THE LEGACY OF DUYVENE DE WIT FOR CREATIONIST BIOLOGY: PART I — THE MAN AND HIS LIFE

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Abstract

This is part one of a three-part series of articles on the life and work of J. J. Duyvene De Wit, a Dutch biologist, who ascribed to the Creation viewpoint and actively worked against the falsity of evolutionary concepts.

A Man to Remember

Dr. J. J. Duyvene De Wit, professor of biology at the University of Orange Free State in South Africa, was an untiring creationist whose major ambition in life was to rally the forces of Christianity to do battle against evolutionism on all fronts.

In his inaugural address when a professor of physiology in Amsterdam he emphasized that if a scientist who is a Christian will avoid *unscientific speculations* derived from non-Christian philosophies, he can avoid many of the conflicts that are said to exist between science and faith. In contrast, the humanist forever gets embarrassing controversies, because he must and does indulge in such speculations. As a biologist he came to this conclusion after an intensive study of the philosophy of nature, developed by Dr. Herman Dooyeweerd.

During the last two years of his life De Wit struck up an intensive correspondence with Dr. George Howe. His purpose was to bring together representatives of the Creation Research Society and those members of the new Christian philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd who had not embraced evolutionism. Alas, his sudden death in 1965 put an end to this project. His article "The Impact of Herman Dooyeweerd's Christian Philosophy upon Present Day Biological Thought" was published posthumously in 1965 as one chapter in the book *Philosophy and Christianity*. This book contained 29 essays dedicated to Dooyeweerd, upon his retirement from teaching philosophy of law and other courses at the Free University of Amsterdam.

Today evolutionists are still winning major propaganda victories in the battle between creationists and transformists. We sometimes tend to despair and wonder whether we are fighting the good fight in a way worthy of God's blessing. For that reason it may be an inspiration for us to have a closer look at the work of this courageous fighter for creationism and to try and find answers to questions such as these: What motivated him? How successful were his methods? Can his example inspire us to adopt his aim and methods? Where do we go from here? And what is his legacy? Who was this man De Wit?

Dr. Howe sent me his correspondence with these questions in mind. In what follows I will try to find some of the answers, since they could prove to be instructive to us today.

Professional Career

J. J. Duyvene De Wit was born in Holland on March 5, 1909. He studied biology in Utrecht and received his M.Sc. in 1933. From 1933 to 1946 De Wit was head of the scientific department of a pharmaceutical company. In his spare time he continued his research with the species of Bitterling, a small fresh water fish.

In 1939 he earned his Ph.D. "cum laude" with as topic for his thesis: *The Sexual-endocrine Organization of Rhodeus Amarus Bloch and the Significance of the Ovipositor Test for Endrocrinology in General.*

From 1946 to 1950 he served as head of the Institute for Animal Production under the auspices of the Central Organization for Applied Scientific Research of The Netherlands. He continued his research on the Bitterling at the University of Utrecht.

In 1950 and 1951 De Wit served as Professor of Physiology at the Free University in Amsterdam and remained scientific advisor to the Institute for Animal Production. From 1951 to 1964 he was Professor of Zoology, University of the Orange Free State, South Africa.

During these years he devoted himself not only to scientific work but also to the battle against evolutionism. This latter activity eventually cost him his standing within his profession. He had begun a research project pertaining to various representatives of the fish of the Acheilognathinae group, commonly called Bitterlings, but funding for this effort was suspended. Next he was put on half pay, his teaching activities were curtailed and he was offered a small position as researcher.

When he first contacted Dr. Howe in 1963, he had heard of the latter's interest in the battle against transformism and inquired about a possible teaching position in the United States. He badly wanted a more congenial environment in which to labor.

On July 25, 1965, just a few months after the untimely passing of his 19 year old son, Dr. De Wit died while on vacation in Italy.

Professional Correspondence

In a letter of October 24, 1963[1] De Wit referred to Howe's paper: "Miracles and the Study of Creation," by stating that he had requested that "lines of descent between primates and man" be removed from displays at the Transvaal Museum.

He complained that the overwhelming majority of Christian biologists are transformists who see evolution as the way God created man. As a consequence they hold that "an animal heritage in man is present, accounting for his moral deficiency, and replacing sin in its true Scriptural meaning." "The fight against this is a heavy one."

In December 1963[2] De Wit announced the publication of an article on Teilhard de Chardin[3] in *Creative Minds in Modern Theology* and also in *Philosophia Reformata*,[4] a journal of Christian philosophy, of which Dr. Herman Dooyeweerd was editor.

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In a letter of February 1964[5] he mentioned that he had sent two treatises telling how difficult it is to find scientific substantiation for evolutionism to some 25 "top biologists," including Dobzhansky, Grobstein, Julian Huxley, E. Mayr, H. J. Muller, B. Rensch, Overhage, Portman, A. Remane, Stich, Stebbings, G. G. Simpson, Waddington, and others for comments.

In March 1964[6] he discussed some of the replies from the biologists to whom he had sent his treatises.

H. J. Muller of Indiana University refused to go over his objections to transformation point by point. The reason: he thoroughly disagreed with them!

