

THE TALE OF TWO JOURNEYS

THIS IS A DIALOGUE TO HIGHLIGHT THE LOGIC OF THE EVOLUTIONIST'S POSITION

STEVE IS A FICTIONAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND VICAR AND A FERVENT EVOLUTIONIST. HE IS NOT A THEISTIC EVOLUTIONIST. HE IS NEARING RETIREMENT. HE WAS A SCIENTIST BEFORE HE ENTERED THE MINISTRY

FRANK IS A YOUNG CHRISTIAN WITH A CONSERVATIVE-EVANGELICAL BACKGROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

Steve] Did you know that scientists can create anything out of a single cell?

Frank] Anything?

Steve] They discovered the formula many years ago.

Frank] Oh, what is this formula?

Steve] It's quite simple. It's called the "Four Fs".

Frank] What are they?

Steve] The Four Fs are the "Fin-Flipper-Flapper-Feet" formula.

Frank] And how does that work?

Steve] You look at any animal that propels itself along, either in the sea (fin), amphibious (flipper), in the air (flaps its wings), or on dry land (feet), and you have to devise ways and means of how you can get from one animal to the next in the least possible moves. It's easy.

Frank] It's hard to see how you could start with a fish and end up with a bird?

Steve] I enjoy a 90 per cent success rate on paper, but 100 per cent in my comfortable armchair in front of nice fire, puffing away on my pipe, with a nice warm beer in my hand, when I set my mind to it. I can end up with Man from any starting-point you care to mention.

Frank] But you are a Church of England vicar. Surely you believe that God made us from the dust of the ground and we return to dust when we die?

Steve] I have to start off with a very primitive animal to do my exercises, but God started off at an even earlier stage – with dust. All the chemicals and minerals needed to form life are already in the soil. So we can take it for granted that God, who made all the chemicals and minerals in the first place, caused the first spark of life to ignite (excuse my non-scientific metaphor), and then he allowed the newly existing single-cell life to develop into multi-cell life forms, and he filled the oceans with these forms.

Frank] But how do you know life started in the oceans?

Steve] Because Genesis states that life only appeared on Day Five, and it began in the waters.

Frank] Oh, I see, so you are using the order in which life appears in Genesis to be the evolutionary order of life.

Steve] Precisely. On Day Five life started in the water, then some of it took to the air, starting off with flying fish. Then on Day Six, some of the marine life crawled out on to dry land, and toward the end of the same day modern Man stands on his feet. So there you have it – the Four Fs.

Frank] Isn't that amazing, because that is precisely the order we see life in the geological column. So the 'days' are really 'ages', each 'day' lasting millions of years.

Steve] Precisely. God started off the creation, sat back, and watched evolution determine the outcome. He was so clever that he packed into that single cell the ability to mutate in millions of different ways so that all sorts of things would just 'happen'.

Frank] So is all life the result of random mutations over millions of years with 'natural selection' determining which new development will survive and which will die out?

Steve] Precisely, and we were the last 'development' to occur on Day Six. Whoever wrote the Genesis account was a very shrewd observer.

Frank] How come?

Steve] He placed his kind on the last Day because he realised that everything that came before him was more primitive. Creation had reached its goal and could go no further. So he structured the story to reflect this conclusion. The fact that he followed the Sixth Day with a 'day' which produced nothing higher than his kind, was his way of saying that evolution had levelled out, and he was right, because since his day everything reproduces itself exactly, so that any further mutations are rarely beneficial.

Frank] So modern Man is the result of a continuous experiment of nature on a previous ape-like creature.

Steve] Precisely. We are very lucky to be here. We belong to a direct line that goes back to all the other man-like creatures, the orangutans, gorillas, monkeys, apes and chimpanzees.

Frank] Would you tell your congregation this if you were going through Genesis 1-3?

Steve] But bet I wouldn't! It would upset some of them. I could become very unpopular and that could have financial implications for me. I have a family to feed and a pension to fund. No, I lead a very quiet life in my parish. I let the schools and the university professors do the task of initiating the next generation into the real truth behind the Genesis story. I am relying on them and, so far as I know, there are very few young people in my congregation who believe in the Genesis story the way it is given in the Bible, and rightly so. You won't get the Church making the same mistake that it did in medieval times when it persecuted Galileo. No, today, science interprets Genesis for us.

Frank] Given your Four Fs formula, how do you get from the monkey stage to modern Man?

Steve] Easy. Have you heard of Punctuated Evolution?

Frank] What is that?

Steve] When those who apply the Four Fs to any chain of development and a half-way stage would result in the 'thing' becoming extinct before it could complete the full stage, then we have to make a macro-leap instead of the hundreds of tiny micro-mutations that would normally be expected.

Frank] Give us an example.

Steve] Well, the sexual organ of the females in our direct line of ancestors is at the rear, and they give birth out the rear. How did the birth canal get to the

front in the modern female? It cannot have shifted by a few millimeters every century because this would have led to the extinction of the females, so we have to envisage a sudden, and massive shift in one generation.

Frank] And did they lose their body hair in one sudden shift?

Steve] Very probably.

Frank] And did they stand upright in one sudden shift?

Steve] Very probably.

Frank] And since language belongs to all modern humans, did it too appear in one sudden shift?

Steve] Very probably, because the area of the brain controlling speech hardly exists in our ancestors. Menstruation does not occur in the female monkey ancestors. You do not find blood all over the forest trees or over the forest floors. The brains of humans are hard-wired very differently from all other primates. Even the female human brain is wired differently to the male brain.

Frank] So are you saying that in order to move from an ape-like ancestor to modern Man, a lot of major changes had to occur *all at the same time*, and that these differences could not have developed by micro-mutations over millions of years?

Steve] It is what the theorists have come up with to get round the problems!

Frank] So what do you make of the statement that God breathed into man the breath of life?

Steve] Whoever wrote up the Genesis story was a very clever guy. He noticed that modern man was far superior to all living creatures, and that this was not inherited 'from below', meaning from his inferior monkey ancestors, but must have been inherited 'from above'—from 'God', which was an 'awareness' that came with this new endowment. So God was not worshipped until modern man suddenly had this 'freak development' and ended up a new, distinct creation, which cut him off from his immediate ancestors. But it gave him a 'self-awareness' of who he was in relation to all the creatures around him, which he did not have before.

Frank] So does the concept of 'God' come with the territory of having developed away from being an ape-like creature?

Steve] Very likely. Have you ever seen a monkey praying to his 'god'? No other animal prays to 'something-out-there'.

Frank] But doesn't that have implications for all religions? But to get back to the Genesis story, from what you have said so far, the idea that Adam was created separately from all the other creatures by a Supreme Being is a myth. So you are saying that it never happened the way the Genesis account says it did.

Steve] That is my conclusion. Man came into being on the back of ape-like ancestors. He was not a fresh creation because all things evolved from a single cell. So yes, "it never happened that way". Darwin was right and Moses (or whoever) was wrong.

Frank] What makes you so sure?

Steve] Why, the Genesis account is unscientific. It says the sun, moon and stars were not made until Day Four, but it says all the green vegetation was made on Day Three. Now if, as you say, Frank, the 'days' were ages, lasting millions of years, how can you have vegetation before the existence

of the sun?

Frank] But there was light of some sort from Day One. Maybe that light was needed to get it going and the sun took over.

Steve] But then you are invoking a 'god of the gaps' cop-out solution when you run out of solid science to back up your say-so. Best to go with science. It is the true measure of what is Truth. Although I credit the guy who wrote up the story of Genesis with good observational skills and good deduction, he was not a scientist and he did not realise that all life is totally dependent on the sun. He lived in a pre-scientific age. It was not his fault that he was ignorant. We have moved on since his day. We have outgrown the scientific world he knew and thought was the ultimate Truth. He knew nothing of the truth of macro-evolution, of 'natural selection' as the prime mover in pushing life forms to the limit in the shape of ourselves. Let's face it, we are the random product of evolution. We would have happened. Our existence was inevitable once the single celled amoeba formed millions of ages ago.

