

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

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This short paper is an attempt to show by diagram and written exposition that the theory of evolution lies in a zone of human understanding that is, at best, conjectural. Since the Bible account of creation consists rather of a witness or record of actual events, it should be regarded as superior to any human theories regarding origins.

Methods of Study and Space-time Dimensions

Man's method of study is always determined by dimensions of space and time. He may make direct analysis of objects in his environment, if these same objects are of such size that they are readily accessible to his senses.

When man is concerned with the structure or properties of objects that differ considerably in size from the dimensions of his own body, however, he must use instruments such as the telescope or the microscope, designed especially for a certain task.

When the structures and phenomena deal with dimensions not directly attainable by instruments, our knowledge can be arrived at by deductions. These deductions are based on data obtained by experimental methods and evaluated by our rational faculties.

In the case of structures having dimensions that are vastly different from those of the human body (such as the atomic nuclei or the hypergalaxies) it is nearly impossible to devise a spatial representation which would be acceptable to the human senses. In such cases reality is best represented by mathematical formulae alone and no valid sensory image exists!

In relation to time as well as space, man's capacity to observe is also limited. Phenomena which occur within an appropriate interval of time (neither too long nor too short) may be described by estimates that become more and more exact. When the time dimensions cannot be reached directly by his senses, man must again employ instruments or resort to deductive methods which extend his powers of observation (consult Figure 1). The image thus obtained may once again be only a sketchy representation which is best expressed by means of a mathematical equation.

When dealing with extremely small size or time dimensions, the image produced is in general an average which has only statistical value and individual phenomena cannot be measured directly. Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy asserts that the act of observing such minute phenomena in itself creates disturbances which may be greater than the phenomena under study!

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In the case of phenomena of long duration (beyond the limits of human observation) the study can be accomplished only by assuming permanency of the conditions under which the phenomena developed. Results of such studies are continually subject to revision and are at best only conjectural. When a man tries to extend his understanding far beyond his own dimensions (in either time or space) his scientific knowledge is severely limited! These relationships and limitations are summarized graphically in Figure 1.

Limitations of Scientific Theories

Scientific theories are proposed to achieve the goal of providing broad bases for human knowledge. Yet the more comprehensive a scientific theory is in scope, the more it is subject to possible revision. Conclusions of scientists become more and more problematic the farther they move away from the description of concrete reality.

Although general theories have value as a basis for new experiments and for pedagogical exposition, their existence is often rather short-lived. The scientific method gives excellent results for describing and explaining partial aspects of reality, but when attempting to draw generalized conclusions, great caution must be exercised.

Evolution Theory in Particular

Several fundamental drawbacks may be detailed with regard to the theory of evolution. In the first place, it is a general theory that encompasses within a simple and universal idea, a very large number of events. For this reason, the theory of evolution extends far beyond the usual domain of scientific theorizing, and for many proponents all caution has been abandoned!

In the second place, proponents use evolution theory to reduce past events to schemes which are based upon estimates of present phenomena alone. This immediately places it out in the "zone of conjecture" (see Figure 1). Using evolution theory, men dare to guess about the manner in which certain events (e.g. the origin of species) may have occurred in the past. This conjecture is supposedly based upon "probability." Does not our estimate of "probability," however, rest ultimately upon that which occurs most frequently before our eyes?