Sir Julian Huxley was astonished that De Wit's bias could bring him to ignore the evidence for evolution as presented by man's embryonic gills and tail. And how could he question the validity of the general theory of gradual evolution by natural selection after he, Huxley, as well as Dobzhansky, Rensch and Mayr had written whole books showing its validity!

Dobzhansky wrote that he was a Christian and was sorrowful and ashamed by De Wit's attitude. He felt that such writings would be welcomed by all militant atheists because they displayed obscurantism, blindness and were reactionary in character.

G. G. Simpson expressed his shock that a professor in the Department of Zoology in what is "supposed to be a university" would write such a treatise. He had even thought that this university was located in a civilized country! He considered De Wit to do a great disservice to Christianity and religion. He refused to address himself to the arguments since he disagreed with De Wit.

Rensch referred De Wit to his books for his opinion on the questions raised. He objected to the "mixing of science and religion." Religion developed slowly and not always in correspondence with the facts, whose investigation is the task of science. But now fortunately many Catholic and Protestant theologians have begun to coordinate scientific facts and religious interpretations. These men now believe that all organisms arose through a slow process of development through natural forces, all the way to man. He hoped that these theologians would convince all Christians now of the scientific merits of evolution.

It is interesting for us to see how some famous scientists descended to the level of the ancient sophists by attacking their opponent "ad hominem" instead of with rational arguments. These sophists pointed at some regrettable feature in their opponents' character, be it a lack of intelligence (he is a fool) or a lack of morals (he is a crook).

On Christian Philosophy

In April 1964[7] De Wit agreed with Howe's statement that "as soon as the light of God's Word penetrates apostate deliberations (religious, philosophical and scientific . . .) then, by inner necessity, it reveals itself as prophetic."

Concerning opposition that such activity might bring from committed evolutionists, De Wit wrote: "If our work does not *evoke* anti-Christian reactions of all sorts, we may question ourselves whether we are moving on the right track!" He posed an open question for evolutionists as follows:

> What have you, so-called non-conservative and scientifically 'enlightened' people *contributed* to the spiritual unfolding and deployment of our world during the last century? What securities, standards, norms, etc. have you developed which transcend, or even equal those which developed already in our Western culture as the result of Christianity taken in its true sense? Nothing but three wars, two of which were world wars.

In a June 16, 1964[8] letter De Wit spoke of Christians who refuse to take a stand. He expressed the hope that some prominent biologists would soon come to the fore who would join him in the task of attacking Darwinism on the scientific *as well as the philosophical* level.

> My greatest concern at present is the increasing sympathy of certain kinds of Christians with secularized science and philosophics for ecumenical reasons. As a result the true children of God become more embarrassed by them than by their non-Christian neighbors.

On July 24, 1964[9] De Wit mentioned the fact that Christians live side by side but apart from each other because of denominational barriers. And yet, so many are agreed on this central issue: they believe God's record of creation and reject man's transformist speculations. He expressed his desire to work for bringing all scientists who are creationists together in spite of their different backgrounds.

In a letter of August 12, 1964[10] De Wit further elaborated on the means by which he felt that this ideal could be realized. He recognized that *the major obstacle is the prevailing lack of insight into the philosophical aspects of biology as a science.* Because of this lack, Christian biologists miss a great weapon in their fight against the transformists. He argued as follows:

> The question at issue, which in my opinion is of essential importance to the further policy of the CRS, can only be treated from the standpoint of Christian philosophy . . . This philosophy is however not known among creationists and I think it absolutely necessary that they become intrinsically acquainted with it.[11]

He urged George Howe and John Moore to attend a conference, to be held on the philosophy of science at Unionville in Canada that summer.[12] Dr. Moore went and wrote a report on his experience, which was reprinted in the October 27, 1964 issue of *Calvinist Contact,* a Christian weekly in Canada.[13] The reason Moore went, he wrote, was his reading of some "tremendously important" articles by Duyvene De Wit. He found it to be "most fulfilling to my mind and spirit." Studying the Christian philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd through reading *In the Twilight of Western Thought*[14] and seeing it applied at the Unionville conference was for him "a wonderful experience." He urged other Christian scholars to investigate this law-philosophy of Dooyeweerd, because he saw the answer there to the traditional theistic evolutionary thoughts of so many Christian scholars. De Wit[15] asked that Dr. Howe have Dr. Moore write in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* about the conference in these words: "Both circles of Christians (i.e. *scientists and philosophers* M.V.) MUST come to intrinsic cooperation and understanding."

He also mentioned that his articles on Teilhard de Chardin and on transformism would be published in *Philosophia Reformata,*[16] edited by Dr. Herman Dooyeweerd, with a foreword by Dr. Mekkes, Professor of philosophy in Holland. Thus De Wit's anti-evolu-

tionist ideas had found a good reception among reformed philosophers in the school of Dooyeweerd.

De Wit[17] wrote that he had sent a request to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) for a grant for research on the problem of how a species originates and what it really is. For elucidation of these questions he proposed to do research on the commensalism between his favorite fish, the Bitterling, and the Mussel. He stated that a side issue to be investigated was the problem of genetic pauperization. In the accompanying bibliography he listed 79 publications by him on related subjects, some of them in co-authorship with others. De Wit felt that his work would help to put his anti-transformist position on a more scientific basis.

