

THEISTIC EVOLUTION: A SINFUL COMPROMISE

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy in **2nd Timothy 2:2** with these words

“And the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also”

Over recent years I have increasingly come to the firm conviction that we are living in days when the preservation and transmission of God’s **“truth” (John 17:17)** has fallen into the hands of many who are **not “faithful men who shall be able to teach others also”**.

An area where this **‘truth war’** has manifested itself is the whole subject of **‘origins’** – God has in the opening chapters of Genesis outlined the truth concerning what are termed **‘origins’** – that He is the creator of all and that He carried out His creative work in six 24-hour days.

With the ‘advent’ of Darwin’s **theory** of evolution that divine-creative **truth** has increasingly been challenged by the secular and increasingly atheistic world. In addition, in recent decades, there have been increasing numbers within professing Christendom who have sought to come to some sort of ‘accommodation’ with this **theory** and so have posited the view of **‘Theistic Evolution’**.

In the last year or so, this has now become for me, a red-line issue where the whole matter of Christian fellowship is concerned, and events in recent weeks have served only to stiffen my resolve that **‘Theistic Evolution’** is, as mentioned in the title of this article, **‘A Sinful Compromise’**.

I need now to make clear that the title of my article is taken from the title of a VERY important book that I shall make further references to as my article progresses and in my opinion any young man going forward for training for Christian ministry should arm himself with a copy of it.

Before coming to the book from which my article-title is taken let me begin with some quotes from another helpful book, this time by **Pastor John MacArthur**, and it is titled **‘The Battle for the Beginning: Creation, Evolution and the Bible’**. I want simply to give some quotes from it that are relevant to how this poisonous spiritual toxin known as **‘Theistic Evolution’** has wormed its way into colleges and seminaries charged with the solemn task of teaching God’s **‘truth’** - a task in which they are in many cases disastrously ‘falling short’ (**sinning**).

'Theological liberals have long espoused theistic evolution. They have never been reluctant to deny the literal truth of Scripture on any issue. The new trend has also influenced some evangelicals who contend that it is possible to harmonise Genesis 1-3 with the theories of modern naturalism without doing violence to any essential doctrine of Christianity. **They affirm evangelical statements of faith. They teach in evangelical institutions. They insist they believe the Bible is inerrant and authoritative. But they are willing to reinterpret Genesis to accommodate evolutionary theory.** They express shock and surprise that anyone would question their approach to Scripture. **And they sometimes employ the same sort of ridicule and intimidation religious liberals and atheistic sceptics have always levelled against believers: "You don't seriously think the universe is less than a billion years old, do you?"**

The result is that over the past couple of decades, large numbers of evangelicals have shown a surprising willingness to take a completely **non-evangelical approach** to interpreting the early chapters of Genesis. More and more are embracing the view known as **"old-earth creationism"** which blends some of the principles of biblical creationism with naturalistic and evolutionary theories, **seeking to reconcile two opposing world-views.** And in order to accomplish this, old-earth creationists **end up explaining away rather than honestly exegeting the biblical creation account....**

An evangelical pastor recently approached me... He was confused and intimidated by several books he had read – **all written ostensibly by evangelical authors** – yet all arguing that the earth is billions of years old. **These authors treat most of the evolutionists' theories as indisputable scientific fact. And in some cases, they wield scientific or academic credentials that intimidate readers into thinking their views are the result of superior expertise rather than naturalistic presuppositions they have brought into the biblical text.** The pastor asked if I believed it possible that the first three chapters of Genesis might really be just a series of literary devices – **a poetic saga** giving the "spiritual" meaning of what actually occurred through billions of years of evolution.

I answered unapologetically, "No, I do not". I am convinced that Genesis 1-3 ought to be taken at face value – as the divinely revealed history of creation. **Nothing about the Genesis text itself suggests that the biblical creation account is merely symbolic, poetic, allegorical, or mythical.** The main thrust of the passage simply cannot be reconciled with the notion that creation occurred via natural evolutionary processes over long periods of time. **And I don't believe a FAITHFUL handling of the biblical text, by any acceptable principles of hermeneutics, can possibly reconcile these chapters with the theory of evolution or any of the other allegedly scientific theories about the origin of the universe.**

Furthermore, much like the philosophical and moral chaos that results from naturalism, **all sorts of theological mischief ensues when we reject or compromise the literal truth of the biblical account of creation and the fall of Adam...** If Adam was not the literal ancestor of the entire human race, then the Bible's explanation of how sin entered the world makes no sense. Moreover, **if we didn't fall in Adam, we cannot be redeemed in Christ,** because Christ's position as the Head of the redeemed race exactly parallels Adam's position as head of the fallen race: **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive"** (1 Corinthians 15:22). **"Therefore, as through one man's offence judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous"** (Romans 5:18-19). **"And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit"** (1 Corinthians 15:45; cf 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Jude 14). So, in an important sense, everything Scripture says about our salvation through Jesus Christ hinges on the **literal truth** of what Genesis 1-3 teaches about Adam's creation and fall. **There is no more pivotal passage of Scripture'. (pp 17-20).**

