

## The Struggles of Michael Ruse

by Henry M. Morris\*

A leading modern evolutionist, Michael Ruse, has recently published a significant book which he has titled, *The Evolution-Creation Struggle*,<sup>1</sup> discussing what might be called the "struggle for existence" (using the Darwinian cliché) between evolution and creation as two rival religious systems. In its prologue, he says:

In particular, I argue that in both evolution and creation we have rival religious responses to a crisis of faith—rival stories of origins, rival judgments about the meaning of human life, rival sets of moral dictates, and above all what theologians call rival eschatologies—pictures of the future and of what lies ahead for humankind.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Ruse is right. That's exactly what the struggle is all about. Most evolutionists will claim, however, that the struggle is between evolutionary science and creationist religion. We creationists have often pointed out the truth about that pervasive false dichotomy, but evolutionists seem oblivious to it. It is good to see at least one leading evolutionist recognizing the religious dimensions of this struggle.

### Evolution or Evolutionism?

But Dr. Ruse also devotes much of his book to another sort of internal struggle

that is happening among his fellow evolutionists.

Ruse now is trying to make a distinction between "evolution" as pure science and "evolutionism" as religion. He is a firm believer in evolution as allegedly proved by science, but also sees that most evolutionary scientists have made it into a naturalistic religion which has many religious and philosophical implications in society.

This particular struggle has involved him personally. Duane Gish and I had a creation-evolution debate with him and another evolutionist at Northwestern University back in 1977. There, we summarized what we considered to be the scientific evidences against evolution but also stressed the religious nature of evolution. Dr. Gish also emphasized the latter in a discussion he had with Dr. Ruse at the famous creation-law trial in Arkansas in 1981. As a result, Dr. Ruse eventually came to agree that evolution has become a religion for many other evolutionists too. He had written a notable book, *Darwinism Defended*, published in 1982, in which he said,

I believe that Darwinism, especially as it extends into human sociobiology, reflects a strong ideology.<sup>3</sup>

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## The Eschatology Conflict

In his new book, Michael Ruse also writes at some length about what he thinks are the eschatological aspects of the creation-evolution “struggle.” He is apparently very knowledgeable about Biblical doctrines, especially about Christ and salvation. But now he introduces what to me is a novel concept about how all this affects creationism and evolutionism.

Evolutionists are postmillennialists, thinking that we humans can improve our lot and bring about heaven on earth. Creationists are anti-postmillennialists, whether they be traditional premillennialists or modern amillennialists (some of the intelligent design theorists). They are against massive government-backed programs for societal change and would have us concentrate rather on immediate and personal salvation.<sup>4</sup>

This supposed relationship of creationism to premillennialism comes up frequently in his book. However, although John Whitcomb and I are convinced premillennialists, the publishers of our book, *The Genesis Flood* (which many say catalyzed modern creationism), normally publish only amillennial and postmillennial books. There are in fact quite a few creationists who are post-millennialists and probably even more who are amillennialists. The common ground of almost all Christian creationists is simply that they believe in God and the Bible, not a particular understanding of eschatology.

Ruse seems to be saying also that the religion of post-millennial evolutionism was actually the parent of the “science” of evolution. That is, many people before Darwin wanted to believe in evolution because of their dissatisfaction with the Christian worldview but the scientists at that time (Kepler, Newton, Boyle,

etc.) nearly all believed that science pointed to God and creation. But then Charles Darwin came along and presumably proved that apparent “design” could be achieved by random variations and natural selection in the struggle for existence. In the widely noted expression of Richard Dawkins, Darwin finally made it possible to be an “intellectually fulfilled atheist.”

However, the fact that one can imagine a way by which complex organisms could be “designed” without a Designer does not prove that such a thing ever really happened. As one leading evolutionist reminded his colleagues:

No one has ever produced a species by mechanisms of natural selection. No one has ever gotten near it. . . .<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, Darwinism is not really a science, regardless of their claims. It has no practical value in the world of real science at all. The editor of the journal *BioEssays* wrote:

Evolution would appear to be the indispensable unifying idea and, at the same time, a highly superfluous one.<sup>6</sup>

That statement was quoted approvingly by another practicing scientist, who said

. . . my own research with antibiotics received no guidance from insights provided by Darwinian evolution. . . . I recently asked more than 70 eminent researchers if they would have done their work differently if they had thought Darwin’s theory was wrong. The responses were all the same: “No.”<sup>7</sup>

## A Personal Struggle

However, such admissions that evolution has no value in real scientific studies will not impress those who are committed to the religion of evolutionism. They are true

believers, even though there is no real *scientific* evidence for macroevolution.