A request to withdraw this grant application was mentioned in correspondence of December 14, 1964.[18] De Wit received a letter from NSF asking him to withdraw his application for a research grant. The reasons were rather technical, but he was told that if he had been an American, he would have stood a good chance:

> . . . likely you would have been on the other side of the wire. Your credentials are excellent and the work you are doing is important. It should be quite a feather in the cap of the University of the Orange Free State to have a scholar of your status on campus.

On February 1, 1965[19] he informed Dr. Howe of the rejection of his application. He had also had further grants for continuing his research in South Africa denied. Indeed, his transformist colleagues were trying to remove him because of his anti-evolutionary position. De Wit also mentioned that Dr. Riemer of NSF wrote that he would gladly support De Wit's application for a grant from the South African authorities because of the scientific merits of the work as recognized by the 13 American scientists who reviewed his application.

On May 17, 1965[20] De Wit reported that the booklet on his critique of transformism had been favorably received by several scholars in philosophy and theology at the Universities of Potchefstroom, Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein. He ended his letter with:

> Although you will be extremely busy, of course, during the period ahead, I hope that you will find time to write me off and on about our common work and task against evolutionism.

Soon after this final letter, Dr. J. J. Duyvene De Wit, dedicated fighter against evolutionism, suddenly died. All we have today is the writings he left behind. In the next paper we shall examine the fruits of his labor.

Readers who are interested to learn more about the amazing Cosmonomic view that inspired Dr. De Wit and others to abandon evolution as a "scientific" approach to the question of origins, may well wish to investigate the following papers and books:

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Kalsbeek, L. 1975. *Contours of a Christian Philosophy.* Wedge Publications, Toronto. (Dooyeweerd has always felt this to be the best available introduction to his philosophy.)

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QUOTE

Charles Steinmetz, the visionary electrical engineer, said in 1930, of all things:

> I think the greatest discovery will be made along spiritual lines. Here is a force which history clearly teaches has been the greatest power in the development of men and history. Yet we have merely been playing with it and have never seriously studied it as we have the physical forces. Some day people will learn that material things do not bring happiness, and are of little use in making men and women creative and powerful. Then the scientists of the world will turn their laboratories over to the study of God and prayer, and the spiritual forces that have hardly been scratched.

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THE LEGACY OF DUYVENE DE WIT FOR CREATIONIST BIOLOGY PART II: THE FOLLY OF MAN AND THE WORKS OF THE LORD

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Abstract

This is part two of a three-part series of articles on the life and work of J. J. Duyvene De Wit, a Dutch biologist, who ascribed to the Creation viewpoint and actively worked against the falsity of evolutionary concepts.

The Unscientific Nature of Evolution

In the previous article I gave a brief glimpse of the life of Dr. J. J. Duyvene de Wit, a tireless fighter against the nearly overwhelming forces of evolution in the academic world.[1]

De Wit had a life-long goal for which he worked till the end. It was that all Christians who accept the creation record, regardless of their other theological differences, would join forces in the battle against evolution.

He felt that it would be much easier to convince undecided and misinformed Christians to do so if they could be shown that *evolution is not a scientific theory but an article of a non-Christian faith.*

We will now examine the contributions he left behind in the ongoing struggle we still must face. I hope to demonstrate that his legacy, which is not widely known among creationists, contains an arsenal of great value in our battle.

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Examining Evidences for Evolution

De Wit delivered a lecture entitled "The Paleontological Record and the Origin of Man" to the Scientific Society of the University of the Orange Free State in South Africa on August 28, 1963.

He began with a quote from a speech, given by Dr. Abraham Kuyper in 1899 entitled "Evolution."

> The doctrine of evolution is a newly invented system, a newly conceived doctrine, a newly formed dogma, a new rising belief, which places itself over against the Christian faith, and can only found its temple on the ruins of our Christian confession.[2]

The intervening 64 years have confirmed these prophetic words. De Wit stated that as Copernicus in his day was persecuted for his astrophysical discoveries by scholastic religious doctrinaires, so scientists who have discovered the systemic discontinuities in biology are persecuted and ridiculed by the modern evolutionary doctrinaires with their metaphysical doctrine of a universal continuity of life.

There are non-Christian as well as Christian biologists who recognize how the theory of evolution deviates from the available scientific data, but their minor-

ity view is not tolerated among the ruling scientists. The violent emotional reaction of the majority against the opinion of the dissenters, which often borders on fanaticism, testifies to the religious character of the transformist doctrine.

De Wit pointed out that the confession of man's descent from the apes is in direct conflict with Scripture and he warned that theologians and elders who have adopted this view are deceiving the people on religious grounds, and, he said, they are equally guilty of *scientific deceit.*

He pointed out the differences between the "Special" theory and the "General" theory of evolution. The former can be studied, because it deals with variation within a species, not with evolution. The general theory exists only as an extrapolation of the "special" theory. But since this special theory does not deal with evolution, this extrapolation is unfounded and hence *unscientific.*

Because the general theory is not based on observed data, it cannot be tested. For that reason *it is not a scientific theory* revealing the gravity of the betrayal of people, including theologians, *by the scientists.*

De Wit then proceeded to give evidence for his thesis that the transformist principle can no longer stand its scientific ground. He based his argument on findings in the fields of paleontology, genetics, embryology, and taxonomy.

