

A

CHRISTIAN THEORY
OF EVERYTHING

II
Cor.
4:6



*“The whole difference
between construction and
creation is exactly this: that a
thing constructed can only be
loved after it is constructed;
but a thing created is loved
before it exists.”*

-Charles Dickens



A Christian Theory of Everything

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I

“For then we would know the mind of God.”

This is the final line from Stephen Hawking’s 1988 book *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*.

Hawking is one of many physicists throughout the history of science who has sought a unifying vision of reality. Scientists have searched for a TOE for a long time. Not a little TOE, or even a big TOE, but a grand-scale, super-TOE.

TOE is short hand for a “Theory of Everything.” If we were to find this TOE, as Hawking suggests, we would know very mind of God:

*“If we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason — for then we would know the mind of God.” (Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*)*

But the Christian has the audacity to claim that he already knows the mind of God. And to be fair to Hawking, he really doesn’t believe in God at all. That was not his point, *per se*.

However, for those who do believe in God, their search for a theory of everything is directed by an understanding that God is both Creator and Redeemer. For scientists like Isaac Newton through Francis Collins, this hasn’t hindered their science but rather enhanced it.

Edgar H. Andrews, Emeritus Professor of Materials at the University of London, in his book *Who Made God: Searching for a Theory of Everything* provides a helpful introduction to this topic:

“As I explain in chapter three, the scientist’s dream is to develop a ‘theory of everything’ – a scientific theory that will encompass all the workings of the physical universe in a single self-consistent formulation. Fair enough, but there is more to the universe than matter, energy, space and time. Most of us believe in the real existence of non-material entities such as friendship, love, beauty, poetry, truth, faith, justice and so on – the things that actually make human life worth living. A true ‘theory of everything’, therefore, must embrace both material and non-material aspects of the universe, and my contention is that we already possess such a theory, namely, the hypothesis of God.”

II

The gospel is a foolish message delivered to blind men in a fallen world.

And yet it is the very light by which they must see in order to understand the world in which they live.

I know this claim is audacious. Yet it is not unlike Hawking's assertion that to discover a theory of everything would be to know the mind of God. The Christian is so deluded as to think he understands the mystery of the cosmos. Or perhaps it the physicist who is deluded to think he can develop a complete theory of the universe apart from the Creator. Herein lies the challenge presented by the Apostle Paul:

"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

This passage teaches us that there is nothing that we can do apart from the Spirit of God to convince a skeptic.

This is not to say we don't love them, seek to answer their questions, work like crazy to understand their objections, but that ultimately their eyes are blinded

to the truth of the light of God's glory. Like the story of the blind man, unless Jesus is to spit in the ground, and press the moist clay into the eyes, they will not see.

Apologetics and Christian philosophy are not enough. They are helpful and important, but they are insufficient. If we are to develop a Christian TOE (Theory of Everything) we must understand that man is not a neutral bystander reflecting without bias on evidence and logical arguments. Few atheists are willing to admit as much. Without a proper understanding of spiritual warfare we may find that we are fighting the wrong battle:

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)

III

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

The two requirements for pleasing God are clear in the previous verse: (1) One must believe God exists; and (2) One must also believe God is personal, or a *rewarder* of those who seek Him. If Satan can blind men to the first category, they will never consider the second. This would blind them to ever considering the work of God in human history through the person of Christ.

While various methods have been used throughout history to obscure men from believing in God, in our day nothing appears more blinding than radical secularism. By this, I mean specific philosophical positions such as “logical positivism” or “scientism,” theories which accept only empirical data as true knowledge. I’ve written elsewhere that this is a philosophical position which is itself not scientifically verifiable. In other

words, such theories do not stand up to their own tests. Myths like “Christianity is at odds with science,” or “Atheism is purely based on science” are vlogged about freely in academia. Such claims are unfounded. As James Hanaam has eloquently illustrated in his book *The Genesis of Science*, the scientific method is an invention of monotheism. Nonetheless, our culture continues to allow myths to masquerade as truth. As G.K. Chesterton once said, “Fallacies do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions.”

Why is it that in our day fallacies have become the vogue? Perhaps the following quotes will help to shed light upon such questions:

The following excerpt comes from “The Last Word” written by Thomas Nagel, Professor of Law; Professor of Philosophy and Bioethics at New York University:

“In speaking of the fear of religion, I don’t mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper – namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and,

naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."

The following quote comes from a book review by Richard Lewontin, Harvard University Professor of Biology Emeritus, Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Emeritus:

"Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Some may argue that these quotes are taken out of context. However, there is nothing in either the book nor the article referenced that would lead the reader

to anything other than a straightforward understanding of the excerpts presented here. At the very starting point, before science is pursued, it seems a decision has been made, quite devoid of any evidence, to reject the existence of God. It appears that eyes have been blinded from the very beginning.

As Francis Schaeffer once said, *"I believe that pluralistic secularism, in the long run, is a more deadly poison than straightforward persecution."* I'm inclined to agree with him. For those with eyes to see, creation offers clues that will inform our meta-theory:

Psalm 19:1-3 "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard."

Romans 1:18-20 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

IV

*“For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”
(Hebrews 11:6)*

The key to unlocking the mystery of the cosmos is to understand where it came from; More specifically, whom it came from.

