



Creation Matters

Volume 4, Number 2

March / April 1999

Godly Astronomers

by Don B. DeYoung, Ph.D.

Introduction. In an earlier article (Vol. 3, No. 6) we surveyed mathematicians who held a high view of scripture. This article continues the theme with biblical astronomers from the past, including ten men and women. Not all the names included here were literal creationists. Nevertheless, each person held a remarkable and public belief in the Creator. In each case their reward was original insight into astronomy details.

Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) was trained in astronomy at the British Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England. He pioneered work in astrophysics with an emphasis on stellar structure. Eddington was the first to calculate the diameter of



red giant stars, including Betelgeuse, later verified with telescopes. In 1919 he measured the bending of starlight during a solar eclipse, thus verifying Einstein's general relativity theory. Eddington grew up in a quiet Quaker home and maintained a strong pietistic faith all his life. In his publications Eddington taught that the Creation needed to be measured, explored, and appreciated. In *Science and the Unseen*

World (1929) he declared that the meaning of life was to be found in spiritual reality rather than in science data alone. He believed that the spiritual realm was just as real as the world of nature. Eddington wrote, "You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed at the forefront." He scoffed at philosophical proofs, whether for or against God's existence. He wrote, "The most flawless proof of the existence of God is no substitute for [our relationship with Him]... if we have that relationship, the most convincing disproof is turned harmlessly aside. If I may say it with reverence, the soul and God laugh together

...continued on page 5



Cancer and War from God's Hands?

by Paul G. Humber, M.S.



Some of you know that I write devotionals for *Days of Praise*. I referred a colleague to one I had just written. He commented later that he agreed with every word I said. This was an encouragement. Perhaps the Lord was/is working in his heart. (I invite you to pray.) But he followed with a sincere question about the sovereignty of God over such things as cancer, war, and the Holocaust. I said a few things on the spot but later handed him a more formal reply. With a few minor changes, here is my response.

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your note which said that I had stated well the nature of your questions. As I sit down at my computer this Saturday morning to formulate a more lengthy response, I sense a need to get over two preliminary (and perhaps only imag-

ined) obstacles. You may be wondering 1) what is my motivation for doing this, and 2) am I not a bit presumptuous in attempting to do what far greater minds than mine have failed to do?

My Response to Obstacle #1: First, I enjoy a challenge. You remember that I used to coach pole vaulting. Getting over a bar is a challenge, and I enjoy it. Your question is like a crossbar — a challenge. Can I get over it?

Second, I named my son Peter after the Apostle who

wrote, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But

...continued on page 2

Contents

Godly Astronomers	1
Cancer and War from God's Hands?	1
Letters	
Men and Women of Mathematics and of God.....	6
Reply.....	6
God and the Big Bang.....	7
Creation Calendar.....	8

do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Pet.3:15-16). I value your friendship. You have asked a good question. I have an obligation to give my reasons for the hope that I have in a fair and just God.

My Response to Obstacle #2: On the matter of arrogance (and I'm not saying you are accusing me of such), I have several things to say.

Many years ago, when we used to meet as an Upper School faculty in the Board Room, I spoke out against smoking in the Faculty Room. One of my peers represented me (in the minutes) as being “adamantly opposed” to smoking in the faculty room.

At the time, I was on the radical fringe of what was acceptable — smoke had been billowing out into the hall and almost into my room. The irony is that now my fringe position is centrist.

Some may have thought at the time that I was arrogant to think I knew what was best for my colleagues. The truth of the matter is that I was right, but not because I was more intelligent. I was simplistic, having seen pictures of lungs blackened by tar. I deduced (rightly) that such was harmful to the body. You may remember that I posted pictures in what was then the mailroom.

There is an interesting passage in the Psalms that speaks to the matter of arrogance: “Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes” (Ps.119:98-99). Note that the writer of those words had more insight, not because he was smarter, but because the Lord was and is smarter. The believer has answers because he is more familiar with God’s “Answer-Key.”

Do cancer and war (specifically, the

Holocaust) come from God's hands? I would like to answer this question in seven parts with a concluding summary:

Part 1: It's Okay to Ask Sincere Questions.