De Wit concluded a lengthy discussion of the findings pertaining to fossils of human remains with the words "No fossil documentation whatsoever with respect to the assumed animal ancestors of man has been found. Hence paleontology cannot help us with hard facts."[3]

Mutations caused by physical influences such as radiation cause changes *within a species only.* No new species have been produced in our experiments. Most such influences produce defective organisms. The rare exception which shows some possibly beneficial change cannot balance the deleterious effects upon the whole population affected.

Recombination of *extant* genetic material is supposed to be the main source of adaptive adjustment to changing environmental factors. Thus, in a border situation of migrating specimens, natural selection will eliminate the less adaptable individuals and a small elite will remain, establishing a new race. Further isolation will prevent interbreeding and it is speculated that eventually beneficial mutations will produce a new species.

De Wit commented that a pioneering population only takes a portion of the genes of the original population along. This results in a *pauperization* of its gene pool. If this had happened, it would have produced disastrous consequences. As he noted "When the process of speciation repeats itself often, a final species arises whose gene pool is so much exhausted that very small environmental changes suffice to contrive their extinction."[4]

He noted that the extinction of some 99 percent of all species that ever lived shows that none of them could adapt to survive. It does not show why only *one percent* managed to survive, nor how they originated. That leaves the optimistic theory of progressive genetic improvement of species through recombination of extant genetic material dangling without support from the findings of extinction. If man had arisen from the amoeba, he must have lost an uncountable number of genes in the process! As De Wit said it would be more reasonable to expect the amoeba to invent the theory of relativity than poorly endowed man.

De Wit observed that since the pauperization of gene pools rules out evolution through genetic recombination, evolutionists have no alternative but to assume that small populations of basic genotypes, endowed with enormous recombinational potencies, *must have* arisen at different places and times. But he rightly added that no biologist is competent to interpret such postulated appearances. It would amount to "special acts of creation." That, he said, is really a matter of religious and philosophical character. De Wit concluded that the discoveries of genetics have not produced any evidence to support the transformist doctrine.

One of the cornerstones of the transformist doctrine is the thesis that the transition "from amoeba to man" has been accomplished *in the cell nucleus only* through genetic changes. De Wit challenged this concept in his lecture. There are other areas of a cell besides the nuclear genes that play an important role in the transmission of hereditary characteristics. Here are the arguments he presented in his speech.

All the cells in our body possess the same chromosomes with their genes. Yet, there are thousands of different types of cells, all with the same "genetic code" in their DNA molecules. Some individuals have a male chromosome pattern and a female appearance (Turner's syndrome). Others have a male appearance with a female chromosome pattern (Klinefelter's syndrome).

Some animal and vegetable species are so similiar that taxonomically they belong to the same species. Yet, their genetic karyogram is different and they do not interbreed. They are called cryptic species or phenocopies. Experiments have demonstrated that many body characteristics are transmitted through the cytoplasm and the cell cortex, not the nucleus.

He quoted embryologists who have discovered these features, which point to the possibility that the genes in the nucleus play a role mainly in the transmission of the *intra*-species characteristics while the rest of the cell, the cytoplasm and the cortex, determine the overall body build, i.e. the *inter*-specific characteristics.

An e nucleated egg of the sea-urchin *Echinus* can be fertilized by the sperm cell of the feather-star *Antedon,* which belongs to a different biological order. The cell, without a nucleus, begins to multiply and forms a maternal type of embryo, typical for *Echinus,* as far as it goes. This seems to indicate that the major body features are formed without a contribution from nuclear genetic material.

Experiments with larval hybridization have confirmed this. The major features of an organism are transmitted through the informational code residing in the cortex and cytoplasm. The nuclear hereditary material only controls the minor variations between individuals within a species (wrongly called as evidence for "special" evolution). In other words, the whole cell is needed for propagation.

All this, concluded De Wit, renders the concept of evolution as based on nuclear mutations *only,* obsolete.

If it is true that it is mainly the cytoplasm (minus the nucleus with its genes in DNA) which transmits the characteristics of the species, a change in DNA alone cannot give rise to a new species. Such a change, a mutation, can only cause individual variations (usually deleterious ones) *within* the species. Hence evolution has lost mutation through alteration of its DNA as its "mechanism of operation."

Transformist taxonomists assume that all groups belonging to one major taxonomic group such as a phylum, arose from one root: they are "monophyletic." But now this is being questioned. De Wit quoted authors who claim that the evidence points to a polyphyletic origin of taxonomically similar groups.

There is evidence, he said, that the evolution of the horse might be even as chaotic as that proposed by Osborn for the evolution of the Proboscidae. The squid family is admitted to be polyphyletic as well as many groups of the viruses, bacteria, protozoa, arthropoda, amphibia, reptilia and mammalia. Among the mammals even some orders appear to be polyphyletic.

All this made Kerkut conclude: ". . . much of the evolution of the major groups of animals has to be taken on trust. It seems at times as if our modern writers on evolution have had their views by some sort of revelation . . ."[5]

A similar predicament has befallen the theories on the origin of man. Some of the more differentiated and "human" looking fossils were more widespread and their possessors lived much earlier than those of some of the less human looking remains.