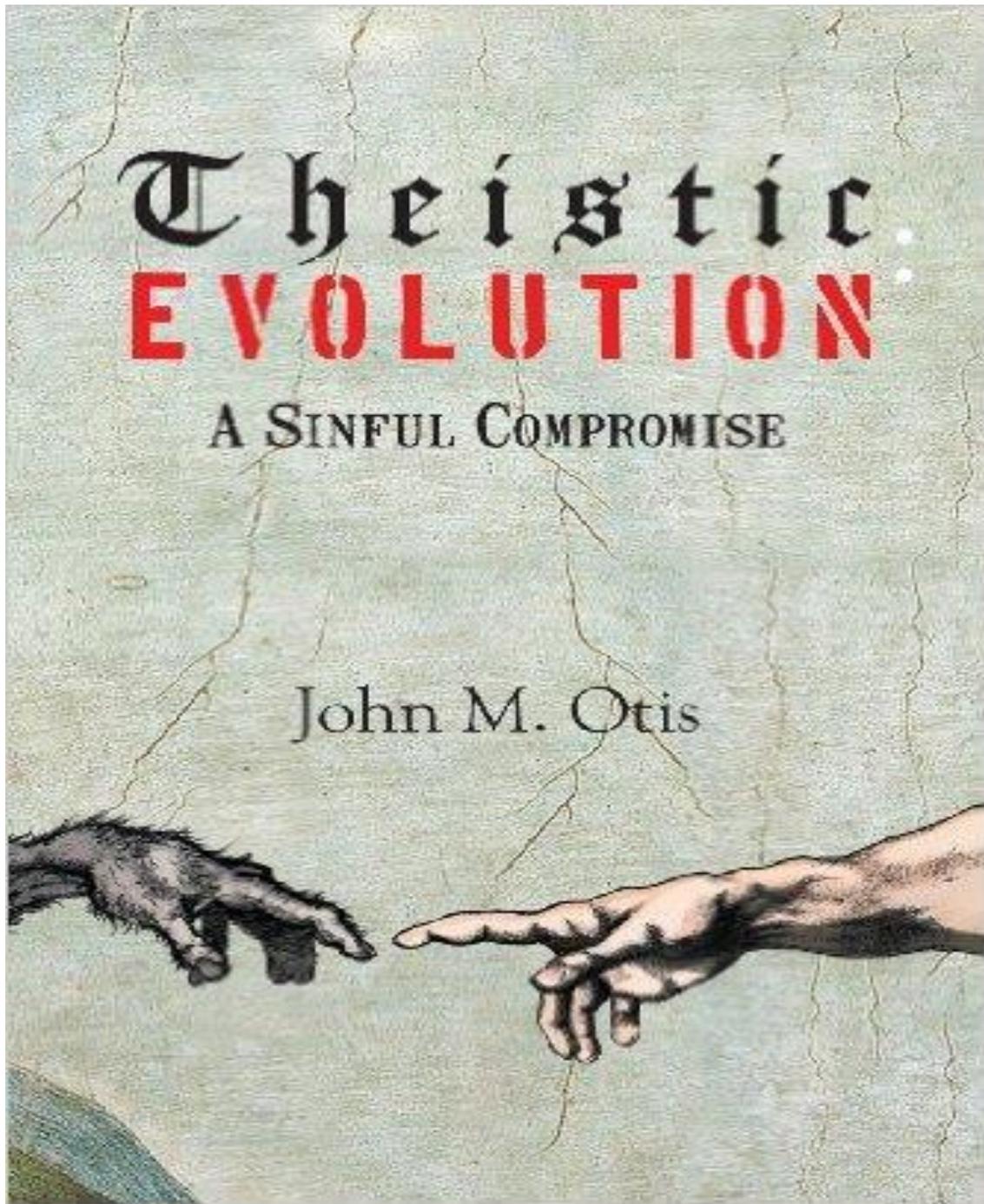
'So-called theistic evolutionists who try to marry humanistic theories of modern science with biblical theism may claim they are doing so because they love God, but the truth is that **they love God a little and their academic reputations a lot**. By undermining the historicity of Genesis they are undermining faith itself. **Give evolutionary doctrine the throne and make the Bible its servant, and you have laid the foundation for spiritual disaster.**

SCRIPTURE, not science, is the ultimate test of all truth. And the further evangelicalism gets from that conviction, the less evangelical and more humanistic it becomes... **when naturalistic and atheistic presuppositions are being aggressively peddled as if they were established scientific facts, Christians ought to expose such lies for what they are and oppose them all the more vigorously...** in Genesis 1-3 we find there the foundation of every doctrine that is essential to the Christian faith... **Sadly it is a foundation that is being systematically undermined by the very institutions that should be most vigorously defending it...** I recall reading a survey a few years ago that in one of America's leading evangelical accrediting associations, whose membership boasted scores of evangelical Bible colleges and universities, **only five or six college-level schools remain solidly opposed to the old-earth view of creation. The rest are open to a reinterpretation of Genesis 1-3 that accommodates evolutionary theories. Scores of well-known Bible teachers and apologists see the whole question as moot, and some even aggressively argue that a literal approach to Genesis is detrimental to the credibility of Christianity.** They have given up the battle – or worse, joined the attack against biblical creationism...

Everything Scripture teaches about sin and redemption assumes the LITERAL TRUTH of the first three chapters of Genesis. If we wobble to any degree on the truth of this passage, we undermine the very foundation of our faith. **If Genesis 1-3 doesn't tell us the TRUTH, why should we believe anything else in the Bible?' (pp 25-29).**

'Absolutely nothing in the text of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 speaks of evolution or long geological ages in the creation process. The text itself is a straightforward refutation of all evolutionary principles. Theistic evolution, billion-year old earth theories and "progressive creationism" are all refuted if we simply take the statements of Genesis at face value. Only by denying key expressions or interpreting them in a nonliteral sense can the Christian read any degree of evolution or "progressive creation" into the Genesis account... In order to attempt it at all, they must begin by obscuring the obvious historical sense of the passage, and turning instead to literary devices such as allegory, myth, legend, or poetic expressions. And in doing so, they are attempting to make the Word of God bow the knee to godless naturalism and its everchanging theories. We ought rather to allow the unchanging authoritative Word of God to inform our understanding and **let science bow the knee to Scripture...** It would be much better to recognise the superiority of Scripture up-front and make Scripture the authority whereby all scientific theory is evaluated. **That is the historic principle of SOLA SCRIPTURA. Christians who hold to the authority of Scripture over scientific theory will not be ashamed when all the true facts come in.** Remember Christ Himself said **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"** (Matthew 24:35). The Word of God still stands unchanged after thousands of years while the theories of secular science change dramatically with every new generation'. (p 65)

Let me turn now to the book from which the title of my article is drawn and I want to begin by including at this point in my article the front and back covers of the book. Included at the foot of the front cover image are two links to where the book may be purchased and also the link to an excellent radio interview that the author, **John Otis**, gave back in 2015.