One must also wonder whether there had been another “struggle” in the soul of Michael Ruse before he became such a totally committed Darwinian. He was once a professing Christian. I do not know how deep that belief was, but he does seem to know the Bible quite well, and also the history of the creation-evolution “struggle.” In fact, he says that:

My area of expertise is the clash between evolutionists and creationists, and my analysis is that we have no simple clash between science and religion but rather between two religions.<sup>8</sup>

His survey of the history of this conflict throughout the centuries is fascinating and well written. The idea that he has had a personal struggle is just my own assumption. However, in an earlier essay for a journal devoted to science and religion, he made several disturbing statements. For example:

Some of the problems of Christianity strike me as being so blatantly rational-belief-destroying that there is almost a sense of farce in seeing its devotees trying to wriggle from under them. Chief among these is the problem of explaining how somebody’s death two thousand years ago can wash away my sins. When you combine this with the doctrine of the Trinity and the implication that the sacrificial lamb is God Himself (or Itself) and that this therefore makes things all right with this self-same God, the rational mind boggles.<sup>9</sup>

He then says, in a second article in the same journal:

... I really want to believe. I find the goodies offered by Christianity extremely attractive. But I am damned

(again!) if I am going to sell my evolutionary birthright for a mess of religious pottage.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to his fairly extensive knowledge of Scripture and Biblical doctrines, he is well acquainted with the scientific problems with evolution, as we creationists see them. In his earlier book, he included a chapter-by-chapter critique of the ICR book *Scientific Creationism*. Although its arguments and evidences have led a goodly number of former evolutionists to become creationists, he concludes that:

... the Creationists fail entirely to make their case. Their arguments are rotten, through and through.<sup>11</sup>

One thing he does not do, however, in any of his books, is to prove macroevolution, or even to show it to be as probable as creation.

## References

1. Michael Ruse, *The Evolution-Creation Struggle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 327 pp.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3. Michael Ruse, *Darwinism Defended* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1982), p. 280.
4. *The Evolution-Creation Struggle*, p. 267.
5. Colin Patterson, “Cladistics,” Interview on BBC, March 4, 1982.
6. O. S. Wilkins, “Evolutionary Processes,” *BioEssays* (vol. 22, 2000), p. 1052. Quoted by Skell (see note 7).
7. Philip S. Skell, “Why Do We Invoke Darwin?” *The Scientist* (vol. 19, August 29, 2005), p. 10.
8. *The Evolution-Creation Struggle*, p. 287.
9. “From Belief to Unbelief—and Halfway Back” in *Zygon* (vol. 29, March 1994), p. 31.
10. Michael Ruse, “A Few Last Words—Until the Next Time,” *Zygon* (vol. 29, March 1994), p. 79.
11. *Darwinism Defended*, p. 321. 

# Just How Well Proven Is Evolution?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Recently I was a guest on CNN's Lou Dobbs program, discussing the difference between evolution, intelligent design, and creation. The other two guests were well-known ID spokesmen, Dr. Jon Wells, and famous evolutionist, Dr. Michael Ruse.

In the middle of the discussion, Dr. Ruse claimed that evolution is a proven fact, just as "proven" as  $2+2=4$ . When challenged, he insisted the two statements are equivalently true. Is this so? If not, what is the difference?

Here's a simple experiment to verify one of the statements. Extend two fingers on your left hand, and then extend two on your right hand. Lay them all on the table in front of you, and count them. You should get four. If you are careful, every time you count them, you will get four. It's an observational fact.

Now devise an experiment to verify evolution. Keep trying. There must be one. I suspect even Dr. Ruse would be unable to propose an experiment to verify evolution like we verified our mathematical equation. Even if both statements are facts, obviously they are not the same kind of facts.

That's because evolution is not something we can observe. If it's happening today, it's going too slow to observe. If it happened in the past, we can't return to the past to see. It may be a fact of history, but how would we know? Certainly not in the same way we know  $2+2=4$ .

Evolution, at the most, is an idea about history, not observational science. There may be inferences we can make about the past based on modern observations, and these may or may not be true, but don't bother claiming that ideas about history

are the same as repeatable observations in the present. And don't insult us by thinking that we will believe that they are.

It makes you wonder if evolutionists really believe what they say or if they are purposely trying to mislead. I suspect there are some of both.

Many evolutionists I have met have something in their own past that has turned them away from "religion." Maybe it was legalistic parents or abuse by a respected figure. Maybe it was the insistence that we should "avoid science because it contradicts the Bible," leaving them without answers to historical claims made in the name of science. A bitter hatred of God and Biblical truth developed, leading them to a life dedicated to freeing others from the shackles of Scripture, justifying the wrong use of evolutionary claims.

However, most evolutionists are evolutionists because they are victims of the wrong teaching of others. Naturalism (i.e., naturalistic evolution) is often desirable, for it seemingly frees us from the authority of a Creator God. Without a God to whom we are accountable, we are free to live as we choose. College students, often surrounded by hedonism are particularly ripe for wrong thinking, and many never recover. Either way, it can lead to ludicrous statements, such as "evolution is as true as  $2+2=4$ ."

Thankfully, most people are not hopelessly deceived. Polls in America show that the majority believes in creation, and many more want it taught. Less than 10% are confirmed evolutionists, yet they seemingly control education. They may teach that evolution is well proven, but we don't have to believe them. ☞



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