According to De Wit a much better explanation is that because of the enormous genetic variability of the human race some groups degenerated (as a result of sinful behavior such as cannibalism?) and succumbed while other groups continued to inhabit the earth.

De Wit proclaimed the transformist doctrine to be highly unscientific on all counts and therefore unacceptable. As a result, he stated, we must reorient our thinking towards our real Origin: the word of God, our Creator. And he concluded his lecture with these words:

> To those who see, it will be obvious that, on account of accumulated evidence, a Copernican turn of biological thought announces itself. It presents a radical challenge to present-day biological scholars, which is primarily of a religious nature. For this reason this compels us to renewed religious self-examination and subsequent inner reformation of our biological outlook.[6]

Articles on the Philosophy of Biology

In 1964 De Wit published two articles, the first of which was entitled: "Teilhard de Chardin, the Founder of a new Pseudo-Christian Evolutionary Mysticism."[7] De Wit demonstrated that the famous Jesuit priest (anthropologist-paleontogist) had made yet another futile attempt to marry pagan thinking to the Christian religion. And modern-day theistic evolutionary thinking as held by "reformed" Christians is just as inspired by pagan thinking as that of De Chardin.

De Wit's second article in *Philosophia Reformata*[8] was of more interest to a biologist. It contained much of what he stated in the public address which I have just reviewed, but a few additional points are important to mention. He began by saying that the biologist has always been confronted with the problem of observing verifiable evidence, and his subjective interpretation of it.

His interpretation was always guided either consciously or unconsciously by his philosophical view of the totality of the world. And this in turn was dominated by his religious position.

Modern scientists maintain that their first task is to keep science "rational and neutral." But this attempt must be "dearly paid for" in biology, said De Wit:

> The intended attitude of neutrality which aims at the preservation of religious peace of mind, at least in scientific matters, becomes sorely disturbed by the *dualistic split* between *scientific knowledge* (pertaining to discontinuity) and supra-scientific *faith* (in continuity).[9]

Torn between these two poles, the biologist must choose between *scientific evidence* which points to morphological discontinuity and his *faith* in evolution, which makes him look for morphological proof of the phylogenetic continuity in the rise of all living species.

The Christian starts from the other side. Divine revelation teaches that man is of Divine origin just as is the entire cosmos. For that reason there can be no conflict between "God's salvatory revelation in Christ Jesus and God's revelation in His creation or 'nature' because both have their root in the Divine Word itself."[10] The remarkable thing is then that his scientific findings and their interpretation never conflict with his faith. It is not evolution which produces man and his theories. God produces man and man produces his theories. Clearly the evolutionist turns reality upside-down and reverses the existing order of man and his theory-making.

De Wit proceeded to give ample quotations from leading evolutionists which prove that discontinuity is admitted by many from the scientific evidence. But still, they cling to their transformist thesis, especially concerning the evolution of man from the primates. How can this be? He quoted from noted evolutionists and then asserted that the evolutionist reasons as follows.

It is generally acknowledged that nothing is known about the origin of man. A supernatural origin of man is ruled out. In the absence of an alternative it is still *believed* that man evolved from the animal kingdom. Because of the general acceptance of this *belief*, it is held up as a scientific truth.

To make matters worse, wrote De Wit, many Christians are transformists and decry the denial of this "scientific truth" by creationists. These "theistic evolutionists" fail to recognize that *the evolutionary theory is based on faith instead of science.* And so they have the unchristian gall to accuse creationists of doing a disservice to Christianity because of their "obscurantism" or other regrettable defects in their character.

De Wit pointed to another irrational twist in modern theoretical biology. An organism dies from senile decay and now it is assumed that *phyletic units also expire from senility.* Thus evolutionists confer upon the *abstract concept* of a phylum the attributes of a living organism. They "personalize and animate" the abstract concept phylum like the Greeks "personalized

and animated" the abstract concept of beauty, called it Venus, and assigned to it the qualities of a living organism.

This type of reasoning of course represents an old form of idolatry known as *animism.*[11] It is a faith that is in direct conflict with the professed rationalistic nature of the science of modern man. Hence transformism is not only profoundly unscientific, it is self-contradictory and thus *irrational* as a philosophy, and it is borne by an apostate faith.

The question "What is man? Who is he?" cannot be answered by man himself, concluded De Wit. For a Christian biologist the answer given by the revelation from God's Word and the limits set by Him to our actual observations form the indispensible point of departure for a veritable science of man.

In a final article I hope to demonstrate how a thoroughly Christian approach to creation can lead us to a Scriptural philosophy of nature and a reformation of the sciences.

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11. Verbrugge, M. 1982. Animism in science. *Journal for Christian Reconstruction,* 8(2):79-107. I have demonstrated that modern humanists throughout the major disciplines of science still endow abstract ideas and concrete inanimate things with a "spirit," which is to animate them. They personify their own inventions and ascribe to them the power to act, grow and to produce, i.e., the power to create, just like the Greeks did. Animism is the inevitable basis of all science that rejects the Creator.