Frank] So when God created all the marine and aerial life on Day Five, and all the animals and Man on Day Six, "after their kind", this was an unscientific statement?

Steve] Absolutely. It definitely did not happen that way. All life evolved from a single cell which just 'happened' by chance. The rest is science. The account is clearly unscientific because everything was created in six twenty-four hour periods. You don't believe that, do you, Frank? So if one part of the story is clearly unscientific why can't other parts be also unscientific?

Frank] Maybe God did take His time to produce life on earth and that from the moment He started to the moment He finished happened outside our conception of Time, but it was a 'single unit' in the life of God, which God then likened to the 'single unit' by which Man was to regulate his life on earth. Is it possible that what a 'week' is in the life of Man, a similar 'unit' is in the life of God? What I'm saying is that God could have funneled all His activity into a human week to mirror the fact that there was a beginning, a middle, and an end to His activity, just as there is in the unit He has asked Man to live by. That is why He created the day of rest – the Sabbath Day.

Steve] Be that as it may, I think that what happened was that a writer — let's call him Moses — when Moses was born in Egypt in 1526 B.C., and educated to the highest level at that time, he looked around him and saw that all life reproduced after its kind in a stable manner, just as we see it happening today. So he deducted from this astute observational fact the idea that everything must have been created 'after its kind' (abbreviated to AIK), so he simply projected back into the beginning what he observed happening in the 16th century B.C. It was an understandable projection, but, nevertheless, we now know he was wrong. So the Genesis story reflects the scientific knowledge available to Moses 3,500 years ago. Well, we have moved on since then, haven't we! We have outgrown the primitive 'science' of Moses' day.

Frank] If that is true then certainly this puts the whole Genesis story in a new light for me. I am now inclined to put it at arm's length and not attempt to

reconcile it with science at all. It was 'good science' for the time in which Moses lived, but it is now shown to be 'bad science' in the light of modern genetic discoveries.

So the mistake Moses made was to project the latest Egyptian 'science' back into the beginning, which was bad enough, but what has thrown the Bible into disrepute is that he then projected his primitive science on to God Himself, and trapped God in dodgy science, so that God backs up his false science. It is a pity Moses put his science into the mouth of God, and has God endorsing it. It was just a matter of time before he was going to be found out to be telling a lie. Modern science has exposed the Genesis account to be a fraud. You're right, it did not happen that way.

Now that I have lost faith in that story, it makes me very wary of accepting the rest of the creation account in Genesis 2 and 3 as 'truth'. Those chapters are definitely under a cloud of suspicion. I don't want to be trapped into believing their stories after your exposure of Genesis 1 to be really a myth put into the mouth of God to give it credibility. This was a very deceptive thing to do. It fooled me because I wanted to believe everything that God said, but here I find something that God said, which now turns out to be a lie. I really can't take anything on trust from now on. It has destroyed my faith completely in a so-called 'inspired and infallible word of God.'

Steve] But all men of science and most of the educated classes, and certainly all the clergy of the Church of England since Darwin's time, have seen through the dodgy science of Genesis 1. Join the club, Frank! You're a bit late, but nevertheless, better late than never.

Frank] This conversation has changed my life. I feel I have been let in on the 'inside' for the first time in my life with my new insight that Genesis 1 did not come from God, but words and primitive science were put into the mouth of God. What a terrible deception! And to think that generations of Christians have been duped into believing AIK-creation. Moses has a lot to answer for. Thank you very much Steve for taking me out of the gloomy cavern of Genesis 1 into the sunny uplands of modern science, where I can now join the great throng of scientists and enjoy the beauty and wonder of 'natural selection' to shape all that I see in nature. It has been a liberating experience for me. Shouldn't we bring all the people of God into the same liberating experience?

Steve] It would upset the older ones in my congregation to give them your liberating experience. A lot of the older generation want to remain in their dark cavern. It is where they grew up. They were taught to believe that Genesis 1 was as infallible as the rest of the Bible. If I told them the truth they could have a bad reaction. Whereas you came out of your dark cavern, these people might recede further into their cavern and become very aloof toward me, so I sit tight, and say nothing. I let the TV and the 'ape-to-man' wall-charts in the schools do my work for me.

Frank] I remember those wall-charts well as a boy. One chart in particular chart was very cleverly drawn. It captured the evolution from something small to something big, so the little chimp is on the extreme left and the full-grown human is on the extreme right and in-between you have a gradation in height of ape-like to man-like creatures. That is very clever,

and it taps in to the 'plausibility/possibility' argument. I think that clever juxtaposition won me over to evolution. But another clever feature was the change from full body hair on the little chimp to no body hair on the human man. The artist once again has captured an evolutionary development. Neanderthal Man is almost hairless. But the greatest impact is the way in which the artist has all of man's predecessors walking in single file directly behind modern man. That was very clever. It is as if the direction of the eyes of all of them is on the Man at the front.

I was thinking, after something that my friend Bunyan said the other day, that this chart would not work as well to promote evolution if the artist had chosen (A) the human female, and (B) reversed the order in which they are all walking. The human female is so different from her immediate predecessor. Her milk glands are on the outside of her rib cage, giving her body a greater sense of beauty and poise. She is unique in this respect. Her sexual organs and birth canal are on the opposite side of her body. She is unique in this respect. And if you reversed the direction of the single file, so that modern woman is looking to the small female chimp at the front, you lose the sense of 'evolution' that the male chart has very cleverly captured. So there is good psychology, and so good propaganda value, in how you present and represent the inexorable march of evolution from chimp to champion.

Steve] I keep many copies of the male version of the chart to give to the young and to use in Sunday School (now sadly declining) and in my adult mid-week Bible study groups when we are dealing with Genesis. But I prefer not to do a Bible study on Genesis because "it is too controversial" as I tell them. However, this one picture is worth a thousand words. Slowly but surely the vast majority of people have now accepted the notion that we are only here because of the inevitable force that 'natural selection' has exerted on life in the past. It was (and probably still is, for all we know) an irresistible force. We are the product of evolutionary forces, Frank, whether we like it or not. I hope it will not upset you if I take you into another level of enlightenment when I tell you that whether there is a god or not, mankind would have come about without His direct interference. There is nothing about our physical makeup that really separates us from what has gone before. We are not a separate, AIK-creation, made directly from the dust of the ground.

All men have an inbuilt 'awareness' of a Superior Being, which shows that it is genetically based. Whether it reflects any concrete reality 'out there' is up for debate.

Frank] But the Genesis account refers to God as a Supreme Being with a personality who cares for His creation.

Steve] Whether this 'god-awareness' is a projection out into space of instincts that are found in all men, is also up for debate. In any case, how do reconcile a tooth-and-claw creation with a caring creator?

Frank] So you still see evolution at work today?

Steve] Frankly, yes. The world would go on and on as it is whether we believe in a 'god' or not. The belief will not affect 'natural selection' in its relentless operation.

Frank] That is a new level of 'illumination' that I'm not sure I am ready for. I still

want to believe in a Supreme Being, who used 'natural selection' to bring us into existence. Why can't I believe that?

Steve] But then you need to ask yourself the question, Is my need to believe that there is 'Someone' out there in space, the result of a mutation in the brain that occurred when we branched off from our ape-like ancestor? Does this 'urge' come with the territory of having developed away from being an ape? You also need to ask yourself, Is every mutation necessarily helpful? It could be that we made a huge, beneficial 'leap' in evolutionary terms at the physical level, but as a consequence of this 'leap' we also inherited a harmful mutation in the form of an 'urge' to believe in a 'Someone' who is 'out there', and whom we irrationally 'fear'. There may be no one 'out there' after all. It could be a shared, but harmful, mutation that came into existence when we turned into 'humans'. Another unhelpful mutation is the loss of all our body hair. We have compensated for this by clothing ourselves. But we are the only animal produced by 'natural selection' which inherited this hairless-gene. Wouldn't we have been better off without this unhelpful mutation?