<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Theistic-Evolution-Compromise-John-Otis/dp/0977280098>

<https://www.amazon.com/Theistic-Evolution-Sinful-Compromise-John-ebook/dp/B01HVNSE6K>

<http://www.ironsharpenironradio.com/podcast/july-24-2015-isi-radio-show-with-john-otis-on-theistic-evolution-a-sinful-compromise/>

(24 July 2015)

For centuries, the Christian church did not question the Genesis account of creation as being an accurate historical accounting of God's creative activity. With the rise of Darwinism in the 19th century, however, the biblical doctrine of creation came under great attack. How are we to understand the relationship of science to Scripture? Sadly, there are some pastors, organizations, and seminaries that want to re-interpret the Bible in light of the purported factuality of Darwinism. They argue that the archaic views of the past must yield to the facts of science.

But is evolution a proven fact? And are the "findings" of modern science an accurate filter through which to interpret the Bible? Some today think so. They are called theistic evolutionists, and they want to wed the theory of evolution with the biblical account of creation. They think the Genesis account was never intended to be taken in the plain meaning of its words. They think there is no problem with maintaining a view that man evolved from lower life forms over millions of years. They think the gospel cannot be threatened by such views.

Pastor John Otis examines the basic tenets of Darwinism, demonstrating its absurdity. He analyzes the various views of theistic evolution, showing where it has compromised the precious doctrine of Sola Scriptura and jeopardized the gospel. Theistic evolutionists are a menace to the Lord's church and must be answered.



Cover Design: Derrick Otis & Michael Minkoff

When I started this article I had fully intended to quote sections from the book that I had personally 'bookmarked' and also to draw attention to various individuals and organisations involved in promoting **'Theistic Evolution'**.

However, in the providence of God I have come across a detailed review of the book that really covers all that I myself had intended to draw attention to. That review is located on –

<https://adaughterofthereformation.wordpress.com/2013/07/16/theistic-evolution-a-sinful-compromise-a-review/>

but, in addition to giving that link, I plan now also to copy here the text of that review and this is the text of it.

John Otis, pastor of a Reformed Presbyterian Church US (RPCUS) church in Burlington, North Carolina, has written a book on theistic evolution, **Theistic Evolution: A Sinful Compromise**, based on a series of lectures. His purpose in writing the book was to alert believers, and especially elders, to the danger that theistic evolution poses to the church:

A word of exhortation is needed to my fellow ruling and teaching elders: What is one of our foremost duties as elders? It is to protect God's precious sheep from the wolves in sheep's clothing that will devour the flock if they could. ... Do I lump all those together as wolves who are not advocating a view of creation as presented in our Confessional Standards? Not exactly, some are far worse than others. ... Those that I am really addressing are those who do advocate an evolutionary view, who do believe that man did evolve from lower forms of life, who do teach that God used this means to "create." These men are the ones who must be silenced; they are disturbing families. In obeying Jude 3, we elders must earnestly contend for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. This is my purpose (pp 5-6).

Pastor Otis begins his book by considering what Scripture teaches regarding creation, creation days, and the chronologies. From there he moves on to a history of Darwin and evolutionary thought. Lastly, he spends several chapters on what he calls "Compromisers." He takes time throughout those chapters to address specific concerns about the teachings of specific organizations and individuals.

Pastor Otis' concern over theistic evolution and its influence in the Reformed church today is due in part to his own background. Before he became a believer, Pastor Otis was an agnostic, evolutionary, Biology student:

I was once an agnostic and an evolutionist in high school, though not a very informed evolutionist. I was a conscious unbeliever. It was God's sovereign grace that saved me when I was a freshman in college. Upon my conversion to Christ, no one had to inform me that there was a problem with maintaining evolutionary views with my Christian faith. I immediately sensed this, even though I was severely biblically illiterate. I did not grow up in the church; I never read a Bible; I didn't even understand what chapter and verse in the Bible meant. However, when the power of the Holy Spirit regenerated my deadened soul, and as the Spirit illumined my mind with biblical truth as I faithfully read my Bible, I knew that there was no reconciling of evolution with the Bible's account of creation (p 281).

Why does Pastor Otis call theistic evolution a sinful compromise?

- It robs God of His due glory.
- It elevates science as an equal authority with Scripture.
- It adopts a faulty hermeneutic.
- It assaults the uniqueness and dignity of man.
- It is insulting to Jesus' true humanity.
- It can undermine the glorious gospel.
- It undermines the Bible's credibility (pp 281-284).

Beginning with what Scripture teaches on creation, Pastor Otis discusses some basic principles of Biblical interpretation. First, he stresses the importance of considering the plain meaning of the text. Second, he references the Westminster Confession of Faith's section on Scripture and interpretation:

The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly (WCF, I: 9). (p 10)

He points out that contrary to what many theistic evolutionists teach we do not need "science" to help us interpret Scripture. (p 15) Pastor Otis then applies these principles to three of the most discussed issues in the creation vs. evolution debate: **creation days, Biblical chronologies, and the creation of Adam from the dust.** Theistic evolutionists, and others, teach that the days of creation do not need to be understood as literal, 24 hour days. And, if the days of creation are more symbolic than literal, then there is no problem with making the long ages necessary for evolution fit with the Biblical account of creation. Also, if the creation account in Genesis is read symbolically or poetically, then maybe it's possible to read the creation of Adam from dust symbolically:

Theistic evolutionists want to take God fashioning Adam from the dust and Eve from Adam's rib as a literary device, not to be taken at face value; in other words, not in the plain sense of the words which is an important hermeneutical principle. Apparently, we can get quite "creative" (pun intended) in how we interpret Genesis 1:26 and 2:7, 21. The evolutionists, even "Christian" evolutionists say that we need the testimony of modern biology, i.e. Darwinism, to properly interpret these texts. Really? And why do we need them? And why must we NOT take the plain meaning of the words of Genesis? And why must we say that the terms "from dust" and "from Adam's rib" must obviously mean biological evolution from single cell organisms to man himself? (pp 14-15).

