointing out that modern science was founded by creationists. These include the following (from Dr. Jonathan Sarfati’s *Refuting Evolution*) --

Physics -- Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Kelvin, Joule

Chemistry - Boyle, Dalton, Ramsay

Biology - Ray, Linnaeus, Mendel, Pasteur, Virchow, Agassiz

Geology - Steno, Woodward, Brewster, Buckland, Cuvier

Astronomy - Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Herschel, Maunder

Mathematics - Pascal, Leibniz, Euler

Mr. Ham further devastated Nye’s premise by pointing out that evolutionary scientists do their science by borrowing from the creationist worldview. They believe in and trust the laws of the universe and the laws of logic, which are premises that are based on a creationist viewpoint or a designed universe. If blind evolution were true, there would be no fundamental, established, unchanging laws.

Bill Nye made no attempt to refute the aforementioned facts that devastate his position, and he did not provide one example of how that creationism hinders science.

Mr. Nye dealt with a wide variety of red herrings, such as whether Noah could build an ark to withstand the flood.

The bottom line is that Mr. Ham hands down disproved Nye's premise about creationism harming science.

A LOPSIDED DEBATE THAT DIDN'T GO FAR ENOUGH

The debate focused on creationism and its scientific credibility. As a result, creationism was on the defensive. In terms of fairness and completeness it should also have focused on evolution's scientific credibility by requiring Nye to answer questions such as the following:

How did everything come from nothing?

How did the matter for the Big Bang evolve?

How did order spring from disorder?

How did the fundamental laws of nature arise from chaos?

Why is the atom stable?

How did life spring from non-life?

How did intelligence arise from non-intelligence?

How did ATP (Adenosine TriPhosphate) evolve?

What scientific evidence is there that mutations can produce complex organs and creatures?

What scientific evidence is there that natural selection can produce complex organs and creatures?

How did mutations and natural selection produce a butterfly?

Why do all breeding experiments demonstrate that kinds of creatures are stable and that the barriers that divide them cannot be breached?

Why are there not a multitude of clear examples of transitional organs and creatures in the fossil record rather than a handful of questionable ones?

Why do the supposed oldest creatures (such as trilobites) demonstrate bewildering complexity?

How did the male-female reproductive system evolve?

How did plants exist over the millions of years that it allegedly took for the incredibly complex process of photosynthesis to evolve?

How can you be sure scientifically that all of the various “homo” categories (e.g., *Homo erectus*, *Homo ergaster*) are not all merely *Homo sapiens* and that the various *australopithecines* (e.g., *affricanus*, *afarensis*) are not simply various types of apes with no evolutionary significance?

Why did evolution cease so that today we see a world system filled with stable, perfectly “adapted” species that have every appearance of intelligent design?

Doubtless, the Ph.D.s associated with AiG could have come up with other questions from their various fields of expertise, such as Dr. Snelling and Dr. Mortenson in geology, Dr. Purdom on molecular genetics, Dr. Lisle in astronomy, and Dr. Menton in biology.

In his answers, Nye would not be allowed to use unproven presuppositions, assumptions, and just-so stories. He says that science is everything, so his answers must be authentically scientific.

A DEBATE THAT EXHIBITED THE IGNORANCE OF THE EVOLUTIONIST

Bill Nye the Science Guy came across to my wife and me as arrogant, artful, closed-minded, and ill-informed.

Nye presented himself as a man who seeks truth with joy and eagerly follows wherever the evidence leads, but he is ignorant of many of the very things that are necessary to make him a knowledgeable man pertaining to issues of ultimate truth.

He claims that creationism is dangerous to science, but it was obvious that his examination of the creationist position has been perfunctory.

He is ignorant, first of all, of the Bible and of Jesus Christ. It was apparent in the debate that he has not read the Bible. He doesn't know its content and history, nor does he know the rules of biblical interpretation, the principles of biblical apologetics, and such things as ancient history touching the Bible and biblical archaeology. It does not appear that he has carefully examined the vast evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that He claimed to be, evidence that has convinced many brilliant men and women, including scientists.

He is ignorant, second, of the wealth of material written by highly educated creationists in defense of the biblical worldview. To mention a few:

Andrew Snelling, Ph.D. geology - *Earth's Catastrophic Past*, a two-volume, 1100-page work

Walt Brown, Ph.D. mechanical engineering, MIT - *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood*

Stuart Burgess, Ph.D. biomimetics and engineering design - *Hallmarks of Design*

Lowell Coker, Ph.D. microbiology and biochemistry - *Darwin's Design Dilemma*

Don DeYoung, Ph.D. physics - *Thousands ... Not Billions*

Jonathan Sarfati, Ph.D. physical chemistry - *By Design*

If we could sit Bill Nye down and give him a test on the previous things, how would he fare?