THE CREATION OF PLANETARY MAGNETIC FIELDS

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Abstract

God could have started magnetic fields in the solar system in a very simple way: by creating the original atoms of the planets with many of their nuclear spins pointing in the same direction. The small magnetic fields of so many atomic nuclei add up to fields large enough to account for the magnetism of the planets. Within seconds after creation, ordinary physical events would convert the alignment of nuclei into a large electric current circulating within each planet, maintaining the magnetic field. The currents and fields would decay steadily over thousands of years, as Barnes has pointed out. The present magnetic field strengths of the Earth, Sun, Moon, and planets agree very well with the values produced by this theory and a 6000-year age for the solar system. The theory is consistent with all the known data and explains many facts which have puzzled evolutionists.

Introduction

The Earth's magnetic field is what makes compass needles point north. In an earlier paper[1] I showed that God could have started the Earth's field in a very simple way, by using the magnetic fields of spinning atomic nuclei (Figure 1). He could have created many of the Earth's original atomic nuclei with their spins pointing in a particular direction. The small magnetic fields of so many nuclei would add up to a field large enough to account for the Earth's magnetism.

Immediately after their creation, the atoms would begin to collide due to normal thermal motions. Within seconds these collisions would knock the nuclei out of their original alignment into a more random order. But the ordinary laws of electricity and magnetism would maintain the magnetic field by starting up a large electric current — billions of amperes — in the Earth's conductive interior. The process is shown in Figure 2.

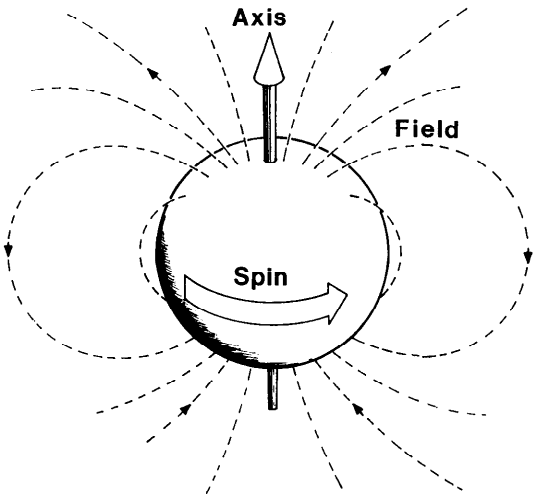

Figure 1. Magnetic field of an atomic nucleus. Atoms of many elements, such as hydrogen, have spinning nuclei. Such a nucleus has a small magnetic field, like that of a small bar magnet lined up with the spin axis.

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THE LEGACY OF DUYVENE DE WIT FOR CREATIONIST BIOLOGY: PART III — THE COSMONOMIC PHILOSOPHY: A CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE TO EVOLUTIONISM

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Abstract

This is Part III in the series of articles dealing with the life and philosophy of science of Duyvene De Wit, a Dutch biologist. This part specifically focuses on how De Wit was influenced by the writings of Herman Dooyeweerd.

A Posthumous Essay on Christian Philosophy

In previous articles I discussed the arguments, presented by the late Dr. J. J. Duyvene De Wit, a noted anti-evolutionary biologist, for the unscientific nature of evolution.[1]

In this, the last of a series of three, I will discuss an article which he wrote and dedicated to Professor Herman Dooyeweerd on the occasion of the latter's seventieth birthday. It was published after De Wit's tragic sudden death.[2]

Its main thesis is that *the Christian scientist can no longer ignore the philosophical implications of his discipline.* For the biologist this comes through loud and clear because of the nature of evolution. It is not a scientific theory but rather is a philosophical and religious view of the genesis of the living world. Its basic doctrine is that of continuous transformation of species and its accessory theories are mutation and selection.

Because of its philosophical character evolutionism is challenged by the Christian biologist who knows philosophy and who seeks the religious presuppositions behind such a philosophy. It is in this context that De Wit wrote:

> Professor Dooyeweerd's Christian philosophy has opened my eyes to the tremendous task which lies ahead for those who feel compelled to contribute to an intrinsic reformation of modern biological and anthropological thought.[3]

De Wit began by stating that Dooyeweerd has made important contributions to the life sciences and has introduced a new approach to the interpretation of scientific data which allows Christians to see a more coherent picture of reality.

Dobzhansky wrote that nobody has yet offered a satisfactory definition of life. The reason for that, says Dooyeweerd, is that life is usually thought of as a "something," a metaphysical "substance." Yet, life is not a concrete "something" that we can put under a microscope, but a *characteristic* displayed by the concrete living things we observe.

De Wit dealt with the term "species," as used in taxonomy. The Greeks saw fixed, unchangeable "ideas" underneath the variable phenomena of living things. Such unchanging ideas led to the concept of unchanging species. Linnaeus built his taxonomic edifice on this basis: ON WHAT HE SAW, not on metaphysical "ideas."

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Evolutionary thinkers first set out to destroy this Greek notion of the fixity of the species since it conflicts with the concept of evolution. In its place came population thinking, which is more consistent with it.