Second Corinthians 4:6 provides a clear reference to Genesis 1:1-4, with one subtle difference. In quoting God’s command “let there be light,” the Apostle Paul adds the line “out of darkness.” This is likely a reference to the spiritual darkness brought about by Satan’s blinding work on earth.

Genesis 1:1-4 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.”

God created the world by *fiat*. Here the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, the command was given for light to shine in darkness, then God affirmed that the light was good. Herein we find a striking parallel to the New Testament account of the baptism of Christ. Thus, the Creation and the Incarnation allow us to properly understand the meta-themes of our universe. Creation and Redemption are integral to and necessary for a theory of everything.

However, for centuries man has thought the universe was eternal and uncreated. We can rightly blame Aristotle for this foible. Like the secularism of our day, this fallacy blinded many from believing in God. Yet, science has allowed us to see this is not the case. One must note, however, in the face of Aristotle’s misstep, and down through the centuries, the Bible *did* have it right all along. There are two discoveries which helped to place the nails into the coffin of an eternal universe theory:

1. **Through the discoveries of the Hubble Telescope we were able to see that our universe is expanding; a tell-tale sign that there was a time when it exploded out of nothing.** In 1948, Edwin Hubble was asked by a BBC reporter to speak of the potential of the new telescope, to which he replied, “We hope to find something we hadn’t expected.” Stephen Hawking heralded Hubble’s achievements as “one of the great intellectual revolutions in the twentieth century.”

2. **Discovery of background radiation:** In 1965 Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson created a new antenna designed to detect low levels of microwave radiation. It was so sensitive that they found they could not get rid of the “background noise” particularly when it was pointed into space. However, they discovered a study from Princeton University that predicted that scientists should one day be able to detect background radiation in space left over from the explosion of the Big Bang. In time, Penzias and Wilson realized that that was precisely what they had found. In 1978 they received a Nobel Prize for their discovery.

In reflecting on this discovery, Penzias said *“The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the Bible as a whole.”* Similarly, Robert Jastrow recognized the insight religion provided for understanding origins. Jastrow was an accomplished astrophysicist who led multiple initiatives at NASA. Although he remained an agnostic until his death in 2008, in his earlier work *God and the Astronomers* he made this telling admission:

“At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he

is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

Understanding origins is fundamental to developing a theory of everything. In spite of popular philosophical commitments to the contrary, science continues to confirm the Bible’s claims regarding creation.

In an interview with Christianity Today Robert Jastrow made another astounding admission:

“Astronomers now find they have painted themselves into a corner because they have proven, by their own methods, that the world began abruptly in an act of creation to which you can trace the seeds of every star, every planet, every living thing in this cosmos and on the earth. And they have found that all this happened as a product of forces they cannot hope to discover. That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact.”

Christians have rightfully considered these “supernatural forces” which Jastrow refers to as “scientifically proven fact” to be the very work of God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness. Let’s now consider the implications of this truth further as we look at “Incarnation” and “Regeneration.”

V

“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

God commanded light to shine out of darkness at two times in the biblical narrative: Creation and the Incarnation. The Apostle John connects these two themes as well in the opening verses of his gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men....The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (John 1:1-4, 9-10)

Similarly, when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the Temple, Simeon, who had longed to see the Messiah, recognized God's work of sending light:

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peo-

ples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” (Luke 2:29-32)

A powerful parallel between Creation and the Incarnation can be found in Jesus' baptism as recorded in Luke's Gospel:

“...and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:21b-22)

Contrast this passage with Genesis 1:1-4:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.”

In both accounts we find darkness: In Luke it is a spiritual darkness as Israel had went for hundreds of years without a prophet or a word from God; In Genesis it is a physical darkness. In both accounts the Spirit of God is hovering above the face of the waters. In both accounts there is a pronouncement that the light is good. The Apostle Paul tethers these events in 2 Corinthians 4:6:

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge

of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Herein we find the answer to the riddle of life: That God has once again sent light, through His Son, in order that man might make sense of his world, and more importantly, make peace with his Creator. As John's gospel records, *"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."*

In Genesis God said "Let there be light." This command has reverberated throughout the corridors of human history, manifesting itself explicitly in the person and work of Christ, and now resonates in the hearts of believers. As John wrote, this true light "enlightens everyone" (John 1:9). It is through belief in Jesus that man experiences this light, or new birth, what theologians call "Regeneration."

Thus, the Christian Theory of Everything is summed up in three words: Creation, Incarnation, & Regeneration.

I offer this series in no way as a substitute for the physicist's hard work in understanding the universe. Like faithful Christians throughout the centuries, I see belief not as a substitute for science, but is instead as the basis for it. While the words "Creation, Incarnation, and Regeneration" may not tell you how to build a telescope, it will tell you how to interpret what you discover through it.

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

- C.S. Lewis

**SERIOUS THOUGHTS FROM
A PSEUDO-INTELLECTUAL**



About: I'm a sketching, writing, thinking, coffee drinking, husband, father, pastor, creative combatant, blessed with the opportunity to serve the faculty & staff of Boyce College. I post regularly on my blog Theolatte.com.

"A Christian Theory of Everything" is based on a sermon I preached at Eastside Community Church in Louisville, KY, by the title of, "Creation, Incarnation, & Regeneration: An Explanation of Reality." The audio from the sermon is available at: <http://www.eastidelouisville.org/the-gospel-explains-everything/>



Boyce College is the undergraduate school of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which exists to equip leaders to serve the church and engage the culture.

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