The plain meaning of "day" and "dust" are simply "day" and "dust." Two things that are familiar to all. Using Scripture to interpret Scripture, Pastor Otis considers what the Biblical arguments are for interpreting the days of creation as 24 hour days. He lays out four arguments:

Argument # 1: The Fundamental Use of the Word "Yom" (day)

A word study for the word “yom” in the Old Testament reveals that the preponderant use of this term demands that we understand it to be a literal twenty-four-hour period of time. The word occurs 1,704 times in the Old Testament, and the overwhelming usage has to do with a normal day from morning to evening. After all, what did The Westminster Confession say is the surest hermeneutical principle – Scripture interprets Scripture (p 23).

Argument # 2: Key Qualifying Statements

This is one of, if not the most powerful argument, in supporting the days of creation in being normal days. Inspired Moses qualifies the six creative days with this all-important phrase – “evening and morning.” The obvious plain meaning is: This is a typical day since each day is viewed as “evening and morning” the first day, evening and morning the second day, etc. When we leave out Darwinian presuppositions, then the text is rather obvious (p 24).

Argument # 3: The Use of Numerical Adjectives

Consider this overwhelming evidence. In the 119 cases in Moses’ writings where the Hebrew word “yom” (day) stands in conjunction with a numerical adjective, such as first, second, third, it almost always means a literal day. The same is true of the 537 usages outside of the Pentateuch (24). When the New Testament says that Jesus was raised on the third day, was it the third literal twenty-four hour day or not? Or could it have been thousands of years? (p 25)

Argument # 4: Divine Example Regarding the Sabbath Day

This has to be one of the most powerful biblical proofs that the days of creation were literal days. God specifically patterns man’s work week after his own original creational work week. Man’s work week is expressly tied to God’s (25).

What about the passage from 2 Peter 3:8-9? Doesn’t it say there that a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day?

Theistic evolutionists say, See, here is proof that “day” can mean an indefinite period of time. It is plainly obvious that this meaning is to be understood figuratively. The whole context pertains to those sceptics who are denying Jesus’ Second Coming simply because He has not returned yet. Peter says that God is not bound by time. Just because He hasn’t returned yet does not mean He is never coming, for with God, time is meaningless. A thousand years is like one day with God and a day as a thousand years. To use II Peter 3 as some proof for interpreting a day to be millions of years in Genesis is just sloppy exegesis to say the least. It is totally ignoring the prevalent use of the term “day” in Scripture. (pp 25-26)

One of the other common arguments for the synthesis of long ages with the days of creation is that there are gaps in the Biblical chronologies. Appeals to the age of the earth using James Ussher’s dates are often ridiculed even by pastors and other Christians. We are told that there are gaps in the Genesis chronologies and that since “became the father of” can mean “became the ancestor of” there is no way to determine from the chronologies how long ago Adam was created. Pastor Otis responds:

You probably have heard that we cannot adopt a view that the biblical chronologies are accurate history because there must be gaps in the genealogies. Guess what? There are no time gaps in the chronology of the Bible. ... The numbers add up precisely from one representative head to another representative head. It does not matter about the other sons and daughters as long as there is precision from one generational head to another (pp 30-31).

Moving on from what Scripture teaches regarding creation, Pastor Otis briefly discusses the “conflict” between science and faith:

[T]he problem with Christianity and evolution, including theistic evolution, is that we do not have a clash between faith and science but a clash of faith versus faith, that is, we have a clash of worldviews (p 34).

He points out too that evolutionary science is not religiously neutral:

The evolutionist claims that he is neutral, that he is unbiased, and that he is not religious. Such a claim is ludicrous. All views of the origin of life are fundamentally religious (p 37).

And,

Evolutionary thinking is inescapably religious at its very foundation. It is wholly untrue that the issue is science vs. faith. No, it is one faith in opposition to another faith; it is a clash of worldviews (pp 38-39).

Next Pastor Otis gives a brief history of Charles Darwin and the rise of Darwinian evolution. Charles Darwin was not the first to discuss evolution processes or to desire an explanation for the origin of universe and life that is not dependent on God. In fact, Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, wrote a book advocating spontaneous generation and millions of years of biological development. But it wasn't until Charles Darwin wrote his **Origins of Species** that evolution began to be widely accepted as a theory (p 63).

Before Charles Darwin wrote **Origins of Species**, he had already abandoned what little Christian faith he began with:

It is evident that Darwin had lost his faith in Christianity and the miraculous before he formulated his hypothesis of evolution. This does not say he had no evolutionary ideas before this, but he still lost his faith in creation before he set out to discover how life and its varied forms would originate by the working of natural laws. Evolution came in with great force to fill the void left by the loss of his faith in God the creator (p 53).

Pastor Otis considers it important the order of Darwin's slide into apostasy:

[P]lease note the process into unbelief for Darwin. It was to doubt the historicity of Genesis, then doubt miracles, adopt an old earth view, and then accept evolutionary views (54).

This is important because Darwin was fully aware that his theory of evolution would draw people away from a belief in God as creator. Darwin even referred to his work as "the Devil's gospel" (p 59). Darwin's theory of evolution was not religiously neutral from its inception. From the start, Darwin and the others who promoted his view actively sought to explain the origin of the universe and of life without the need for a Creator. George Bernard Shaw is quoted as saying:

If you can realize how insufferably the world was oppressed by the notion that everything that happened was an arbitrary personal act of an arbitrary personal God of dangerous, jealous and cruel personal character, you will understand how the world jumped at Darwin (p 73).

The godless nature of evolutionary thought is illustrated by those throughout history who have used the ideas of survival of the fittest and natural selection to perpetual great cruelty:

Evolution provides the scientific and moral (or lack of morality) rationale for many to propagate evil. The field of eugenics is the applied science of improving the genetic composition of the human population. It seeks to achieve this goal through both encouraging reproduction among fit individuals and discouraging breeding among unfit populations. It has an evolutionary basis, and the means used to achieve this goal is population control by abortion and sterilization. But who decides who is unfit and unworthy to reproduce? Those who have the power to subjugate others! (p 74).

One of the best examples, of course, is Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party:

Hitler was an ardent evolutionist and a true believer. He was probably more consistent than anyone else has ever been. This is why he murdered so many people in the name of trying to perfect a race that would reign for 1,000 years (p 75).