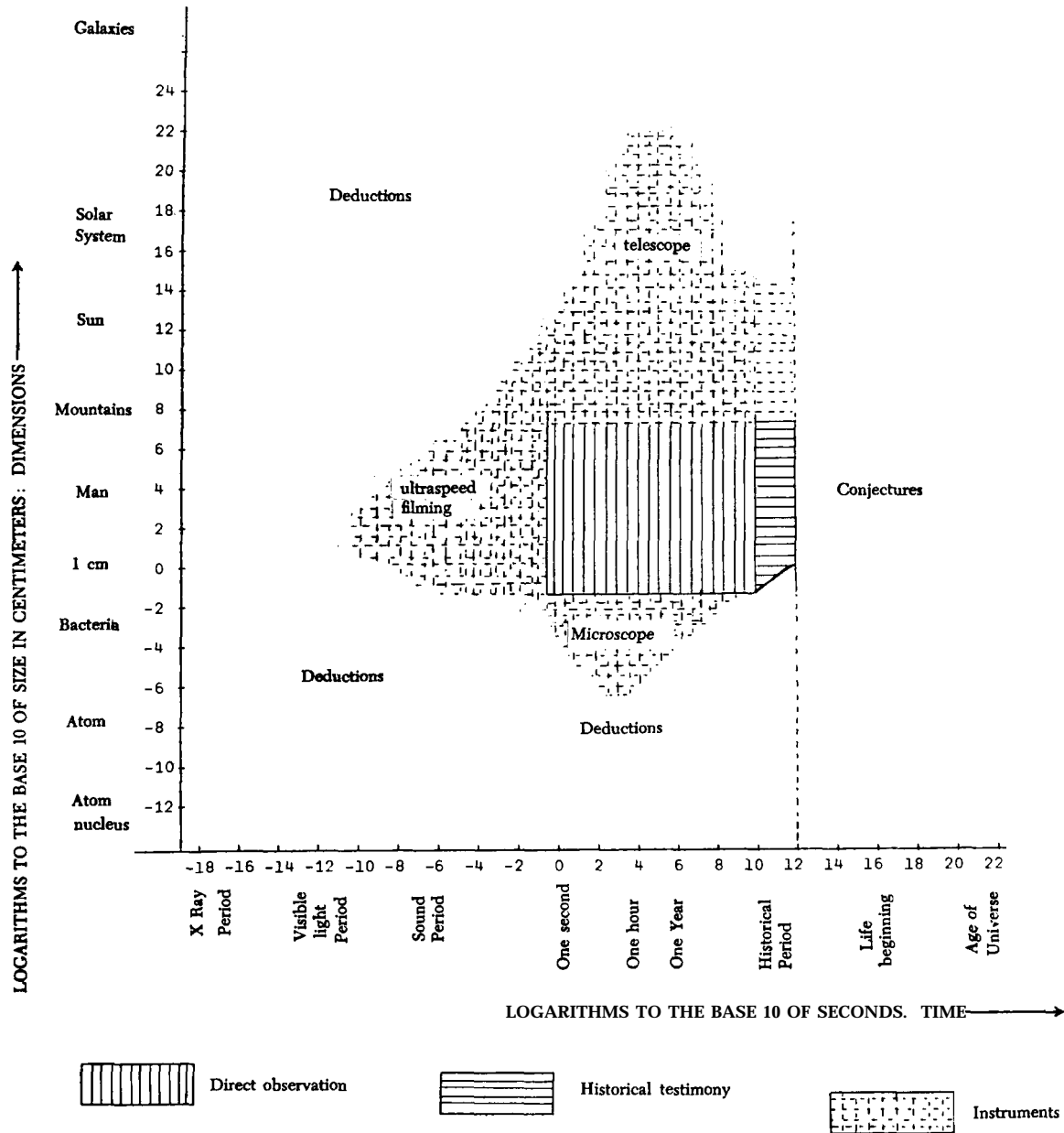


Figure 1. This figure represents sources of our knowledge and understanding regarding structures and phenomena and their relation with time and size.

The representation involves logarithms to the base 10 for time in seconds on the X axis and logarithms to the base 10 for size in centimeters on the axis of Y. The plan thus defined can be divided into five areas in correspondence with procedures utilized to acquire knowledge.

The first zone corresponds to sensorial knowledge which includes sizes ranging from 0.1 mm to a few thousand kilometers, and time intervals from one second to the life span of the observer.

Within the second area the sensorial capacity is increased by means of the use of instruments such as microscopes, telescopes, ultraspeed filming, etc. Limits of this area are changeable, and are in constant advancement as a consequence of technological improvement.

Beyond the area of instrumental observation there is another area which can be rendered by the application of deductive methods which are more or less reliable.

In the case of phenomena of duration extending beyond the life span of the observer, one has to resort to the testimony of trustworthy men. Therefore, a new zone is defined and limited obviously to the historical period.

At the right hand of this zone, that is to say in the case of phenomena of duration beyond written history, one can only guess about the way the phenomena occurred. It is within this "zone of conjecture" that the pretended biological evolution is placed.

In historical analysis, it is quite unsound to suppose that events which occur most frequently now are necessarily those which happened in the past. Yet, ironically for the evolution theory, if one were to attempt a theory of evolution based upon the notion of probability, he would be surprised to discover that natural events demonstrate *fixity of biological types*, and provide little or no *basis for transformism!*

Knowledge of the Past

If man really wishes to understand those aspects of the past which are not iterative, the only valid system (as historians know) is through the testimony of intelligent and trustworthy witnesses. It is in this way alone that one may acquire a knowledge of the detailed history of humanity.

Such specific knowledge cannot be attained by logical deduction for deductions are always prone to discussion and revision. The more sweeping a deduction becomes, the more likely it is to be inexact in a particular instance. In the domain of history, then, witness is the information of choice.

Fortunately we have available for study regarding the origin of living beings, a secure source of information. This is the revelation as it appears in the unchangeable Sacred Scripture. This revelation informs us concerning the origin of living beings and of humanity in a schematic but clear and precise manner.

Yet the theory of evolution is, at present, quite fashionable and is admitted as an unquestioned dogma, by numerous scientists. Some dare say, against logical reasoning itself, that evolution is not a matter of theory but of scientific fact. The falsity of such assertions appears when one considers the limitations of human knowledge regarding past events.

Proponents of naturalism, who do not allow any act of God in the world, do not accept the idea of the creation of man, and has put forward a number of more or less fantastic suppositions and hypotheses. Some of these are ridiculous, such as the one proposed by the Stoics who thought that the first men were born out of the earth, spontaneously, in the fashion of mushrooms! Monists, on the other hand, willingly admit that man is the result of chance, which would involve the possibility that atoms combine to yield more and more complex structures. They assert that at the end of many millions of years man came into being from one of these combinations.