First, this is a fair question. We are creatures made in God's image. He is eminently rational, and it is fitting that we ask rational questions. He said, “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Is.1:18). Job asked all kinds of questions — so did the Psalmist (Ps.73) and Habakkuk:

The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not

The believer has answers because he is more familiar with God's “Answer-Key.”

save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted. (Hab. 1:1-4)

The slain saints (cf. Rev.6:10) asked another probing question from heaven, but I move on to the next part.

Part 2: It's Not Okay to Be Puffed Up with Pride.

Having said the above, it is also very important to be humble before God. Putting God on trial (and He has allowed this to happen more than once — see pp. 17-18 of my book) is indeed arrogant! God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. He said:

Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there

is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. (Is.46:8-10)

Man today says that he will do all that he pleases, but he will fail in his prideful efforts to usurp God.

Part 3: Let's Admit to Our Limitations.

We also should realize that our capacity to understand is very limited. Even if we are more intelligent than Adam (a thing very unlikely), our understanding is next to nothing when compared to God. But He has revealed Himself to us: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the

words of this law” (Deut.29:29).

Part 4: Getting to Know God's Character.

The most important thing for us as humans is to know God intimately and lovingly. Jesus prayed:

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. (Jn.17:24-26)

Getting to know someone involves getting to know his character. God is loving, compassionate, holy, and just. When a human author (C.S.Lewis) creates an evil character (the White Witch), we do not say that the author is evil for doing so. The character may be evil, but the author is not — especially if he has a good purpose that

transcends temporary evil (the ultimate triumph of good over evil, for example).

The Sovereign of the Universe, in order to display the wonder of His character to the cosmic (heavenly) host, created people who would fall into sin. Unlike Lewis' White Witch, however, Adam and Eve were created both real and good. They chose the evil (to disobey God). That sin has been imputed to us, their descendants. In Adam, all fall.

Two questions might arise at this point. First, is not the idea of a heavenly host fanciful — does it find biblical support? Second, who does God think He is — making the universe this way? In response to the first question, there is ample support for the heavenly host notion. I offer two passages. The first is from the Book of Revelation (Chapter 5):

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev. 5:11-14)

As to the notion of man's being on display before angels, see the first chapter of Job:

One day the angels [*note: literally, the sons of God*] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." (Job 1:6-12a)

The second question was: Who does God think He is — making the universe this way? This is not unlike the hypotheti-

Who does God think he is — making the universe this way?

cal question the Apostle Paul entertained:

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? (Rom. 9:19-21)

This may be something like asking, "Does not the author (Lewis) have the right to make with the same pen and ink some characters for noble purposes and some for ignoble?" The Apostle went on immediately to write:

What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath — prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his

glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory — even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" (Rom. 9:22-26)

Part 5: Let's Not Forget God's Mercy.

Lest we be tempted at this point to sit in judgment over God, it would be good to remind ourselves that the same God who punishes evil with war and judgments also displays His character of love and mercy. It seems that both Adam and Eve, for example, who were expelled from the Garden, were rescued. He gave them garments of skin — requiring sacrifice of an animal. This typified the covering of righteousness the Lamb of

God gives to those who humble their hearts before the Cross. Adam and Eve accepted God's provision.

Part 6: But Why Cancer?

Several years ago I held my father-in-law's hand as he passed from this life. Though he was (is) a Christian, he died of cancer. Why? Isn't God supposed to heal all our diseases? My wife, Prudence, has been healed of cancer! Why not her father?

First, my father-in-law did live much beyond the maximum of four years that was projected following diagnosis of the cancer. Fifteen years is much more than four. But also, it was a tremendous learning experience for him and others. He gained new appreciation, for example, for the passage in 1 Pet.1:3-7:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you,

who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

My father-in-law, a former executive with Firestone Tire and Rubber, would go with men from his church to the Akron City Jail and speak to some on death row. I would wheel him around in his wheelchair. When they spoke of death row, he identified with them by saying he was on death row, too. He rejoiced in the opportunity to share with them freedom in Christ.