Frank] So there could be no 'god' after all? You think the idea of 'god' could be the product of this mutated 'awareness' gene?

Steve] I'm afraid Frank, it is more than 'could be', it is a fact of evolution. I know you are not ready to start thinking through the logical implications of this further illumination, but there is a logic in evolution that you need to penetrate into. Others have gone there before you, but it is only a minority who have traversed the sunny uplands and gone over into the next valley.

Frank] I sense already that that valley is an abyss. It is frightening. It is scary, because if there is no God, then our existence is no better than the apes swinging about in the trees. Is this all there is to life? There may be no hereafter, as I had been led to believe.

Steve] There is a wonderful vision in the last book of the Bible of the hereafter, in which there is no sun, but there is light. Do you spot the similarity with Genesis? There is no 'sin'. There is no crying, no tears, there is a Garden whose trees produce miraculous fruit. Does this remind you of the Garden of Eden? In the vision there is a serpent who is finally killed. Doesn't this remind you of Genesis?

Frank] So, what are you saying?

Steve] Well, if you agree with me that the first chapter of the Bible is a myth, is it possible that the last chapter is also a myth? They have a lot in common. The first is a mythical story, and the last is a mythical vision, because you cannot put physical chains on spirits.

Frank] You have certainly convinced me that Genesis 1 was written by a fallible man, and another fallible man wrote the Book of Revelation, and all the writings in between them have also come out of the mind of fallible men and women, so can the whole lot be a fallible collection of men's strivings to reach out to this 'Someone out there'? I'm beginning to just entertain the barest suggestion that the whole Bible may be suspect, but I can't bear to think through the consequences of going over "into the next valley," as you put it. It would lead to total despair and dejection if it dawned on me that the 'Someone' I thought was a reality turned out to be a product of mutation in my brain. Then there truly would be no 'hereafter'.

Steve] But some of mankind have not shrunk from going on that journey. They have traversed the sunny uplands of evolution and entered the next valley. I am one of them.

Frank] And do you believe in a personal God and a Heaven, now that you are in the 'next valley'?

Steve] Take the journey into the next valley, and maybe we will meet up again.

Frank] You described the journey as a move from a darkened cavern into the bright, sunny uplands of evolution, and then you came to a valley. A valley suggests you go down. Is it a dark valley?

Steve] Very dark. There is no sunshine there.

Frank] Can you say anything more about it?

Steve] There is no way back out of it.

Frank] So you can't retreat back to the sunny upland stage of your journey?

Steve] No. There is a logic in the 'journey' that makes that not an option.

Frank] Can you see what's on the other side of the valley?

Steve] No, it is hidden by a very thick mist, and the further one progresses down the valley the steeper the sides become.

Frank] Where are you now in that valley?

Steve] I think I am half way down, but I can't see ahead of me, and worst of all, it has started to rain heavily. The slope is too slippery and I can't climb back up again. I am stuck and alone, and the night is coming on. That is where I am at the moment, and have been for a number of years.

Frank] And you said this was all as a result of working through the logic of evolution?

Steve] Evolution is the only reality because AIK is not an option for me any more. I did a degree in science before I entered the ministry. Many of my friends are in the sunny uplands stage in their thinking, but they are like little children prancing around in the meadows. They have not thought through the implications of evolution the way I, and a few others, have done. They will live and die in the sunny uplands stage. They will never complete their journey. This is where you find all the Christians in science. They will never 'progress'. They will always remain naïve. But at least they did leave the gloomy old cavern behind, which is something. They are moving toward the valley I'm in, whether any of them will ever reach the goal of their journey is another thing. But I want my congregation to think through the implications of living in the sunny uplands. Many of them still believe there is a 'god out there'. But this is a delusion.

Frank] I was talking to Bunyan the other day and he mentioned a journey he was on. He also started off in a cavern, but he went deeper into the cavern, the opposite way to which you went, because, [pause] he said he went to the entrance of his cavern and looked out on to the sunny uplands, but the people he saw there and their style of living did not appeal to him. They invited him to join them and he very nearly did, but something about them was not quite 'right', which was the word he used, so he went back into the cavern. They came after him to persuade him to join them, but he retreated still further into the blackness of the cavern to avoid them. After they gave up searching for him he sat in the dark musing what he should do next. He felt a draft on his cheek coming from deeper inside the cavern. This meant only one thing; there must be another entrance through the

back of the cavern. He slowly made his way deeper and deeper into the cavern until he began to see daylight. Eventually, he, too, emerged into a sunny landscape. It was a terrific experience, he said. It was like entering into another world, which it literally was, he claimed. Have you met anyone who has been on that journey?

Steve] I only meet your friend Bunyan once. Does he believe in a personal God?

Frank] Yes, and he believes the Bible from cover to cover.

Steve] He is living in a fantasy world.

Frank] He is an AIK-believer. He believes in an hereafter, and he believes he will meet God face to face some day when he will thank Him for directing him to the 'narrow door' that led to life. The 'broad road', he claims, is the one that leads to the valley of futility you are stuck in. He claims that only a few people will ever accept AIK-creation because the god of this world has blinded the eyes of the vast majority with the lure that science is superior to God's Word.

Steve] I do not believe there is a path going in the opposite direction to the one that all educated people are now on, certainly all who have examined how we got here and where we are going. The cavern represents ignorance. You do not go deeper into ignorance and come out the other side into sunshine. That is not logical. I admit I am in the valley of futility, because futility stares me in the face every day. It is terribly depressing at times, but I shake myself out of it by being 'busy'. I try not to think too deeply about my position now. I avoid going back into my own thought-world where my black dog accompanies me everywhere, reminding me that I am destined to turn back into dust and then 'out beyond the blue' to where, I have no idea. I think that, like the animals, this life is all there is, and by having a family I have contributed to keeping the chain of evolution going, but that is about the sum of my existence really.

Frank] So you are a minister without any hope of a life beyond the grave?

Steve] I did not want you to know this, in case it would upset you, but since you ask, yes, there is nothing beyond the grave. That is the logic of evolution. We know where we have come from and we know where we are going. Genesis represents the first edition of a science textbook. The latest science textbook has made it look even more obsolete. Tomorrow's newly revised edition will mean today's edition will be obsolete tomorrow. You can't go back to outdated editions on any subject and expect respect from your peers. You must keep up to date with the latest findings, so when I hear of members of my congregation looking to Genesis to discover how we got here, I feel a failure.

Frank] I can appreciate how you feel, but if there is no hope of life beyond the grave how can you preach the Gospel?

Steve] Mankind inherited a mutation that demands he worship 'Something out there'. You see this mutation all over the world, in every tribe under the sun. That demand needs to be met. I meet that need because of the demand. If there was no demand, there would be no need. So just as there is the need for a doctor or a dentist, so there is a need for a witch-doctor class of all denominations and none. So I fit into the 'witch-doctor' slot. I fulfill and satisfy the primitive 'urge' felt by my congregation to come together and 'worship'. It is a vestige of our evolutionary past. There may

come a day when a further mutation will take place on this harmful god-gene and the need to 'worship' this 'Someone-out-there' will fall out of the human genome altogether. But in the meantime, I have a function that keeps body and soul together, and that is all one can ask of life. "All is futile," as the Preacher observed. "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour." The time will surely come when food no longer tastes good, and the grinders are exchanged for plastic ones, and the eyes grow dim. "Vanities of vanities, all is vanity." "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." "There's a time to be born and a time to die." Evolution is an endless, upward spiral, to what, we do not know, nor can we predict it, since all is at the mercy of random mutations.