Having discussed that the theory of evolution is not neutral, but is actually an attack on God as creator, Pastor Otis continues by pointing out various weaknesses in Darwin's theory. He concludes:

As I conclude this chapter, we should realize that evolutionists themselves have recognized the great problem with Darwinism. The view of macroevolution cannot be scientifically verified. Darwin couldn't do it and neither have any others after him. Living organisms and the fossil record do not give scientific evidence for macroevolution, but it does point to special creation. Hence, evolution is no scientific fact; it is outside the parameters of operational science. It is not a fact; science has not spoken definitively in the factuality of macroevolution; evolution is a worldview, a religious faith held as tenaciously as the most ardent Christian holds to his belief in the Bible (p 102).

The second half of his book is focused on addressing specific concerns of particular organizations and individuals.

Because Pastor Otis is an elder in a reformed, Presbyterian denomination, he is particularly concerned with organizations and individuals either within the reformed world or with considerable influence within reformed churches.

These include: the BioLogos Foundation, Dr. Tim Keller, Dr. Ron Choong, Dr. Gregg Davidson, Dr. Jack Collins, and Dr. Peter Enns:

The men and organizations that I will mention have compromised the Faith in my opinion. For some, the compromise is greater than others. Some obviously do not think their views are compromising positions; they think they are being "humble," "open-minded," and "diverse," respecting the differing opinions of honourable men. Grant it, some of those who advocate the value of diverse beliefs and diverse interpretations of Scripture are sincere in their views. The problem is: Men can be sincerely wrong, and they can be responsible for leading the visible church of the Lord Jesus into great peril (pp 109-110).

I will give a very brief synopsis for each of the "**Compromisers**", as Pastor Otis calls them.

First, the BioLogos Foundation:

BioLogos is a foundation that touts itself as an evangelical organization that thinks theistic evolution is a true understanding of the origins of the universe and man. I consider this organization as one of the greatest threats to today's visible church (p 110).

Pastor Otis gives three examples of what BioLogos teaches to illustrate how their views are compromising positions:

What is BioLogos' View on Scientific Evidence of the First Humans?

The fossil record shows a gradual transition over 5 million years ago from chimpanzee-size creatures to hominids with larger brains who walked on two legs. Genetics also tells us that the human population today descended from more than two people. Evolution happens not to individuals but to populations, and the amount of genetic diversity in the gene pool today suggests that the human population was never smaller than several thousand individuals (p 114).

Were Adam and Eve Historical Figures?

Genetic evidence shows that humans descended from a group of several thousand individuals who lived about 150,000 years ago. One option is to view Adam and Eve as a historical pair living among many about 10,000 years ago, chosen to represent the rest of humanity before God. Another option is to view Genesis 2-4 as an allegory in which Adam and Eve symbolize the large group of ancestors who lived 150,000 years ago. Yet another option is to view Genesis 2-4 as an "everyman" story, a parable of each person's individual rejection of God. BioLogos does not take a particular view and encourages scholarly work on these questions (pp 116-117).

Did Death Occur Before the Fall? BioLogos says:

Humans appear very late in the history of life. The fossil record clearly shows that many creatures died before humans appeared. This appears to conflict with Bible passages which describe death as a punishment for human sinfulness. However, the curse of Genesis 3 was that Adam and Eve, not the animals, should die for their disobedience. Therefore, animal death before the Fall is compatible with Christian doctrine (p 118).

The next chapter focuses on Dr. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA), New York.

Pastor Otis goes into much greater detail, but he summarizes his concerns with Dr. Keller this way:

In summary, the main strikes against Dr. Keller are:

He allows his name to be used on BioLogos' home page as a reference for the purpose of encouraging others to see the great value of this foundation, a foundation which openly embraces theistic evolution.

He has allowed his church to sponsor the workshops of BioLogos.

He has allowed Dr. Ron Choong to teach in his church, who has adopted views that not only embrace theistic evolution but which assault other precious truths of the biblical doctrine of creation.

He accepts evolution as a plausible explanation of the origin of all life, including man (p 137).

Connected to Dr. Keller is Dr. Ron Choong:

One of the men who is listed as a missionary and member of Metro New York Presbytery (PCA) is Dr. Ron Choong, who has taught classes in Keller's church. Dr. Choong founded the New York based "Academy of Christian Thought," and he has written a book titled, **Project Timothy: The New Testament You Thought You Knew**. ... Ron Choong's views of Scripture, the relationship between Scripture and science, and man's evolution is most illuminating and disturbing, especially since he is an ordained elder within the PCA (pp 138-139).

Pastor Otis concludes his chapter on Dr. Choong with this summary:

Let us summarize briefly the main points of Choong's doctrine of creation:

1. The Bible's reliability cannot be affirmed by its own historicity, literary, or theological components.
2. Modern science corrects the historical and scientific inaccuracies in the Bible.
3. Each generation with new discoveries need to revise their theological understanding.
4. The Bible is silent on the mechanism of creation.
5. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are not to be understood literally or even historically.
6. Special creation is biologically untenable.
7. Adam may or may not have been a single person, but he could be a representative of a community of hominids (ape-like creatures).
8. Regardless of the singular or communal view of Adam, he was a hominid, having evolved from lower forms of life.
9. God's image conferred upon an existing hominid makes this hominid the biblical Adam.
10. God's conferring of His image upon Adam and Eve as existing hominids was done after they ate the forbidden fruit, not before.
11. The image of God in man is the acquisition of moral knowledge, namely fear and guilt.
12. Adam's fall into sin is best seen as "rising beasts falling upwards to moral awareness."
13. Original sin as The Westminster Standards describe man's fall is not true.
14. The Westminster Standards are archaic, needing revision. They are an obstacle to fruitful science and theological conversation.
15. Adam was not created with an immortal soul.

16. Adam was not created righteous.

17. Adam was not created with the law of God written on his heart.

18. Adam's sin was not a violation of God's moral law.

19. Adam and Eve were made loaded with sinful desires.

20. Adam cannot be blamed for an existence of sin per se (pp 158-159).

Dr. Choong, in response to questions about his teachings on Adam, said:

All my views about Adam and Eve have been published for more than 10 years and Redeemer as a church as well as Dr Keller as a minister have never had any objections to my non-doctrinal interpretations. This means that while I hold to a certain view of who Adam might mean, no church doctrine in the history of the church has ever made this a litmus test of faith. No one should get their knickers in a twist over whether Adam was a collective or a singularity (p 151).