Cancer for my wife was a learning experience. For one thing, we learn utter dependence on God. The Lord comes very close to His children when they suffer. He never leaves them nor forsakes them. Cancer is not such a bad thing if it means closeness to the greatest Lover of all time, and death for the believer is like birth — a moving from one location to a much bigger world.

Much, much more could be said here, but I move to the Holocaust.

Part 7: Why War and the Holocaust?

I don't know if you have ever read my articles dealing with Hitler's evil and the resistance of Christians to it. I mention Corrie ten Boom in one of those two articles, and I loaned you a copy of the video, *The Hiding Place*, featuring her story. She is interviewed at the end. We have the notion that the ultimate evil that can come our way is physical death, but this is not right. The Lord said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Mt.10:28)

Corrie's sister died in one of the prison camps. Her family's crime was trying to save Jews. The apostle Paul wrote:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Cor.4:16-18)

Death in a concentration camp, for the believer, is a "light and momentary trouble." The Apostle Peter wrote:

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did

not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Pet.2:21-25)

Summary

I do not profess to have answered every aspect of your question, but I find God's revelation of Himself in His Word satisfying to me. I allow that there are many dimensions beyond my ability to understand, but He has proven His goodness to me in so many ways that it would be utter folly for me to do other than to bow before Him in humble admiration, love, and praise.

If there is one passage that says it all, it might be the Apostle Paul's words in Eph.1:11-12: "In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory."

A passage in his third chapter, perhaps because it is more lengthy, may actually top it, however. Paul adds:

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of His power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church,

the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and

authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Eph 3:7-11)

Thank you for setting up that crossbar so that I might at least try to "Paul-vault" over it. I'm not sure whether in your mind I have quite cleared the bar, but it's been a joy trying, anyway.

May the One who gives us strength to do anything — including staring "in wonder" at "a leaf bud emerging on a flowering pear" with all of its "delicate complexity" and "filaments of fragility," fill our hearts with such love and adoration of Him that we all but burst with His joy.

Scripture quotations are from the New International Version. Paul has a M.S. degree in education and teaches mathematics at The Haverford School in Philadelphia.

Godly Astronomers

...continued from p. 1

over so odd a conclusion.”

David Fabricius (1564-1617) was a Dutch astronomer who discovered the first known variable star in 1596, which was later named Mira. It is located in the December constellation Cetus. Fabricius watched the light output of Mira slowly change during 1596. Today Mira is thought to expand and contract over a 331-day period, somewhat like a soap bubble, with varying brightness. Fabricius had a friendship with both Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler. He also was the minister of a local Dutch Reformed church. Faith in God and preaching duties held first place in Fabricius' life. Astronomy was a secondary interest in which the Lord blessed Fabricius with Mira's discovery.

James Ferguson (1710-1776) was a Scottish astronomer and instrument maker. He published many technical papers concerning solar eclipses and constructed theoretical models for the formation of the planets. Ferguson promoted the nebular hypothesis theory of solar system origin rather than a direct creation. However, unlike the philosophers Kant and Laplace, Ferguson gave God credit for giving all atoms their proper initial position and speed at the moment of Creation. Ferguson rejected random, chance beginnings for the solar system — ideas which are so popular today.

Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) was a personal friend of the astronomer Galileo. Gassendi was the first to observe a planetary transit across the face of the sun, that of Mercury in 1631. This particular observation helped verify Kepler's laws of planetary motion. Gassendi also experimented with the principle of inertia and helped explain this universal tendency of objects to remain at rest or in constant motion. He introduced the term *aurora borealis* in 1621 to describe the northern and southern lights. He further supported Galileo's heliocentric idea that God directed the earth to revolve about the sun. Gassendi believed God had created the atoms of the universe in a single stroke. Yet, he correctly taught that the Creation was open to detailed scientific analysis. Gassendi also insisted that man had an immaterial soul, making him distinct from

the animal world.