Frank] But your favourite Preacher also spoke of the reality of God. He said, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked," did he not?

Steve] There is no God. This only proves that he was a fallible, human being! [laughter] On the other hand, his musings on the futility of life is where he proves his infallibility! [more laughter] He said, "For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them; as the one dies, so dies the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to the dust again."

Frank] But didn't he add, "Who knows the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?" Doesn't this make a difference between man and the beasts?

Steve] His pure thinking was contaminated by the mutated god-gene that created the illusion that there is 'Someone' or 'Something' out there in space, which has to be 'worshipped', otherwise it might have malignant designs on them. This 'Thing' has to be placated. It is a fear we all have, but which we can grow out of by suppressing it, or redirecting it into some other form of mental activity.

Frank] So now that you say that you are an atheist, when you have to preach through the early chapters of Genesis, how do you manage to hide the fact that you believe that these chapters are pure myth and that you don't believe there is a God at all?

Steve] That is very easy. The secret is to keep my congregation happy. I tell them what they want to hear. So I always have two or more interpretations to present to them. In this way I can satisfy the educated ones who believe in evolution, and also the few uneducated ones, the conservative die-hards. I take great delight in calling them 'Fundamentalists' [big broad grin]. It is such a disparaging word [chuckle]. I always hide my preferred interpretation because I need to have what I call 'my wriggle room'. I must never be nailed down. I will always wriggle free of any pigeon-hole they try to put me into. I will be definite about nothing, but always be the middle-man — the moderate. As one of my more conservative members aptly put it, "I am as woolly as a sheep, and as slippery as an eel." They try to get me to preach a 'salvation' from a wrathful God, but I stress the need to love one another. I preach love, love, love; and they love it. They say I am a very loving vicar. I love gays and lesbians. I accept all for Holy Communion. I support women priests, bishops, and hopefully soon,

our first woman archbishop of Canterbury. My goal in life is to break down all barriers and remove all obstacles.

The Creed contains a reference to the virgin birth which many of us cannot stomach, it is unscientific and a hangover from medieval times, so we are hoping to ease out the Creed over a period of time. We skip it every other Sunday now and I hope to reduce this to once a month, and silently manoeuvre it out of sight altogether. Evolution has taught me that if you do things a little bit at a time you can produce a very different 'animal' in time. The Creed is as obsolete as last century's science textbook. It has to be updated to reflect our present scientific knowledge. The final edition of any textbook on any subject can never be written, so why do we accept the Bible as the only textbook on religion? Aren't the experiences of other religions just as valid as the Christian religion?

Frank] What about my original question, when you have to preach through the early chapters of Genesis, how do you manage to hide the fact that you believe these chapters are pure myth?

Steve] I hide behind my great friend, Ernest Lucas, who has written a brilliant book for theistic evolutionists called, *Can We Believe Genesis Today?* Published by Inter-Varsity Press in 1989 and in print ever since.

Frank] I don't know the book. How does he manage to wriggle out of a literal understanding of Genesis 1-3? Isn't he a conservative-evangelical scholar?

Steve] Yes, he is a fundamentalist in every other part of his treatment of Genesis, but he is on the side of the evolutionists when it comes to creation, and a weighty protagonist he has proved to be for our cause.

Frank] How would he handle the origin of Adam and Eve?

Steve] Oh, he is an out and out evolutionist. No question about it. Adam did not come from the dust but from another hominid or hominiform creature. He just flatly denies you can accept the Genesis story as it stands. The Bible is a religious book, not a science book.

Frank] How does he handle the other issues such as the longevity of men in those days, 900+ years, that he was vegetarian at first, that the first woman was made from his rib, that humans were nude at first and only clothed themselves after they 'sinned' (whatever that means), that women suffer excruciating pain during childbirth, again traced back to her first 'sin' that thorns and thistles are due to Adam's 'sin', etc.?

Steve] He has a brilliant answer to all of these things. He very cleverly undercuts all these stories by saying that they all have their origin in Near Eastern myths and legends, which pre-date the Hebrew version by thousands of years, and which the Hebrews took over and revised, or rather 'purified' them, by removing all references to polytheism in them. Now, once he severed the roots of these stories from being a direct revelation from God, and replanted them back in their Mesopotamian *milieu*, he then cleverly deduced that we must logically go back to Mesopotamia and discover what these stories meant to the men who originally wrote them, thousands of years before Moses rewrote them. In this way, very cleverly, he has subtly manoeuvred all these stories into the genre of myth, at least they have come out of that genre. That is their origin.

I thought he was brilliant to shift the entire Genesis record into that new context. So, to understand the early, pre-scientific stories in the early part

of Genesis, he has warned all Christians everywhere that they must first see them in their even more primitive context, before they can begin to start understanding how they should be understood today.

But what I like most of all about his approach is that he has shown that these early chapters should not be attributed to a direct revelation from God to man, but that they are Moses' version to counter the evil influence of these myths on his monotheistic religion and people. Wasn't that a brilliant move? He has *completely* [emphasis] undermined the idea that Genesis 1-11 pre-dates the Near Eastern parallels. He concluded that the stories in Genesis came later and are a reactionary, 'replacement theology' edition of those myths. So in origin, all the stories have emerged out of myths. *They are not from God at all* [very emphatic]. They are man-made compositions. Ernest is a brilliant man, a brilliant scholar, and a brilliant scientist, all rolled into one. He has demolished, undermined and undercut the fundamentalist position *completely* [huge emphasis on the word 'completely']. I find it hard to contain my delight when I am in the pulpit and giving my congregation Reverend Dr. Ernest Lucas' brilliant reply to the fundamentalist's position, which I usually deal with first so as to be 'all things to all men' in my congregation. But in all my expositions of Scripture, I always present the truth as I see it from an evolutionary point of view, alongside other less truthful interpretations. My object is to feed the theistic evolutionists in the congregation with my good friend's interpretation, because I know where they are coming from, and they need me, or rather, they need Ernest, to show them how to 'read' the Genesis myths and still accept them as 'scripture' in some sense.

The scientists in my congregation are not going to be happy if I just give them the traditional interpretation, so I like to please everybody. I am a chameleon-type Christian witch-doctor. I can run with all shades of interpretation. In the end it doesn't matter what you believe, so never make an enemy out of anyone's dogmatic beliefs. You can't change the evolutionary nature you have been dealt with by the hand of 'natural selection'. 'God' is Natural Selection, and Natural Selection is 'god'. Outside this creed everything else is heresy.

Frank] Wow! That is some statement! I did not realise you had come that far in your thinking.

Steve] When you pass through the sunny uplands and do some serious trekking down into the valley on the other side you will arrive at my destination. That is what I meant when I said there is no going back once you have reached that point in your journey. I should add that my good friend has not travelled as far as I have, because moving Genesis 1-11 into a Near Eastern mythological context is only half the story. The other half is that these Near Eastern myths themselves were generated because of the mutated 'god-awareness' gene, which further undercuts any connection with reality. They are simply the products of men's 'urge' to placate an angry 'god out there'.

Frank] I can see where both of you are coming from. Your good friend is closer to my position because I want to believe in evolution but I also want to believe in a personal God.

Steve] Then you are in the sunny uplands stage where my good friend is. But at

least you are not on the other side of the gloomy cavern where your friend Bunyan is. He is going in a completely opposite direction to us, so there is no hope for him. He is in another world to us, yet he seems happy enough. I sometimes wonder what it must be like to come out on the other side of the cavern, as Bunyan claims to have done. I have no idea what lies on that side, and Ernest doesn't have anything to say that differs from my experience in the sunny uplands. What unites all of us on the sunny uplands, Christians and atheists, is our faith in the reality of evolution. We are living in the real world. Bunyan is living in the mythical world of Genesis 1. We should pity him and maybe give him a gift of Ernest's book for his birthday.