It is surprising to realize that the evolutionists, who are usually agnostics regarding such important matters as the immortality of the soul, abandon their agnostic position when referring to the

origin of living beings! In the case of origins, it would be wiser for them to say, "we do not know," rather than postulate fragile, if not unbelievable hypotheses.

Theistic Evolutionism

A number of professedly Christian evolutionists give the same value (in certain cases greater value) to their scientific theories as to God's Word; and, they wish to adapt the meaning of the Sacred Text to their ideas and conclusions. They propose to interpret the clear narratives of the Bible so as to say, "God has insufflated a soul into a preexisting animal being, and by this act the first man came into existence."

To uphold these interpretations of the Sacred Text is simply and clearly to deny its worth. If in such an important matter the Bible can contain many gross errors, what will then be the value of all its other affirmations? Christian evolutionists virtually admit that their theories and conclusions are more worthy of faith than the Sacred Scripture. This is comparable to a situation in which a historian would give more importance to conclusions arrived at by him (out of vestiges) than to a document which is clear and faithful.

The Origin of Man

The Sacred Scripture tells us that humanity originated from a single couple: Adam and Eve. The Bible says that the first man was created and that God, by means of a mysterious operation, formed woman out of a part of man's body. This fact stresses the unity and uniqueness of the creation of man, independent of the animals.

The Bible view, which stresses the common origin of all humanity, is opposed by polygenism, which is based on the idea that the human race originated from numerous couples, without any relationship, and whose origin would have been ape-like animals in what are called "centres of hominization." It is important to stress that the Bible, being *monogenistic* for the human species is polygenistic for the animal species.

Yet some evolution-minded scientists would assert exactly the opposite thesis—that there is basically a *monogenistic* origin of all the animal kinds including mankind, and superimposed on this a *polygenistic* origin of the races of mankind. Except for their origin from the common gene pool of the animal species from which these human races presumably "evolved," they would have no close relationship. This is certainly quite different from kinship resulting from tracing all races back to Adam and Eve!

Here again the attitude is to give more importance to theories and provisional conclusions of conjectural men than to the straightforward statements of Sacred Scripture.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES HAVING THE CREATION POINT OF VIEW

WALTER E. LAMMERTS*



Figure 1. Left, Administration Building; Center, James White Memorial Library; Right, Theological Seminary.



Figure 2. Campus Health Center.

Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, is the "academic home" of Dr. Frank L. Marsh, one of the original Creation Research Committee "Team of Ten" from which developed the Creation Research Society in the fall of 1963.

According to a recent letter, Dr. Marsh is still actively teaching entomology, among other subjects, at the age of 70. Dr. Marsh, a pioneer creationist, is well known as the author of many books in this field of study. Among them are: *Evolution, Creation, and Science* published in 1947; *Studies in Creationism*, 1950; and *Life, Man, and Time*, 1957, with Revised Edition in 1967. Also he has published numerous articles in the six volumes of the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* and *Annual*.

Quoting from his October 7, 1969 letter:

A unique feature of Andrews University is its cosmopolitan nature. The registrar gave me the opening report for 1968-69, and it shows a total college and up enrollment of 2061 students (1219 men and 842 women). The University also has a Laboratory school (kindergarten through senior high school) and the enrollment in this part is 725. Our students are from all 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. This enrollment also included college students from 67 foreign countries—from Antigua to Yugoslavia. This makes us quite a melting pot. We have just about every color in the rainbow, and no serious troubles.

All classrooms stand squarely for special Creation as opposed to evolution.

The following information from the various catalogues he sent is of interest. Andrews University is located on a beautiful 700 acre campus near the banks of the St. Joseph river. It began

in 1901 as the Seventh-Day Adventist Emmanuel Missionary College. In 1960 this college, the Theological Seminary, and school of graduate studies were united under one charter as a University. It is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and also by the Michigan State Board of Education.

About 36 buildings, many quite recent in construction, house the various departments. Since only the science curriculum will be of interest for this article, only this part of the program will be outlined. Bachelor of Science degrees are given in agriculture, biology, chemistry, foods and home economics, mathematics, medical secretary, nursing, physics, and secretarial science. The school of graduate studies offers programs leading to Master of Arts degree in biological science, education, English, history and political science, mathematics, and music.

Dr. Asa C. Thoresen is head of the biological science department. Assisting him are Frank Marsh, Harold E. Heidtke, Ch. D. S. Johnson, and Leonard Hare, all having Ph.D. degrees in various fields of biological science. Harold Coffin and Richard M. Ritland have their Ph.D. degrees in paleontology and geology, and specialize in research in these fields though teaching in the biological sciences department.

Dr. Coffin contributed an article for the *Creation Research Society Annual* of 1969 entitled, "Research on the Classic Joggins Petrified Trees," which gives, in a most interesting manner, the evidence that supports the idea that these trees could only have been buried and petrified by rapid sedimentation.

Tuition, room, and board per quarter costs about \$760.00, plus miscellaneous expenses of \$75-\$100.00 for each quarter. The usual college year consists of three quarters. Student loans at very low interest are available.

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