Mr. Nye cannot rightly call himself a lover of truth when he dismisses and mocks the creationist position without adequate research.

On the other hand, Ken Ham has studied the Bible diligently but he has also studied evolution and was accredited in Australia as a science teacher, so that he is knowledgeable of his own position as well as that of his debating partner.

Mr. Nye was debating (and ridiculing) something he is largely ignorant of and can't therefore understand properly. It reminds us of the warning in Proverbs 18:13, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, it is folly and shame unto him."

One question that was asked of Ham toward the end of the debate was this: "What would be necessary to change your mind about the Bible and evolution?" The implication is that Bible believers are closed-minded as opposed to evolutionists.

In his answer, Mr. Ham focused on the fact that the past cannot be absolutely proven with scientific tools of the present.

If I were asked this question, I would say that *truth and evidence would convince me to change my mind about the Bible and to accept evolution,*

and I have looked at all sides of the issue for many decades. In fact, I have been on both sides of the issue. In 1973, I was not a Bible believer. I was a brash rejecter of the Christ of Scripture who loved to argue against the Bible. The last thing I wanted to be at that time was any type of Christian. It was truth that convinced me that the Bible is true and that such things as evolution and non-Christian religions are wrong. Over the past 40 years, the more I have studied the Bible and the more I have examined skeptical challenges, the more I have been convinced that the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible. And the more I have studied evolution--and I've studied it intently by way of building and using a large personal library of material and visiting most of the prominent natural history museums in America, England, Europe, and Australia--the more I am convinced that naturalistic evolution is what Dr. Raymond Damadian calls it -- *science fiction*.

Many of the Ph.D. scientists who are listed in our free eBook *The Testimonies of Scientists Who Believe the Bible* were formerly evolutionists, atheists, and agnostics. It was evidentiary truth that convinced them to reject evolution and to believe the Bible. These are not people who follow fairy tales.

Unlike Bill Nye, these men and women have carefully examined ALL sides of these issues.

In spite of his huffing and puffing, Bill Nye the Science Guy sadly exposed himself in this debate as Bill Nye the Ignorant Guy.

A DEBATE THAT DEALT WITH THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF LIFE

The debate was a rare opportunity for people today to see the two fundamentally different world views defended head to head.

On one hand, we have the Bible-believer with his view that the world was created by a personal, holy, and compassionate God, that man was made in God's image and fell into sin by breaking God's laws, and that man can be redeemed to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, we have the “agnostic” evolutionist with his world view of *nothing*. The universe came from nothing, has no purpose, and is going to nothing.

The heart of the debate was the gospel of Jesus Christ vs. the gospel of nothing.

At the end of the day, if naturalistic evolution is true nothing matters. There is zero ultimate purpose. Man is simply a collection of meaningless particles. When he dies, he dies. If the earth warms up and dies, it means nothing. If animals are made extinct, it means nothing. If the rich rule the earth and the poor starve, it means nothing. If the universe freezes or collapses back into the chaos from which it allegedly arose, it ultimately means nothing.

But if the Bible is the Word of God as it claims to be and Jesus Christ is the Son of God that He professed to be, everything matters. It means that there is a Creator to whom every man is accountable and before whom every man will stand. It means death is not the end. It means that man is fallen and under divine condemnation. It means that salvation was purchased by the compassionate God Himself by Christ’s death on the cross and that forgiveness of sin and eternal life are offered to men as a free gift of God’s grace. It means that there is a heaven and a hell.

I put my faith in Jesus Christ at age 23. That was 41 years ago. I have never regretted it for a moment. I lived a sensual, lawless life to the fullest prior to my conversion, and I have never hankered for the “old life.”

On my most recent trip to Israel, our Jewish guide rather mockingly said that I am missing a lot by living according to biblical moral “restrictions.” That was a statement of ignorance. I have lived without moral restrictions, and I have lived with them, and I have found by experience that living with them is the way of true liberty. That guide’s smoking and drinking and cursing and womanizing and over-preening arrogance has not made him free. It is because of my “biblical lifestyle” that I am alive and in good health at 64 (in contrast to some of my high school buddies who are dead because of their sensual lifestyles), am married to the “wife of my youth,” have grown children with good marriages who are raising our grandchildren in stable happy homes, and a thousand other things I could mention.

If naturalistic evolution is true and I am wrong about the Bible, I haven't missed anything. It would only mean that I have a superior lifestyle in this present world, and when I die I die.

But if the Bible is true, the naturalistic evolutionist cannot say that it won't matter to him, both in this life and in eternity.

It does matter what one believes.

“Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Jesus Christ, Matthew 11:28-30).

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is none else*” Isaiah 45:22).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

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