Frank] I could do with reading it first! I really do need to explore this territory for myself and have a look into this valley that you have entered. I'm not sure I want to go down into it, seeing the journey has transformed you from being a theistic evolutionist into being an atheistic evolutionist. Do you know of anyone who has done a critique of your good friend's book from a conservative-evangelical standpoint?

Steve] I think there was one done by Leslie McFall,¹ but I wouldn't recommend it. I haven't read it, and don't intend doing so. Anyway, I can lend you my good friend's book. It will help you get from the sunny uplands into "the next valley" in no time.

Frank] Just before you go, could you solve one problem for me? You said at the beginning that you could look at any animal and plot how it developed from a previous existence using your Four Fs formula. How do you go about this?

Steve] No problem. Start with the wall-charts in our children's classrooms. On the left you see a tiny chimp-like creature on all fours. In front of him is another chimp-like creature, but this time we have made him a little taller and notice carefully, one hand is off the ground, so he is on three 'legs' as it were. And so on with the next ten or so chimp-like creatures. Now what we are cleverly doing here is managing the child's mind using plausibility as our key tool. By introducing tiny 'developments' in each of the pictures we can draw the child into believing that it is 'possible' that the little chimp on the left developed into the upright, hairless human man on the extreme right. That is all we need to do at this stage. We are not saying this is how it happened. All we are doing at this stage is sowing the idea of plausibility and possibility. And these charts are very effective at doing this.

Frank] That seems very manipulative.

Steve] But it works! The basic building block has been set in place in the child's mind. From now onwards that wall-chart will condition how the child will evaluate the world around it. It is a prism through which all animals and every living organism will be seen for the rest of the child's life.

Frank] But you don't give the child an alternative way of viewing the world. It has no choice but to believe the wall-charts.

Steve] But there is no alternative, is there? We need to plant 'evolution' and 'natural selection' as early as possible in every child's mind before it has a

¹ Available at <http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12>

chance to get AIK-creation in there. Think of the mind as if it were made up of compartments. If you fill a compartment with something, then you prevent anything else getting in there. Now if you have put the wrong item in first, then you have to get it out again before you can put the right item in there. So it is with a child's mind. There is a compartment labelled, "How did we get here?" If I can get my solution into that compartment first, then I block any other solution getting in. I do not want any child to get the idea that "Somebody" out there in space created each animal separately. There are two heresies in that solution. First, there is no "Somebody" out there, and secondly, nothing was created separately. Everything emerged from something else. If we have any concern for our children then we must get to them first, and fill the compartments in their brain with evolution. So sit your children down in front of the TV and let them look at nature films which contain a running commentary on how 'evolution' adapted each creature to survive in its new environment. In this way you will keep reinforcing the idea of plausibility that the wall-charts were designed to teach.

Frank] But isn't this indoctrination? What chance does the child have to ever question what it is seeing? It has no alternative framework from which to compare and contrast.

Steve] But what is the alternative? You do not have an alternative in arithmetic. Two and two make four. Why would you question that method of teaching? You accept that two and two are four as a fact and move on, and build on that first building block. We don't encourage a child to question that two and two make four, do we? so why should we encourage it to question the fact of evolution?

Frank] But maths is not the same as evolutionary biology.

Steve] But you can no more question the 'truth' that two and two make four, than you can question the 'truth' that evolution and 'natural selection' are facts of nature, can you?

Frank] I'm not sure about that. If you get your 'truth' of evolution in first, then the idea that God created the animals 'after its kind' can't occupy the same compartment.

Steve] True. That idea must go into the 'Religion' compartment, and 'Evolution' must fill the 'Science' compartment. You see, the 'Religion' compartment does not exist in the chimpanzee's brain. We got this compartment when our chimp-like ancestor underwent a huge macro-evolutionary development. We inherited many beneficial mutations when this massive macro-evolution took place, but we also inherited some less welcome compartments, and one of these was a 'self-awareness' god-gene compartment which has to be filled with something. Now all over the world this 'god-compartment' is filled with different religions because there is a flawed belief that a Supreme Spirit-being is 'out there' and needs to be placated by offering sacrifices to 'It'. To this 'Somebody' each religion attributes the creation of the sun, moon and stars. So, what I'm saying is that since there is no reality behind this bizarre mutated 'god-gene', there is no Supreme Being, and therefore there is no creator, no Intelligent Designer, no nothing 'out there'. It is all the creation of this mutated 'god-gene' which has infected the DNA of homo-sapiens. It is

unique to us.

Frank] I have to admit that your logic is flawless, if indeed the 'god-gene' was an inherited flaw in our evolutionary development.

Steve] It were better that we never had it, because the religion compartment has been the cause of more friction between human beings than any other cause. Let me describe it this way. I said that the brain had many compartments. And there are two separate compartments, one called 'Religion' and the other 'Science'. Now, instead of two compartments, imagine that they are one compartment with a sliding divider between them. If I can expand the Science end of the compartment so that it compresses the Religion end of the compartment to less than five per cent of the entire compartment, I would be a very happy minister of the Gospel. Unfortunately, Frank, in your case, you have expanded the Religion end of the compartment so that you have compressed the Science end to less than ten per cent. The more you learn of science and especially evolutionary genetic science the less room you are going to have for all this useless Religion that you have accumulated.

Frank] I can see from this why you should be so keen to get the evolutionary wall-charts into the classrooms as early as possible. Children are impressionable and it is a terrific advert for your cause if children are looking at those charts every day. We learn a lot about subliminal 'messages' being beamed out of advertisements, and we are bombarded with them every day, and apparently we are influenced by them even if we think we are ignoring them. How much more then to have these charts pinned up in all our science classes and reproduced in all the elementary biology textbooks. The child does not stand a chance of avoiding becoming an evolutionist at an early age. I can understand why those who reject evolution would see our education system as a tool to control and indoctrinate our children to think in only one direction.

Steve] If the alternative is to put AIK-creation charts alongside Evolution charts as a valid alternative, then I would say No to their charts. AIK-creation is religion. Evolution is science. But I would say that, wouldn't I, because I am coming to 'truth' in an objective manner. I do not allow the mutated 'god-gene' to interfere with my objective assessment of the biological facts.

Frank] Another chart that I found very compelling in my schoolboy days showed a series of wings. Starting on the left-hand side these wings gradually merged into a set of human feet on the right-hand side. By placing actual, living specimens, not artists' impressions, side by side in this manner it convinced me that all it needed was a tiny mutation of the first to produce the next, and so on. Though, strangely, I once saw a chart which started off with feet and ended with wings! Maybe evolution went in both directions! At any rate, the cleverness lay in placing side by side a series of wings which gradually merged into feet. And it just takes the child to bring together the twin ideas of small changes leading to big changes, and then the plausibility of this happening in say-so-science, for the child's belief in evolution to be reinforced.

Steve] You would think I would agree with this chart wouldn't you, given my belief in evolution? but I read Richard Dawkin's book, *The Blind*

*Watchmaker*² and he made the observation that the DNA in the cells of any individual is 'burned in', and is never altered during that individual's lifetime, except by very rare random deterioration. When a new individual is conceived, a new and unique pattern of data is 'burned into' his DNA ROM, and he is then stuck with this pattern for the rest of his life. It is copied into all of his cells (except his reproductive cells, into which a random half of his DNA is copied). All human beings have the same set of DNA *addresses*, but not necessarily the same *contents* of those addresses. That is the main reason why we are all different from each other. Other species don't have the same addresses. The DNA is arranged along stringy chromosomes. Chimpanzees have 48 chromosomes, compared to humans with 46. Addresses don't correspond to each other across species barriers. Closely related species, however, like chimps and humans, have large chunks of adjacent contents in common. The thing that defines a species is that all members have the same addressing system for their DNA. It is for this reason, he says, that humans could not have descended *directly* [emphasis] from chimps. He speculated that both might be descended from something else that existed before both of them came into being, but how this could have happened is a biological mystery.