Also, Pastor Otis notes:

At the 2011 meeting of Metro New York Presbytery, one presbyter suggested that presbytery look into the teachings of Dr. Choong. Did this happen? Was he disciplined by this PCA presbytery? No! The presbytery refused to look into it with strong vocal opposition to such a thing, and in fact, a request was made and granted that the idea of looking into Dr. Choong's teachings not be recorded in the minutes lest his name be illegitimately besmirched (p 160).

The next chapter is on Dr. Gregg Davidson who gave a seminar on the age of the earth at the 2012 General Assembly of the PCA.

Pastor Otis is very concerned that Dr. Davidson was allowed to speak given his published evolutionary views:

I believe that those who gave permission to Dr. Davidson to hold this seminar at the PCA 2012 General Assembly did a great disservice to their denomination and opened the door for further deterioration. Surely, someone knew of Dr. Davidson's position on evolution prior to the invite. Surely, someone knew of his avowed commitment to viewing man as having descended from ape like creatures (p 163).

For those who are not familiar with Dr. Davidson's work, Pastor Otis addresses both Dr. Davidson's seminar at the General Assembly as well as his book, **When Faith and Science Collide**. At the end of the seminar, Dr. Davidson was asked a few questions. One of the questions was particularly of note:

The question was: Did he believe that Adam was specially created and directly created by God from the dust, or if Adam was a hominid adopted by God? ... In his answer, he said he did not see a difference between an Adam specially created by God from the dust and an Adam as a hominid adopted by God and given a soul. Either way, Adam was the first human and father of mankind. In other words, Dr. Davidson admitted to being an evolutionist, who thinks that Adam and Eve were descended from ape like creatures (p 164).

Dr. Davidson's book, **When Faith and Science Collide**, gives a much fuller picture of what he believes:

Davidson's bias towards evolutionary views is quite explicit. He says that science teaches us that "life began on earth 3.5 billion years ago." Even though scientists are not cognizant of how life began from non-living material and how everything evolved from single cell organisms to man, Davidson thinks there is a plausible synthesis with Scripture. This synthesis is: the Bible says that God commanded the earth to bring forth and it did; science says that man was formed from the same dust of the earth as all other creatures. In other words, science provides us with the accurate understanding of the mechanism of creation. Again, it is not biblical exegesis that is in the "driver's seat;" it is the scientific views often postulated by unbelieving men (p 169).

And,

There is no question of Dr. Davidson's commitment to macroevolution, meaning that all life forms evolved from simple, single celled organisms throughout millions of years. He accepts all of the presuppositions and arguments of the evolutionists in terms of their so called "scientific" findings. Davidson wants to maintain the science of evolution over the non-Christian agnostic and atheistic views held by many evolutionists. In other words, Davidson wants to accept the evolutionist's conclusions but within the framework of God doing His creative work through the mechanism of evolution (pp 174-175).

The next chapter deals with Dr. C. John (Jack) Collins, Professor of Old Testament at Covenant Seminary, and author of Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?: Who They Were and Why You Should Care. Dr. Collins' book is an attempt to address the issue of the historicity of Adam:

His book's title is not intended to deny the historicity of Adam. Collins says that he affirms Adam's historicity, but he does so in such a way as to definitely allow for the possibility of non-traditional views to be considered as acceptable (p 211).

Pastor Otis explains his concern:

Here is the crux of the matter. For Collins, it is not really necessary for us to believe that God literally made Adam from mere dust on the sixth day, which is a twenty-four hour period. Literal trees or a talking snake are not necessary for us to get the point. All that matters is the worldview that from Adam sin came into the world. While Collins may be distancing himself from the conclusions of Ron Choong and Peter Enns, he will still consider the legitimacy of an evolutionary view of man's origin (pp 220-221).

And,

In conclusion about the views of Jack Collins, we can say rather conclusively that he has admitted to being a type of evolutionist; he just isn't in the camp of being one who adopts the philosophy of evolution. His latest book argues for a type of modified monogenesis for Adam's origin. It is a revision to the traditional view, but it falls within the parameters of sound reasoning nonetheless. Are we to be encouraged by this? Absolutely not! Covenant Seminary has an evolutionist on its faculty. It is wholly misleading to the public, and probably to its supporters for the Seminary. So, when Covenant Seminary says that Jack Collins does not subscribe to a Darwinian or a Neo-Darwinian view of evolution, it is totally misleading. And when the official seminary statement states that Dr. Collins may allow for some differences of opinion on some of the details, it fails to specify those details that Collins makes known in his books – he subscribes to a form of evolution, and he is very critical of young earth creationists and the whole field of "creation science" (p 250).

Lastly, Pastor Otis addresses Dr. Peter Enns, formerly of Westminster Theological Seminary and also formerly a Senior Fellow at BioLogos.

Dr. Enns has written several books and essays including: **The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Does not Say About Human Origins**. Pastor Otis sees Dr. Enns as the logical conclusion of the theology that begins with theistic evolution:

Peter Enns is the last person that I will analyze simply because he probably best typifies what can happen once one begins the downward spiral on adopting an evolutionary view to Scripture. This does not mean that all theistic evolutionists will end up theologically where Enns has, but it does show how one can easily end up with views purported by Enns. I would say that Enns' views are the logical outcome of an evolutionary perspective, and the result when one views science as the best interpreter of Scripture (p 251).

Dr. Enns has written that it is not necessary to believe in an historical Adam, that evolution should make Christians rethink traditional views on things such as sexual promiscuity, and that death is not an enemy:

Evolution is a serious challenge to how Christians have traditionally understood at least three central issues of the faith: the origin of humanity, of sin, and of death... sin and death are universal realities, the Christian tradition has generally attributed the cause to Adam. But evolution removes that cause as Paul understood it and thus leaves open the questions of where sin and death have come from. More than that, the very nature of what sin is and why people die is turned on its head. Some characteristics that Christians have thought of as sinful – for example, in an evolutionary scheme the aggression and dominance associated with “survival of the fittest” and sexual promiscuity to perpetuate one’s gene pool – are understood as means of ensuring survival. Likewise, death is not the enemy to be defeated ... death is not the unnatural state introduced by a disobedient couple in a primordial garden. Actually, it is the means that promotes the continued evolution of life on this planet and even ensures workable population numbers. Death may hurt, but it is evolution’s ally (pp 258-259).