Caroline Herschel (1750-1848) lived in the shadow of her brother William and also her astronomer nephew John Herschel. William discovered the planet Uranus in 1781 while Caroline worked as his astronomy assistant. She diligently taught herself the mathematical details of the heavens and soon began her own observations. Caroline cataloged 14 new nebulae, including what is today called the Andromeda Galaxy. Between 1786-97 she discovered 8 new comets, an outstanding accomplishment. The British Royal Astronomical Society voted Caroline a gold medal in 1828 and later made her an honorary member. All her life Caroline Herschel displayed a solid Christian testimony. She composed her own epitaph, including these words, on her grave in Hanover, Germany:

Here lies the earthly veil of
Caroline Herschel.
The eyes of her who passed
to glory,
while below turned to the
starry heavens.
[She followed] to a better life
her father, Isaac Herschel.

Bartholomew Keckermann (1571-1609) was a Polish leader in astronomy, mathematics, and educational philosophy. He had a special interest in the origin of comets. Halley's Comet appeared toward the end of his life, in 1607. At this early stage of astronomy he believed that comet appearances were a heavenly sign of God's wrath and impending judgment. Indeed, this has often appeared to be the case in history. Keckermann held to strict Calvinist Christianity.



Henrietta Swan Leavitt (1868-1921) developed a childhood interest in astronomy. This eventually led to her life's work at the Harvard College Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She discovered 4 new novae, or exploding stars, and cataloged more than

2,400 variable stars. Miss Leavitt had a special interest in the properties of Cepheid variable stars. These important stars reveal their distance by the way their light output changes with time. She calibrated this distance method, thus providing an important yardstick for measuring the depths of space. Cepheid variables remain today one of the most popular techniques for finding distances to stars and galaxies. Throughout her life Henrietta Leavitt remained loyal to her pastor father and also to her Puritan roots. Biographer Solon Bailey describes her as “a devoted member of her immediate family circle ... unselfishly considerate in her friendships, steadfastly loyal to her principles and deeply conscientious and sincere in her Christian life and character.”



Maria Mitchell (1818-1889) was the first woman astronomer in America. Her discovery of Comet Mitchell in 1847 called attention to the role of American women in science.

She was educated chiefly by her father, then enjoyed a distinguished career as an astronomy professor at Vassar College in New York. All her life Maria presented a strong testimony to the Creation. She wrote, “Every formula which expresses a law of nature is a hymn of praise to God.” Her diary further states that “There is a God and He is good ... I try to increase my trust in this, my only article of creed.” At her birthplace in Massachusetts, the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association maintains an observatory, library, and science museum.

Gotfried Wendelin (1580-1667) is known as the Ptolemy of his age. This Flemish astronomer bravely promoted the heliocentric view that the earth circles the sun. At this time persecution often resulted from such thinking. Wendelin made careful studies of the orbital paths of planets. He showed in 1626 that the satellites or moons of Jupiter exactly follow Kepler's laws of motion. Isaac Newton later listed Wendelin in his *Principia* (1687) for contributing to Newton's understanding of nature. Wendelin was an ordained priest in Brussels and held a deep Catholic faith in his Creator.

Thomas Wright (1711-1786) studied as-

tronomy in eighteenth century England. Immanuel Kant credits Wright for originating the disk-shaped model for the Milky Way Galaxy, the model still valid today. Wright also correctly understood that the universe was made up of numerous galaxies. He worked diligently to integrate scientific observation with biblical theology. While the telescope could show universe structure, Wright believed that religion alone could provide the correct cosmo-

logical overview. In one of Wright's early models God's abode was placed at the physical center of the universe, with the far-distant outer darkness of space as a place of punishment.

Conclusion. If any field of science warrants humility, then astronomy qualifies. It is here where we learn the extent of the heavens and the variety within. However, modern astronomers all too often project a troubling arrogance toward their creator.

They could well profit from studying pioneer astronomers from the past.

Don B. DeYoung is Vice-President of the Creation Research Society, and is Professor of Physics at Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana. He can be reached at 200 Seminary Drive, Winona Lake, IN 46590, or by email at DBDeYoung@grace.edu. This article is excerpted from a future creationist biographical book on which he is working.