The present system of transfer of DNA from one generation to the next is already determined at birth. So for instance, when a baby boy is born, the male seed which he has inherited is fixed at his birth, so no matter what this baby boy acquires in the way of mental or physical skills as he develops into a full-grown man cannot alter the male seed he inherited at birth. So no skills that he has acquired during his life can be passed on to his son at the genetic level. The son can only learn these from his father, the same way that all animals learn their skills from their parents. This applies to every living species on earth today. *The blueprint of the next generation is fixed at the moment of birth* [emphasis]. Dawkins concluded that, somehow, before the present AIK mechanism for replication developed across the entire planet, there must have been another mechanism which did not replicate the next generation so inflexibly.

Frank] Now isn't that an amazing concession? So that means that all this talk about giraffes stretching their necks resulting in their necks getting longer and longer is just 'say-so-science'. If Dawkins is right then this chart I mentioned of placing real specimens of wings in a graded fashion leading to feet, is false science, because as far as genetic science is concerned AIK is the only successful method used by all animals and plants since modern man appeared on the earth. Before you read Dawkins' book how did you interpret that chart? Did *you* [emphasis] believe it?

Steve] I had no choice, did I? Yes, of course I believed it. We debated it with Christians and they accused us of 'say-so-science'.

Frank] What did they mean by that?

Steve] Well, being schoolboys, and interested in the opposite sex, we said that when the chimps came down from the trees and started walking upright and then lost their ability to swing through the trees through subsequent mutations, the females underwent a development whereby their big milk

² Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Penguin Books, 1986; Appendix, 1991).

glands became externalised and sat on the outside of their chests, so that they could no longer swing through the trees, which got us a good laugh at the time. So we were accused of 'say-so-science'. We were naïve enough to believe that if a scientist postulated a series of micro-mutations to link all the wings-to-feet specimens in one picture, then his 'say-so-science' was good enough for us. We believed it probably happened the way he said it did. Of course it was not based on actual science. We all knew that. But we knew it was only a matter of time before our say-so-science would become actual science.

Frank] Unfortunately, Richard Dawkins appears to have scotched your say-so-science ever becoming a reality.

Steve] Science has still a long way to go yet. I'm still hopeful that science will yet overcome this obstacle. The underlying similarity of the locomotion appendages of birds and animals have *got to be connected somehow* [emphasis]. In the meantime we live with the fact of evolution and leave the science to catch-up with it later, as assuredly it will.

Frank] So you are relying on catch-up-science at the moment! [laughter] So is that where science is at the moment?

Steve] Well, so far as I know, no one has yet come up with an alternative to the AIK method, because tinkering with the AIK method and hoping for beneficial mutations to occur is not going to solve anything, because the AIK method itself is not capable of introducing anything beyond the most microscopic changes in the 'contents' of the 'addresses', and these are still within the AIK method. No, what Dawkins is looking for is a rival to the AIK method. He, and others, are looking for some other method of replication which must, they postulate, have existed before the AIK method took over from it. If we dub it the pre-AIK method, then this mechanism was not as exact as the AIK method when replicating the next generation but was 'open' to across-the-board macro changes without destroying the animals it created through sterility. We have to envisage a drastic macro change, followed by millions of years of stability, then another, sudden, drastic macro change, and so on. It envisages a series of fits and starts to work. In this way the wall-charts would represent this pre-AIK macro-evolution. I suspect most modern geneticists would agree that the wall-charts, as they stand, are false representations, because AIK cannot account for these evolutionary developments. So, from the scientific point of view, the wall-charts are false. They represent 'say-so-science' based on a pre-AIK replication mechanism, which has not yet been discovered.

Frank] So modern scientists—not the evolutionists who have an axe to grind—are honest enough to admit that the AIK-method is the only method found in nature whereby all things replicate themselves?

Steve] Well, I have only just read Dawkins' book, so I don't know if *all* [emphasis] scientists would agree with him. But I would have thought that Dawkins had a vested interest in finding some evidence in pure science that permitted the present method of AIK replication to be responsible for macro-evolution before Man appeared on the earth, but I have read his book carefully, searching for this evidence, but I was very disappointed to find he had not discovered any evidence. He has many

theoretical scenarios to account for evolution, but no hard facts to back them up with. If anything, he seemed to confirm the inflexibility of the AIK-method to accommodate any macro-changes. These were always harmful or produced sterile offspring. At one point I thought he had abandoned the AIK mechanism in disgust because it would not permit what he wanted it to permit. He mentioned a very interesting fact. He said cows and pea plants have an almost identical gene called the histone H4 gene. The DNA text is 306 characters long. Cows and peas differ from each other in only two characters out of these 306. He claims they had a common ancestor 1,000 to 2,000 million years ago. The copying of the DNA was so accurate over this time that it is the equivalent of making only one error in copying the Bible 250,000 times.

Frank] I did not realise the AIK method of replication was so accurate and resisted mutation so successfully.

Steve] I recommend Dawkins' book to you because when it comes to real science he is not afraid to divulge evidence that is harmful to his case, such is his honesty. I learned a lot of good science from him.

Frank] Because Dawkins is an atheist and life is too busy to read all that I want to, I had ignored him. Maybe I will read this controversial book. I can appreciate that as boys we were indoctrinated or brainwashed into believing the classroom charts, but surely, if science has concluded that AIK is responsible for the replication of all life on earth today, and that there is no other mechanism in place, and if the Genesis record states that this was the method whereby God intended all living forms to replicate themselves, shouldn't we go with it, rather than sit around in the hope that science will some day vindicate the theory of evolution?

Steve] There are huge implications in that statement. If evolution is a fiction, which is implied in your logic, then I cannot see how millions of AIK creatures and plants and fauna could have come into existence simultaneously and spontaneously. This is nothing less than asking me to believe in a miraculous creation. The only miracle I believe in is the billions to one chance that a single cell somehow came into being. Allow me that one miracle and I can explain all the rest as the result of evolution and 'natural selection'.

Frank] Except that we know of no method of replication other than AIK. So don't you need another miracle to set up a method of replication which would permit macro changes to occur without any harmful effects destroying the replication process itself?

Steve] True, and I admit Dawkins has not yet found it for me, but he will! But Dawkins is not the only one searching for that mechanism out there, and someone, someday, will produce it much to your disgust, Frank [laughter].

Frank] So you are a man of faith, after all, Steve! But Bunyan came up with an example of social evolution, the other day. Men in the West have removed their beards in order to avoid the appearance of being old, because to be old conveys the message of being 'weak'. He pointed out that the male and the female of the human species were not created equal right across the board. He was created taller, stronger, and had a bigger brain, and was better adapted to cope with his environment, being the first to climb

the highest mountains and reach the two poles, and even venture out into space. The female always *follows* where Man has gone. He said that in the past century feminism had tried to turn a blind eye to these facts of evolution, and the hope was to reverse the trend of evolution by aping the men, and being his leader in the boardroom and in every sphere where her physical or mental deficiency was not exposed. So the church became a prime target. He pointed out that the male figure automatically carries with it the message of being the 'stronger sex', and the female figure automatically conveys the message of being the 'weaker sex', so in order for her to be his leader she has had to down-play or distort her femaleness and has cropped her hair short to ape the man, and she has removed all obvious 'female' characteristics such as lipstick, strong perfume, high heeled shoes, and jewellery because these belong to the 'weaker sex'. What do you think of that?