Aristotle assumed an immanent substance, an "essential form" behind all observed living things. He saw this substance as the "formal cause" of the development of matter into living things and of eggs into mature organisms.[4] This "cause" received the name of *telos* or *entelechy*, meaning "end goal' or purpose. The doctrine of seeing the end result of development as its cause became known as *teleology*. Dooyeweerd, wrote De Wit, demonstrated that this doctrine of teleology is of pagan origin. It is pure speculation without any scientific value and even defies simple logic.[5]

The Cosmic Philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd as a Basis for Biological Science

In the place of this pagan thinking about concrete things Dooyeweerd formulated his theory of the *Individuality Structures* of things in which all living beings display an orderly development which is governed by the laws, obviously given for each species. The entire *cosmos* to which they belong is governed by God's *nomos*. (Hence the name "cosmonomic" for this philosophy.)

These groups of laws, specific for each species, are the regularities which the Lord set for His creatures. They are the laws which we scientists investigate. Examples are the manner in which organisms grow, reproduce and make proteins. These specific law-groups through which God governs the individual members of a species Dooyeweerd called their "individuality structures."

As the complement to his theory of individuality structures Dooyeweerd formulated the theory of *Encapsis*, which accounts for the amazing ability of living beings to "capture" inanimate material. Organisms manage to transform this material and make it perform physical and chemical reactions in an orderly fashion, an order, not found among atoms and molecules when placed outside a living organism. And yet these particles, atoms and many small molecules, retain their own individuality and structure while in "captivity."

Dooyeweerd was careful to emphasize that his theories were based on observations which all biologists can make. They contain no untestable speculations about substances and autonomous striving towards a goal, i.e. teleology, as believed by the Greeks and the vitalists of the beginning of our century.

The Bankruptcy of Evolutionist Philosophy

In order to make evolution acceptable, its believers first had to destroy the basic modes in which we experience reality. They had to proclaim that the "life-mode" or "life-aspect" which we see is merely a complex form of matter in motion. The essential difference between dead and alive, which every human being intuitively experiences, had to be denied. Life was *reduced* to a special condition of inanimate matter. But that flies in the face of all scientific observation of reality. So, in order to make evolution acceptable, man must first *abandon the scientific method.*

Next, wrote Dooyeweerd, the individuality structures of living beings, the laws for their functioning which we abstract as the "laws of nature," had to go. *No laws, as discovered by experimental biologists, could have any permanent status.* They were mere transient peculiarities seen in organisms.[6]

It is obvious to even the most casual observer of life that each living thing functions under laws of great order and harmony. If life were to have arisen from atoms and molecules, which all function under their established laws of random interaction, these laws must have been suspended *for a time.* Thus the materialistic theory of abiogenesis suddenly requires something "supernatural": a miracle. In the past this was called a *spontaneous generation.* Its new name of abiogenesis does not make the theory less magical.[7]

The laws of genetics, wrote De Wit, have been found to affect only the inheritance and modification of characteristics *within* a species. Thus the theory of spontaneous transformation of one species into another one, regardless of the number of *assumed* spontaneous molecular misplacements in DNA requires the assumption of a concept such as "spontaneous generation" or a special "act of creation."

Guided by his doctrine the evolutionist *must* boldly take the jump into the unknown and declare that all species arose through such transformations. *Their faith left them no choice.* De Wit also gave evidence that points to the crucial role which the cortex and cytoplasm of the egg cell play in transmitting the characteristics of a species.

When the nucleus of a renal adenocarcinoma cell of an adult frog was transplanted to an enucleated, unfertilized frog egg, a nearly perfect frog embryo developed. He quoted Raven:

> The group-specific fundamentals of the body plan which make the developing animal, e.g. into an anuran or a bony fish, are determined by factors residing in the cortex and the cytoplasm of the fertilized egg. Only after completion of the first phases of development, up to the beginning of gastrulation, do the nuclear genes begin to unfold their activity in order to establish the intraspecific characteristics of the developing organism.[8]

Experiments with grafting segments of cortex or cytoplasm have yielded similar evidence that confirmed the important role of the cortical membrane and cytoplasm of egg cells in heredity and the subordinate role of genes. Even the prominent evolutionist C .H. Waddington stated that many problems exist which cannot be solved by the methods of genetics and biochemistry.[9]

When all this knowledge of the role of cytoplasm in inheritance is confirmed and appreciated, wrote De Wit, theoretical biology will take a dramatic turn indeed. It effectively falsifies the "general theory of evolution" and it is entirely consistent with Dooyeweerd's theory of encapsis. In fact, through this theory of encapsis, biology can return to the investigation of reality without the inhibitions imposed on it by the unscientific mythology of the transformists.

De Wit noted that in the evolutionary "New Systematics," developed by Dobzhansky and others: "the role of the cortex in development is completely ignored because it does not support the basic tenets of the doctrine."[10] It becomes clear why this would be so. Given the transmission of the species characteristics through the cortex or cytoplasm, the whole theory that man has arisen from animal ancestry through some random misplacement of his DNA bases becomes irrelevant.