Letters

Men and Women of Mathematics and of God

In rereading *Creation Matters*, Vol.3, Num. 6, Nov/Dec. 1998, I find an inconsistency of standards in the article "Men and Women of Mathematics and of God."

Lauding the scientific achievements of the cited men and women is commendable because the author has demonstrated a standard of scientific peer excellence by which to rank them based on their labors. However, speaking of some of their spiritual states of affairs, deism and faith in or religious practice in a denomination seems to be equated with repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Even biblical salvation and denominational doctrine are not necessarily mutually inclusive. Belief in a personal God does not make one a Christian or in agreement with God. Furthermore, renowned Buddhist, Muslim, pagan, or atheistic scientists can legitimately say that they have taken their faith "seriously," or felt that they have had it grow "in personal importance" as they matured in their own respective societies, even unto many "good works." The Bible says works will not save one's soul, hence will not make them Christians or get them into heaven. The Bible and its doctrines, not denominations, cults, nor religiosity, should have been the clear spiritual standard of Christianity in the article.

Based on the evidence presented, it appears to me an egregious error to imply that all persons in the DeYoung article were biblical Christians, as opposed to nominal Christians pretending to salva-

tion. Granted that only they and God know, but the Bible plainly rejects those who rely on deism, works, denomination, or religion as a test of Christianity, instead of biblical saving faith. Yes, there are individuals I have met who confess and demonstrate biblical faith and salvation in various "Christian" denominations; *i.e.*, are saved / born again. But, according to the Book of Revelation, if one is in the institution of the Whore that sits on the seven hills and trades in the souls of men, one is to leave her and not be a partaker of her iniquity, much less to grow in her ways or remain faithful to her. My question then becomes, "why use the name of Catholicism as a testimony of the life or faith of an individual, seeing that the Bible rejects it?"

The Christian student of the Bible, reading the "Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent," the reaffirmation of most of their contents in the "Vatican II" papers, and various Catholic literature and encyclopedia, will find a clear pattern. In contrast to the Scriptures, to grow in allegiance to or faith in the official Catholic institution and its official doctrines will lead one farther and farther away from biblicism and from a Christ centered theology and practice. Having used biographical material that sounds deistic and denominational, instead of biblically sound confessions of faith and salvation, the broad painting of some of these men and women as Christian scientists and as the "rich biblical foundation of modern science," yields a subtly weaker argument for God and the Bible. "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3:1)

Craig M. Szwed

Reply

I appreciate Craig's concern about true citizens of God's Kingdom. My article actually did not make any assumptions about the spiritual state of the listed mathematicians. Affairs of the heart and soul are known only by God. The point was that these men and women were driven to excellence by faith in their Creator. They held a high view of scripture. And they were rewarded for their fidelity to the Lord with important math discoveries.

Creationists, past and present, show much religious diversity. It is somewhat unsettling to study closely the beliefs of Johann Kepler or Isaac Newton. However, their creationist testimonies are strong, encouraging, and deserving of all the publicity we can give. Such testimonies cancel the common criticism that "creation science" is an oxymoron. In truth, Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 declares that science without God is the ultimate impoverishment: vanity of vanities.

Craig singles out Catholicism for particular attack. However, whether Catholic or Congregationalist, Baptist or Brethren, there are some included individuals who know the Lord and others who do not. May we strive to win others and defend God's truth with grace and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Don DeYoung

God and the Big Bang

by Robert E. Meyer

For those who believe in the immutable God of the Bible, it is neither necessary nor desirable that he share that belief with the ever-changing speculations of modern cosmology.

Can one believe simultaneously in God and the Big Bang? This is very relevant since belief in one or both of these concepts greatly affects our whole philosophy of life. But the question is not as simple as it first might appear. We must define some key words before proceeding. These are: God, the big bang and belief.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, tenth edition, defines *God* as "The supreme or ultimate reality: as the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshiped as creator and ruler of the universe." It defines the *big bang* as "a theory in astronomy: the universe originated billions of years ago in an explosion from a single point of nearly infinite energy density." *Belief* is defined as "a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing."