Steve] He is right to call it social evolution. She can never change her sex into a more male-like being, so in evolutionary terms she never is going to develop into a male. She does not have a single male cell in her body, and never will. If she is dissatisfied with her unique status as the continuator of the human species then something is going on which is producing this dissatisfaction. I don't know what it is. But let me ask you a question, Frank. The Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:18, believed that there is 'neither male nor female in Christ.' Is it possible that Paul saw an evolutionary implication in that statement as regards her functions, and this is why we have women priests, bishops, and very soon, Archbishops? Doesn't that suggest to you that male and female are equal in function?

Frank] If he did see an evolutionary implication in that statement, why did the evolutionary process start outside the Church, and not from within it?

Steve] You tell me!

Frank] Bunyan suggested that it originated in the 'world'; that it was of the Devil, to cause disorder in his great enemy's Church. The Spirit of Christ instructed His Church that just as He made man head over His creation, He also made him head over his family, and in the Church He gave the role of love-headship to the men. Indeed, women were commanded not to speak in the church, but to be submissive to the Elders, on the analogy that just as woman was to submit to do man's will, so man was to submit to do Christ's will, and so Christ was to do God's will. Bunyan said there was an authority pyramid in which God was at the top and woman at the bottom, and if each kept within this pyramid there would be harmony and peace and all would be well, but that if any broke away or usurped their allotted position, then disorder and disharmony and strife would result.

Steve] If he wants to believe that then let him do so, for myself this is just an extension of the Alpha-male hierarchy that you find in many animal 'societies'. For me, all religion is the result of a faulty 'self-awareness, god-gene'. 'God' is the creation of the human brain. 'God' does not exist outside the human brain. There is no pyramid of authority. It is up to women to battle for equality and not to accept Paul's stupid idea of the 'headship' of man over woman, and that she should do her husband's will after the analogy of Jesus doing his father's will. This is all airy-fairy stuff. I get angry with this patriarchy stuff. It is so restrictive and oppressive

and negative and stultifying. Let women or men be leaders at all levels.

Frank] So I deduce from this that you don't believe the Trinity exists. Jesus was just another man.

Steve] It follows if you are a thinking evolutionist, does it not?

Frank] So the ordinary Christian who has unconsciously gone along with evolution, because everyone else has gone along with it, and still believes that God directed the evolution of everything, is not being a 'consistent evolutionist'. He is, in fact, an 'inconsistent evolutionist', in your opinion.

Steve] Absolutely. He cannot unite chalk (evolution) and cheese (God directed evolution). It is either one or the other. He is trying to take chalk and pass it off as cheese, and call it 'biblical'. If he took the time to think through the implications of random evolution he would arrive at the place I am today.

Frank] And you explained earlier that this is half-way down the valley on the far side of the sunny uplands, but you are on a slippery slope, it is pouring with rain, and the night is coming on, and you can't retreat. You are alone with your black dog without hope of a hereafter.

Steve] In my darker moments I have wondered if there should not be a time when all of us have the right to terminate our lives when we become a burden on our family and society.

Frank] Is this because you feel that once you lose the ability to live independently and become a liability on your family or the State, you are wasting precious resources?

Steve] Precisely. Why should the lives of other human beings stop to look after the sick and the disabled and the bed-ridden? No one should hang on to life if it puts restrictions on one's family or the State. We should turn this idea into a chart to go alongside the other charts of evolution. We could have a baby at one end and an old age pensioner at the other end, still on his feet, but then you should have two or three scenes of him gradually tottering over until he is lying down, and then ask the question: Isn't it best for his family and for State resources that he be gently 'put to sleep' so that he doesn't become a burden on anyone?

I mean, what is the point, from an evolutionary point of view, in keeping these old guys alive? In nature, 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest' would kill them off as soon as they started to go downhill. It is probably a third unhelpful outcome of our branching off from our ape-like ancestors that we can't bring ourselves to terminate those that nature would definitely have abandoned to their inevitable fate. The other two unhelpful genes being mutated into a naked ape and sacrificing to 'someone-out-there' who does not exist.

Frank] It is clear, Steve, that the truth of evolution does have you thinking along lines that Bunyan would never entertain. You are both claiming to be Christians. You have demonstrated to me that evolution does have its inner logic, and indeed it allows you to escape the confines of the Bible and see the world and the universe from a perspective which the ancient writers could never have contemplated, so that in a sense, you have a superior vantage point from which to view the rise of all things from a single cell.

I can see the logic in your position that if modern man is a mutation and

with that mutation came an awareness of a 'god' and that mistaken belief generated myths about how he created the world, and these myths were then taken over by the Hebrews and incorporated into their Bible, and the Christians inherited their Bible, then the whole lot is hanging precariously by a tiny thread of a mutated 'god-gene'. We are all living a delusion if we go on believing in a Supreme Being which is the product of our own evolutionary development.

The logic of evolution, as you put it very well, is that if there had been no modern man there would have been no god. 'God' exists only because modern man exists. We give 'god' his existence. Without us, he would not exist. Given this logic, I can see why euthanasia would have benefits for society and the family. At rock bottom, then, you would say that the message of evolution is, "Man is only a naked ape."

Steve] I really did not want to let you into my deepest thoughts in case they upset you, so I played along with the idea that God existed, knowing as I do for over thirty years, that he doesn't. But now that you know where I stand can't you see that if man is the next improvement on Neanderthal man, that the idea that Adam was an entirely new creation from dust runs counter to what every scientist is saying? The idea that Adam and Eve were created naked and did not start to make clothes for themselves until they disobeyed a ridiculous command not to eat a piece of fruit is an insult to our intelligence today. How could eating a piece of fruit rob them of immortality? Anyway, what would immortality mean? Would they just go on existing for millions of years on this earth? Would they have advanced as far as we have and have walked on the moon? That story of their immortality is a dream, a myth. The truth is the naked ape underwent an incredible leap in the size and complexity of his brain. That is all you can put the existence of 'god' down to.

Again, take the idea that the reason why the modern female experiences excruciating pain at childbirth is because she ate a piece of fruit. Now, I ask you, does that sound credible to you? How could these two ideas be linked?

Then again, out of that same story comes the idea that thorns and thistles are linked to Adam eating a piece of forbidden fruit. If you found that story in a Near Eastern book of fables you would laugh at it, wouldn't you? But just because these crazy ideas are found in the Bible, somehow that changes them into true stories! You even have the incredible story that the Creator walked side by side with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Now that is the stuff of ancient Greek myths, is it not?

The last, and greatest myth of them all, is the idea that 'god' made everything, from the Big Bang to the emergence of modern man in the space of 144 hours. Now there's a whopper, if ever there was one.

Frank] You present a good case for doubting the Genesis account, but what I hold unto is the fact that Jesus believed in God the Father, the creator of all things. He prayed to Him, and God answered him directly, and Jesus said He did nothing except what the Father instructed Him to say and do. Surely, as a vicar in the Church of England, you *must* [emphasis] believe in a Supreme Being. If you deny that God exists, then you part company with Jesus, both in this life and the next.

But I have a second reason. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, believed that Adam and Eve were real persons, who were created immortal and sinless, and perfect (disease free). I believe him when he pointed out that the things you mentioned above as being mythical all came about through the first sin of disobedience that the pair committed. Incredible as it may seem, I believe it because Paul believed it. If we did not have an explanation for our present fallen world, which Paul's commentary on Genesis gives us, then I would have been shaken by your very persuasive and logical arguments.

What is preventing me becoming an evolutionist is this, incredible things are said to have happened as a result of Adam's first sin. Those things are still with us; our mortality, shame over our nakedness, childbirth pain, thorn and thistles, the absence of God walking physically with us on the earth. Now all these things I accept by faith. I cannot prove them, any more than I can prove that the rainbow is a sign that God will never flood the world again.

But when it comes to my creation, it is a different story. Science does come to my aid here. Science tells me that AIK is the only method for replicating all things today. I can see it with my own eyes everywhere. But you're telling me to lay aside good science and believe a myth! And it appears to me, Steve, that everything hangs on your belief that the 'awareness-of-god' gene has brought God into existence, because no other animal on earth prays to God or has any inclination that God created it.