De Wit discussed this theory in the footsteps of Dooyeweerd, who wrote in this same context that we cannot come to an understanding of man by starting from the animal. Rather, observed reality points the other way, that the animal can only be understood from *man* and *by man* as we all note by common sense. Would anyone be prepared to state that the ability to formulate scientific theories started with the animals and that we inherited the trick of analyzing reality from them through a random mutation of their genes? This type of absurd consequence clearly demonstrates the bankruptcy of evolutionist philosophy. De Wit ended his essay with:

> In this essay it was attempted to indicate the impact of Dooyeweerd's Christian philosophy on present day evolutionary biological thought. I hope to have succeeded in showing that this philosophy poses a number of essential questions and problems which have never been raised before by the leading transformist biologists of today. Moreover, it presents an earnest challenge to theoretical biological thought which, for the sake of a sound development of the biological and anthropological sciences, can no longer be evaded.[11]

Creationists United Against Evolutionism

One lesson we can draw from the work of J. J. Duyvene De Wit is that the road of the Bible believer is made narrow to tread by reason not only of the professed enemies of the Lord, but also his fellow believers in science who have embraced evolution as a "theory." These evolutionists have dug some deep potholes in which any Christian, not familiar with biology, can readily stumble.

Theistic evolutionists have tried to dress up this religious doctrine-turned-scientific-theory with the mantle of Scriptural authority. Any Christian who refuses to believe in evolutionism is condemned as an obscurantist or a reactionary and is accused of cutting the lines of communication between Christians and unbelievers. In effect these "Christian evolutionists" try to throw their creationist fellow believers out of the scientific community. We can also learn that the best apologetics is to be found in demonstrating that the evolutionist is not driven by his *scientific* accomplishments but by his *religious zeal.* He wants to prove that there need be no God.

We cannot "prove" that God exists and created the universe. Creationism rests on faith, even though it fits with all scientific data, which is something evolutionism cannot claim. We have strong scientific weapons, as De Wit maintained, and if we do not wish to blunt them, we must at all cost avoid:

1) *Unscientific* speculations.
2) *Unscriptural* speculations.

If we do involve ourselves in the above, we effectively cut our lines of communication with those to whom we wish to bring the good news such as well-meaning Christian scientists, unbelieving scientists and non-scientists alike.

The philosopher Russell recently expressed his indebtedness to the creationist movement and regretted that reformed scholars seemed to have dismissed creationism for two decades. He deplored the fact that no one had: ". . . built upon the excellent work of J. J. Duyvene De Wit in the area of the critique of evolutionism and the outlining of a new philosophy of biology."[12] The reason for this may be that many creationists suspect that philosophy is injurious to conservative theology and to sound science. Hence few evangelical scientists ever receive philosophical training.

Schuurman, a professor in cosmonomic philosophy, emphasized that as creationists:

> . . . we should continue to work for an inner reformation of the scientific disciplines. . . . Yet it is the weakness of reformational philosophy that among its proponents there are so few biologists and geologists. J. J. Duyvene De Wit has done much foundation work. . . . Nevertheless there remains a *crying need* for Christian scientists who oppose the exaggerated claims of science and who at the same time reflect on the 'internal structure of the discipline.' It is a cause for joy that someone like Russell, coming from the school of creationism, asks for that.[13]

It is time now for believing scientists and philosophers alike to unite. Science cannot remain neutral when one discipline tries to absorb another. Physics and chemistry cannot swallow up biology with the mechanist's claim that "life is nothing but a special case of matter in motion." It is time to get to the philosophical root of the reductionist efforts of humanism, masquerading as "science."

Let us take up the thread, spun by Duyvene De Wit in the sixties, and follow it right into the enemy camp, where the fabric of evolutionism is woven. Let us teach our brightest students about the scientific and philosophic arsenal we have, so that the work of Dooyeweerd, De Wit and others can be carried on. Let us join hands and together work for the clarification of the difference between pagan speculations which lead science to ruin and our children astray, and sober scientific work that leads us to recognize the glory of God's creation.

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A REPLY TO G. BRENT DALRYMPLE

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Five years ago, I published a comprehensive geologically-based critique of radiometric dating,[1] and this has drawn criticism from Dalrymple,[2] who is one of the nation's leading authorities on radiometric dating. I thank Drs. George Howe and Emmett Williams for bringing this matter to my attention. Let it be noted, right at the outset, that Dalrymple reacts as a typical anti-Creationist, i.e., using a superficial and sophomoric reading of Creationist views coupled with misleading and emotionalistic assertions. Just as he gave a highly self-congratulatory and rosy facade of radiometric dating at the Arkansas Trial, so he has—in such typically anti-Creationist fashion—erected and demolished a straw man of my paper.

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Consider, first of all, Dalrymple's charge that results from Coast Range Batholith[3] are not really anomalous. His initial claim that these results are really from Western Canada (not Alaska) and are cited (not initially reported) in my reference 42 are true but trivial. When an age-dated formation (in this case, the Coast Ranges Batholith) ranges beyond national borders, for the sake of brevity, I often list the nation of its most prominent or studied occurrence. Likewise, I have occasionally cited secondary sources if the primary source was not readily available, was more difficult for my readers to look up than the secondary source, or contributed to an unnecessary proliferation of references. It can thus be seen that Dalrymple's nitpicking is trivial and carries no weight.

Proof that results from the Coast Range Batholith are anomalous (although the authors Lanphere, *et al.*,