By dictionary definition, the concepts are incompatible. God is worshiped as the Creator of the universe. A creative act by an intelligent being is very different from a chance explosion.

The Bible has been the historical primary source in North America for knowledge about God. It will therefore be used to define our concept of God and His creative work. It is important to note that the concept of God's creative act is not limited to the Genesis account. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament affirm it in many places. There is clear evidence that it was written to be understood, employing the normal sense of language, and that it was, in fact, so understood by the original readers.

Most people who attempt to reconcile the two concepts end up watering down the attributes of God. He becomes a god [small "g"] of their own preconceived imagination. Reduce Him in size sufficiently and one could probably reconcile the two concepts. This of course is not intellectually honest. It would also result in a god of little or no value for the one who believes in him.

Besides the dictionary definition, we

should note that the Biblical record itself states clearly that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth by divine decree. This too is incompatible with a mere chance event. They cannot both be true.

It is accurate to describe both concepts as "beliefs." The origin of the universe was a singular event that can be neither verified nor repeated in a laboratory. Whichever concept one believes in must be taken by faith. There is no way to scientifically prove either one. They are opposite beliefs and mutually exclusive. For those who believe in the immutable God of the Bible, it is neither necessary nor desirable that he share that belief with the ever-changing speculations of modern cosmology.

From what I read in some articles in *Astronomy* magazine, the theory of the big bang is far from a stable monolithic concept. On page 40 of the July 1997 issue, it says that the inflation theory "cures the classic big bang model of its most troubling intrinsic difficulties." In the January 1998 issue, page 34, we read, "The Big Bang came with finely tuned initial conditions until inflationary theory explained how the current universe got to be this way." April 1997, page 57 says, "Today, astronomers playing the high-stakes game of cosmology find themselves in a similar predicament, one that threatens the very foundation of modern cosmology: the big bang theory." Also on page 57 it is said, "Still, no one likes the cosmological constant, in part because its numerical value, like that of a true wild card, seems arbitrary, a fudge factor invoked to save the big bang cosmology." On page 59 it is admitted that if the Hubble constant is not resolved favorably, it is possible that cosmologists may have to "dump the big bang."

Why should one who believes in an unchanging God even want to believe in an ever changing big bang theory? The abundance of ambiguous terminology in many articles on cosmology presents a serious credibility problem for discerning readers. Such words as "likely," "it is

possible," "many believe," "probably," "roughly consistent," etc., do little to strengthen the faith of those skeptical of the big bang.

The normal use of the English language does not allow us to symbolize or allegorize the 4.5 to 15 billion years since the theoretical big bang occurred. Its proponents really do mean billions of years in the normal sense of the term. They clearly mean that it was very big and that it involved a great explosion. If the big bang theory is to be understood by the normal use of the English language, is it unreasonable that the Bible account of the God of Creation also be taken in the normal sense of the language?

Most people would make no attempt to reconcile the two concepts. They would just leave God completely out of the picture. The two theories are not supposed to be reconcilable.

The dictionary definition refers to God not only as worshiped as the creator of the universe but also as the ruler. This carries the strong implication of moral accountability, and many refuse to believe in God for this very reason. Make no mistake about it, this is a major issue. It is not too much to declare that it is **the** central issue.

It is no secret that much of what is written about the theories of origins is a deliberate effort to discredit the concept of the God of the Bible. This has taken the form of ruthless persecution in some totalitarian states, and more subtle practices in other places. Most people simply refuse to accept the idea of their moral accountability.

In conclusion, it is not possible to believe in the God described in the Bible and simultaneously believe in the big bang theory as described in *Astronomy* magazine without seriously distorting the normal use of the English language relative to one or both concepts.

Robert is a missionary to Ecuador. He may be reached at Robert E. Meyer, Casilla 01-05-1822, Cuenca, Ecuador, South America. E-mail: rmeyer@cue.satnet.net

Creation Calendar

Note: Items in "Creation Calendar" are for information only; the listing of an event does not necessarily imply endorsement by the Creation Research Society.