But then explain to me how Jesus Christ could worship God, if there is no God? If there is no God, and Jesus prays to Him, then Jesus is a lesser person than you, who have been to the valley and seen the origin for the 'god-awareness' phenomenon in a harmful gene mutation.

Steve] I admit that Paul is an obstacle to passing off Genesis 1-11 as just a collection of Near Eastern myths; and as for Jesus praying to 'someone-out-there' who does not exist, I just cannot believe he could do this. Do you think that the fact that he claimed to be the 'someone-out-there' has anything to do with it?

Frank] Maybe.

Steve] I am aware that there are many Christian professors in scientific departments who claim to be theistic evolutionists. Let's be clear. Evolution exists whether there is a god or not. It is independent of 'god'. They know that. Everything has a rational, scientific explanation. There is no need to invoke 'a god' in any investigation, or to attribute anything in the universe to a mythical force out there who is required to supply a part of the solution in getting from A to B. They know that. If there is 'a god' he exists outside science. To invoke the presence of 'God' or 'a god' is an unscientific procedure. It is like an historian consulting a horoscope to write up history. They don't mix well, do they? So neither does 'god' and science.

But fortunately evolution is such a dominant theory among all unbelievers that these Christians in science must go along with it. They have no choice. Peer-group pressure sees to that. The herd instinct will ensure that they must stick together with their unbelieving colleagues.

These Christians suffer an embarrassment of exegesis. On the one hand

they say they believe in God and that Genesis 1-11 is His truthful revelation to man, but on the other hand science does not require God to be present at any stage. And science, they learned from their infancy, gazing at the wall-charts, has no place for their God. They don't mix. They are embarrassed to express their disbelief in God's record of AIK-creation. Their academic record would suffer if they believed God's record, so, like me, they keep quiet when they are behind their pulpit. Their shame to accept AIK-creation, which is the straight reading of the text and was clearly intended by those who wrote up Genesis, blunts their witness to God's power and intelligence and design.

Frank] What would you say is the strength of evolution, the thing that convinces you that it and not AIK-creation is the way to view the universe?

Steve] Its plausibility. Its simplicity. The impact of the wall-charts conveys it all. The cumulative effect of micro-evolutionary changes is sufficient to account for the entire world as we see it today.

Frank] And what do you think is the strength of AIK-creation?

Steve] Its plausibility, given that science can only see AIK operating today. It also has the advantage that it is incorporated into the Bible, so that gives it a head start.

Frank] OK. Let me come back to you after I have asked Bunyan what he thinks about the case for evolution.

SOME TIME LATER

Steve] So what did your tinker, I mean thinker, chap say about evolution?

Frank] He said the weakness of evolution was its strength.

Steve] What does he mean by that?!

Frank] He said, its plausibility is its weakness. It is armchair science. Take for example our first parents. They looked like chimps. They had full body hair. They produce twins, a boy and a girl, with no body hair due to a freak mutation. Now, in order for these bald chimps to retain this freak mutation they have to be isolated, just as you would do in a laboratory. So somehow these two freak chimps had to move away to another part of the world and through incest produce more of their own kind. As they multiply in complete isolation, which insures that there is no crossbreeding to neutralise the mutation, the suggestion is that their hairy parent-stock became extinct, leaving the naked freaks to colonise their space. After each freak mutation the whole cycle of isolation-multiplication through incest-extinction of parent stock-recolonisation, takes place again. This goes on for millions of times to insure that any new freak mutation is not lost. At the end of millions of micro-evolutionary developments you get something looking like Adam and Eve. The only flaw with this armchair scenario is that the world is not a laboratory. On paper this would explain the huge gap between our nearest cousins, the chimpanzees, and ourselves. The weakness of evolution is its implausibility.

Steve] He might have added that it is based on AIK biology which Dawkins has shown is the wrong mechanism for producing viable freak mutations.

Frank] Well, that was his next point!

Steve] I accept these are weaknesses with micro-evolution, but it seems a climb-down to have to rely on faith in the biblical record when my good friend has shown conclusively that Genesis is not the Word of God, but the word of man — the word of myth-makers. Genesis is phenomenological science, not pure science. It recognises that AIK was working at the dawn of Mesopotamian culture and so it incorporated this visual observation into its myths, and Genesis is just a Hebrew version of these early myths. How would 'thinker' answer that?

Frank] Well, my answer would be that Genesis 1 must be myth because no human eye was witness to what is recorded in that story, OR [emphasis] this is a story that could only have been divulged by the Creator Himself. I suspect that what Bunyan would say is that the Creator, in answer to Adam's questions when they used to walk in the Garden of Eden together in the cool of the evening, gave him this version and Adam handed this on to all his offspring. His offspring spread out over the whole Mesopotamian region taking with them this tradition. In time the tradition was distorted in the re-telling over the centuries and millennia, so that would explain why these Mesopotamian versions of creation and the flood are both similar and dissimilar to the Genesis stories. They all derive from one source, as your good friend rightly surmised, but Bunyan would say that the Genesis version contains the original story whereas your friend says the Mesopotamian was the original and the Hebrews reshaped it to suit their monotheistic beliefs. If you believe your friend's interpretation, then the Genesis stories are myths; if you believe Bunyan, then we have in our hands God's version of how He created the universe.

Steve] It is asking a lot to believe that Genesis 1 was spoken to Adam and it was faithfully passed down thousands of years to end up as the first page of the Bible without being distorted in some details.

Frank] The alternative is that the Mesopotamian version came first and supplied the Hebrews with the building-block that is Genesis 1. If we imagine the Mesopotamian building-block began life as a crude statue of a man, because they were a very primitive people. Then thousands of years later the Hebrews came across this crude statue and they take it back to Israel where their craftsmen get to work on it and out of that crude image of a man they produce an image that would rival Michelangelo's statue of David.

Steve] That is exactly the impression I got when I studied my good friend's book. The Mesopotamian version came first, and the Genesis account is a much later and sophisticated version of their myths. But nevertheless, it shows that Genesis 1 did not come from God. It had its origin in the mind of man from the beginning. For that reason it lacks credibility. Its human origin undermines its so-called inspiration.

Frank] The issue then boils down to, How much of the Bible is revelation from God and how much is it the insights of man? If it is a mixture, and God is reported as saying things which He could not have said, then the whole Bible becomes suspect and unreliable.

Steve] This is why I and Christian teachers of science are careful to avoid taking Genesis 1 into our pulpits and into our science classes, and into our research, and into our textbooks. It is an embarrassment to us. Not to

believe in evolution would immediately cut one off from other scientists. They all say it exists, so we go along with them in saying that it exists. Frank] Bunyan said that evolution was like the Emperor's new clothes. They didn't exist, any more than evolution exists, but those around the Emperor told him what he wanted to hear and one day he walked out to greet his people wearing his new clothes. It wasn't until one small boy shouted out in surprise to his parents, "The king is in the nude!" that he looked down and realised he had no clothes on!³ Christians in science have taken off the clothes that God gave them and have put on the 'new clothes' that evolution has provided.

END
Dr Leslie McFall
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³ The fact that Steve at first misled Frank on a number of issues, such as mentioning 'God' when he did not believe there was a God, and using the 'days' of creation and what was made in each 'day' to underpin the evolution of life as represented in the geological column, all this was done deliberately in order to take Frank on a journey of discovery. Sometimes Christians in science fear it would frighten off other Christians if they revealed their innermost thoughts, so the majority 'go along with' AIK believers in talking about a personal God who left a scientific record of how He created the world Man lives in, but among themselves they adopt a superior attitude toward God's record. By 'go along with' is meant they give the impression that they believe Genesis 1-3 is based on fact, but this is not their belief.