



Charles Darwin, *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle* (1838-1843)

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## *Evangelical Christians and Evolution: some discussion points*

1. Darwin's 19 printed works display an amazing breadth and beauty.
2. Darwin did not argue for atheism, nor that his theory of evolution (descent with modification from common ancestors) was inconsistent with Christian faith.
3. Evolution does not imply atheism. (Cf. embryology.)
4. Evolution is compatible with Christian theology (e.g., history, providence, concurrence).
5. Evolution is consistent with a high view of the authority of scripture (cf. B.B. Warfield).
6. Evolution is strongly supported by the fossil record, and by multiple lines of evidence.
7. Christian apologetics should begin with Christ, not with an independent natural theology. "No creation without Christ."
8. Modern Christian thinking about creation is often deistic (viewing nature as autonomous) instead of theistic, and often Unitarian rather than Trinitarian (Christ-centered).
9. The human problem is rebellion, not ignorance of God. Forgiveness rather than proof is our chief need; revelation and reconciliation should go together (Calvin's spectacles).
10. Christians should be critically open to the discoveries of non-Christians, balancing two principles: the *presuppositional character of knowledge* and *common grace*.
  - All knowledge has a presuppositional character (which implies, among other things, that even large-scale scientific theories may turn out to be replaced by future paradigm shifts).
  - All knowledge is obtained through common grace (which implies, among other things, that Christians have much to learn from others, even from so-called "atheistic" large-scale scientific theories).
11. Evangelical Christians who are disinclined to accept evolution should nevertheless keep the truth of evolution an open question.
12. Contra "methodological naturalism," one should do science in view of all that one knows. One should integrate worldview and science in profound ways.
13. "Evolutionary atheists" and "Intelligent Design" apologists both agree that Darwinism implies atheism and that worldviews are based upon scientific proof. These are false.
14. Many "evolutionary atheists" and "Intelligent Design apologists" need to be confronted about the limits of science (and the temptations of "scientism").
  - It is invalid to extrapolate from nature or science either to an ethic or to a worldview.
  - Many outspoken polemicists uncritically fail to appreciate both the limitations of science and the profound influence of their presuppositions.
15. The chief characteristic of a "scientific" approach to knowledge (in any field) is *kata physin*, i.e., that the methodology should be appropriate to the subject matter.
  - *Kata physin* implies that methods will vary as much as subject matter.
  - *Kata physin* implies that the natural sciences have inherent, profound limitations.
16. To ask biologists and paleontologists to consider Christ is a non-starter if we are first asking them to jettison all that they passionately love and know. Therefore, evangelical scientists should largely exemplify an evolutionary position.