Pastor Otis concludes:

Conservative men in the PCA ought to be very concerned about the present trend in their denomination. The debate over the doctrine of creation and the place that evolution has in it is nothing new. They have the dismal track record of the PCUS to observe and serve as a warning. Sadly, the warning is going unheeded (p 267).

Pastor Otis' book, **Theistic Evolution: A Sinful Compromise**, is available for **free download here**. You can also order a **printed copy here**. The lecture series is available on **Sermon Audio here**

As I move towards the conclusion of this article I want to quote from the latest book written by my good friend, Roger Oakland, and the book is entitled ‘**The Good Shepherd Calls**’. On two occasions Roger was my guest here in Northern Ireland to speak on the subject of ‘**Creation v Evolution**’. Video of his talk given in Portrush Baptist church can be viewed on these links –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL9KmDFiYeo>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_0w5miFfgg

On pages 74-76 of his book, Roger has a section headed 'Theistic Evolution' and herewith are some extracts from that section –

'I have given thousands of lectures in universities, schools, churches and conferences around the world on the topic of origins. These lectures usually contrast the differences between the evolution and creation worldviews... In my introduction to these lectures, I always tell people only two basic models for origins exist – evolution or creation. Then we examine the claims of evolution and the claims of creation, demonstrating that **evolution is based on false assumptions** (e.g., explosions do not create order, life does not originate from non-life spontaneously, nor is there a mechanism to show life has evolved from simple to complex).

Following these meetings, it is almost guaranteed I will be confronted by people who insist they believe in God. However, they believe God used millions of years of evolutionary process to create. They say there is no problem, whatsoever, accommodating Darwinianism into the Bible. God, they say, and evolution are compatible.

So, what about this view? Is it credible? Is it compatible with what the Bible teaches? What about the Darwinian perspective? Does evolution have a supernatural directing force?

Speaking of Darwinism, **Charles Darwin was asked during his lifetime if he thought God could have used evolution to create? His answer was abrupt. Evolution is purely a natural process he said.** That was the basis and the reason for his theory. No supernatural directing force was necessary – only matter, time and chance.

For me, I have a personal reason for rejecting "Christian evolution". When I taught biology as an unbeliever, I was an evolutionist. Evolution was my reason or excuse for explaining away the Creator. **My conversion to Christianity was from evolution to creation to Christ.** Now as a Christian, I question why other Christians seem so confident that God could have used evolution to create. **Why would you use a process that has been used to explain away God, to explain God? It just doesn't make sense.**

Further, there is another major problem with trying to accommodate evolution into the Bible. The Darwinian view proposes that life has arisen from lower to higher, from simple to complex, by processes over millions of years of time, as life lived and died while competing. How do you reconcile this with the Genesis record? The Bible states that death in this world became a reality when Adam sinned. **In order to believe in theistic evolution, one has to believe billions of years of death and survival of the fittest took place before Adam ever came on the scene.**

I should be obvious that evolution and creation are two separate explanations for origins. **To combine the two is what is called an oxymoron.** It is like saying that I saw a flaming snow flake'.

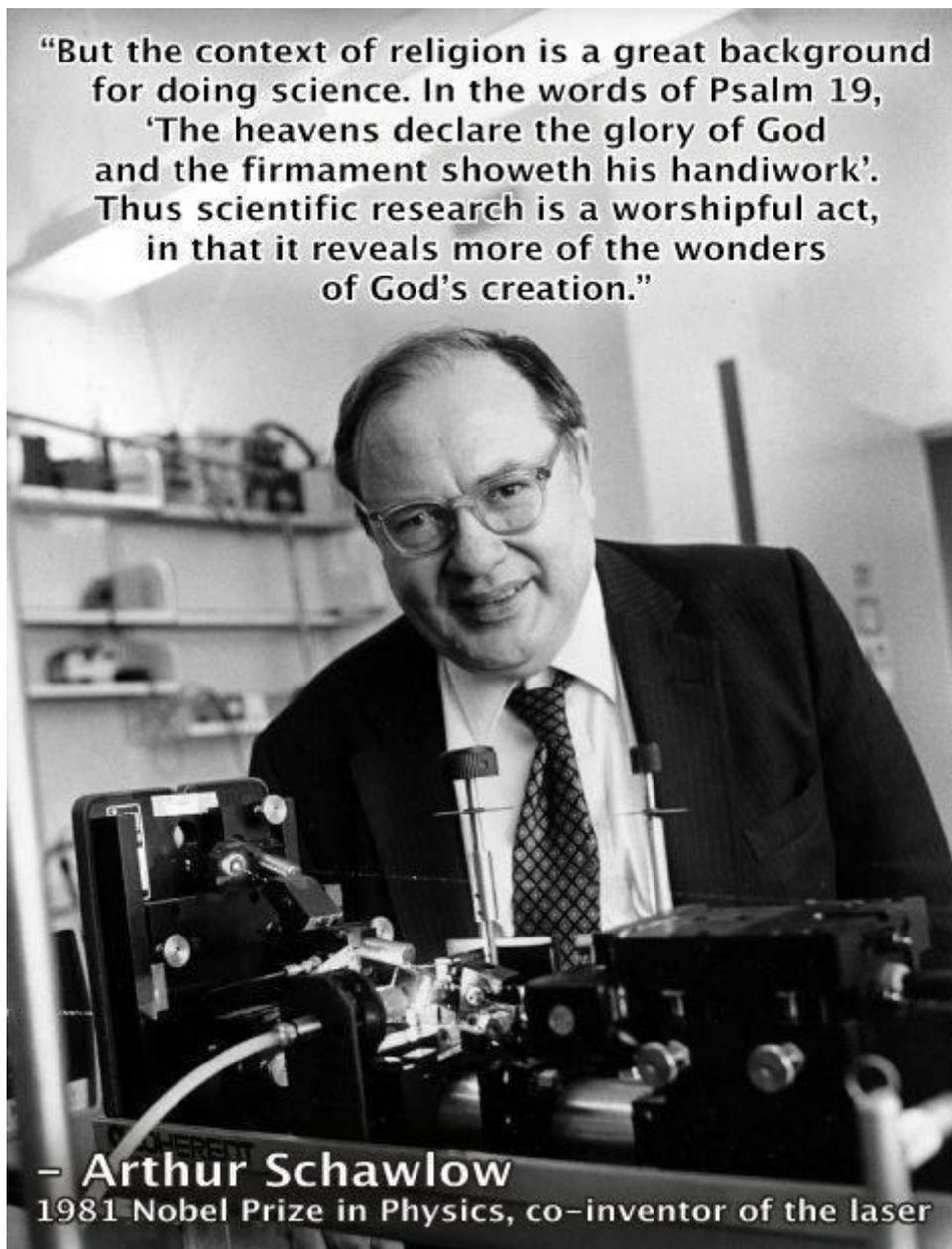
Back on 21st December 2016 I posted the following message on Facebook –