April 16-18

Ha Ha Tonka Weekend Safari

"More of God's wonders in less space than anywhere else"

CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)

Contact: Tom Willis (816)618-3610, csahq@juno.com

April 17

Design in the Living World by Frank Sherwin

Bible Science Ass'n, San Fernando Valley Chapter

7 pm, Our Saviour's First Lutheran Church, Granada Hills, CA

Contact: Mark Armitage (805)499-9634, micromark@juno.com

April 20

Let There Be Life by Robert Harsh

Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA

7:30 pm, Mars CM&A Church, Mars, PA

Contact: (412)341-4908, csf@trfn.clpgh.org

April 23-26

Creation Seminar by Dr. Don DeYoung

Riverside Grace Brethren Church, Johnstown, PA

Contact: Pastor Don Rough, (814)288-1163

May 15

Structural and Developmental Design in Parasites, by Mark Armitage

Bible Science Assoc'n, San Fernando Valley Chapter

7 pm, Our Saviour's First Lutheran Church, Granada Hills, CA

Contact: Mark Armitage (805)499-9634, micromark@juno.com

May 18

Preflood World by Robert Walsh and Henry Jackson

Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA

7:30 pm, Mars CM&A Church, Mars, PA

Contact: (412)341-4908, csf@trfn.clpgh.org

May 20

Debate: Duane Gish (ICR) vs. Massimo Pigliucci (U. Of Tenn.)

Church of Christ at Mtn. View, Winchester, VA

Contact: Evng. Charles Doughty, (540)869-2250 ext. 100

May 28-31

Nebraska Ashfall Fossil Beds

CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)

Contact: Tom Willis (816)618-3610, csahq@juno.com

June 15

The Ark by Robert Walsh and Jeff Lawther

Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA

7:30 pm, Mars CM&A Church, Mars, PA

Contact: (412)341-4908, csf@trfn.clpgh.org

June 19

Greater Kansas City Geology and Fossil Outing

9 am - 4 pm, CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)

Contact: Tom Willis (816)618-3610, csahq@juno.com

June 27 - July 2

Twin Peaks Family Science Adventure

Twin Peaks Bible Camp, Collbran, Colorado

Contact: Alpha Omega Inst., Grand Junction, CO (970)523-9943

July 20

The Rocks Cry Out by Chuck Danley and Dr. Steve Rodabaugh

Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA

7:30 pm, Mars CM&A Church, Mars, PA

Contact: (412)341-4908, csf@trfn.clpgh.org

July 24

Kansas University Natural History Museum

CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)

Contact: Tom Willis (816)618-3610, csahq@juno.com

Aug. 15-20 or Aug. 22-27

Redcloud Family Mountain Adventure

Camp Redcloud, Lake City, Colorado

Contact: Alpha Omega Inst., Grand Junction, CO (970)523-9943

Aug. 17

The Dead Speak by Dennis E. Wert

Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA

7:30 pm, Mars CM&A Church, Mars, PA

Contact: (412)341-4908, csf@trfn.clpgh.org

Aug. 21

Greater Kansas City Geology and Fossil Outing #2

9 am - 4 pm, CSA for Mid-America (Kansas City Area)

Contact: Tom Willis (816)618-3610, csahq@juno.com

Creation Matters

ISSN 1094-6632

A publication of the Creation Research Society

Volume 4, Number 2

March / April 1999

Copyright © 1999, Creation Research Society

All rights reserved.

General Editor: Glen Wolfrom

Email: CRSnetwork@aol.com

For membership / subscription information, advertising rates, and information for authors:

Glen Wolfrom

P.O. Box 8263

St. Joseph, MO 64508-8263

Email: CRSnetwork@aol.com

Creation Research Society Website:

<http://www.creationresearch.org>

Articles published in *Creation Matters* represent the opinions and beliefs of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Creation Research Society.

Advertisements appearing in this publication do not necessarily imply endorsement of the products or services by the Creation Research Society.

Creation Research Society

P.O. Box 8263

St. Joseph, MO 64508-8263

USA

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.

US Postage

PAID

Creation Research Society



Creation Matters

March / April 1999