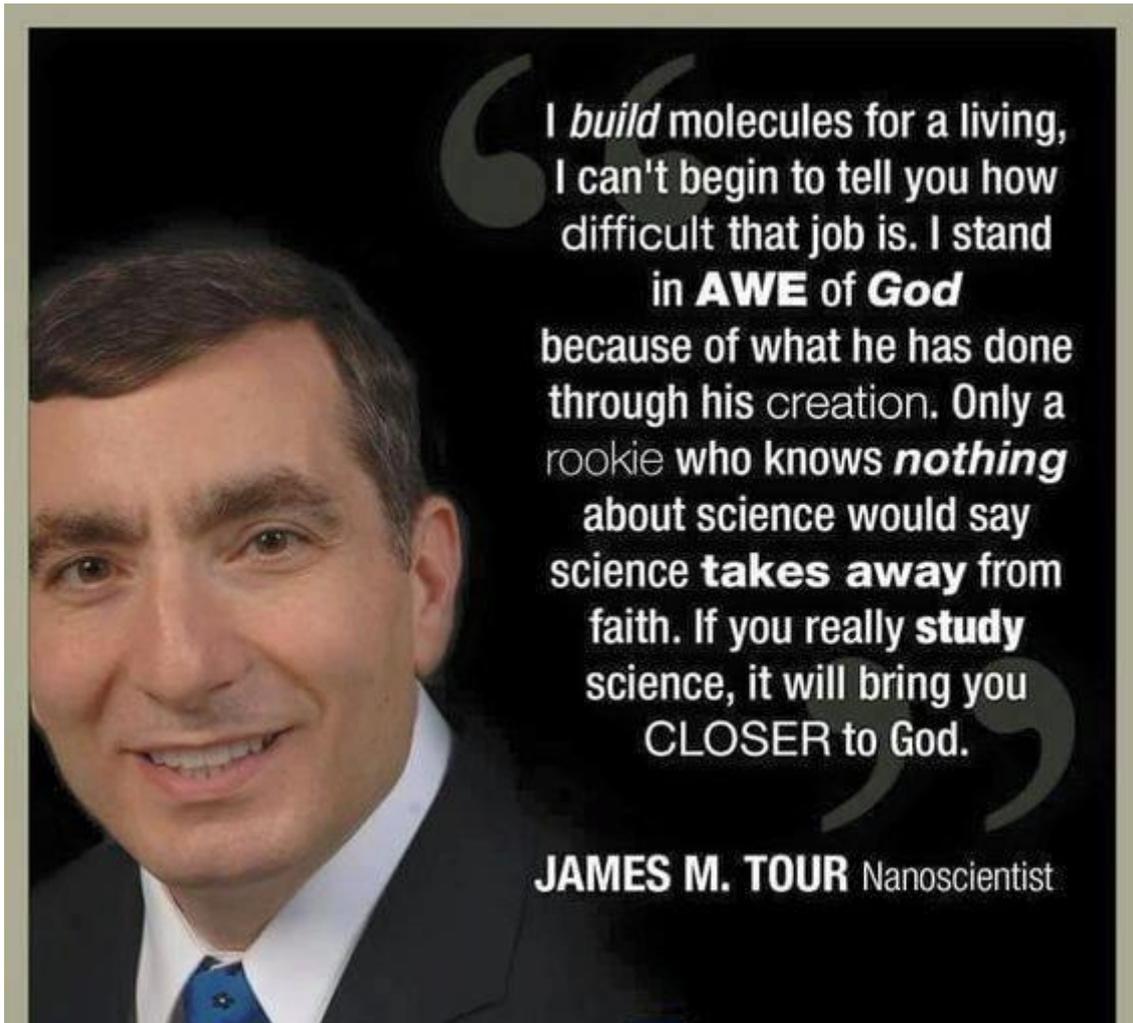
I've no doubt that in coming days these words from God's Word will be read in many churches around the world – "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo an angel of the Lord came upon them... And the angel said unto them, Fear not... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest... (Luke 2:8-14). **I have a question** for those who claim to be Christian but who reject creation as revealed to us by God in Genesis 1 & 2 and instead believe in 'THEISTIC EVOLUTION'. This is my question. **Was this "angel" of Luke 2 and the singing "heavenly host" the result of some evolutionary process in heaven or were they part of God's "very good" creation as told to us in Genesis 1:31 and Colossians 1:16?**

As I wrote earlier, **'In the last year or so, this has now become for me, a red-line issue where the whole matter of Christian fellowship is concerned'** – and why have I taken this view? Well, like one of old who will be especially remembered in this year, 2017 which is being designated as the 500th anniversary of The Reformation, I would like to paraphrase words attributed to him –

"Unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason... I do not accept 'THEISTIC EVOLUTION'... my conscience is captive to the Word of God... Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen."

I'll leave the last words in this article to two men who are obviously well qualified, and well-recognised to express a personal opinion on the whole subject of **science, origins** and the **Creator God** of the Bible -





Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 17 January 2017