

Darwinism And Christianity



Question

Is Darwin's theory of evolution a suitable philosophical framework for interpreting Biblical Origins?

This is one of the most significant questions confronting Churches today.

The Darwinists

The central representatives of Darwin's theory of evolution hold a philosophical view that creation and even religion in general are an error of thought and lifestyle

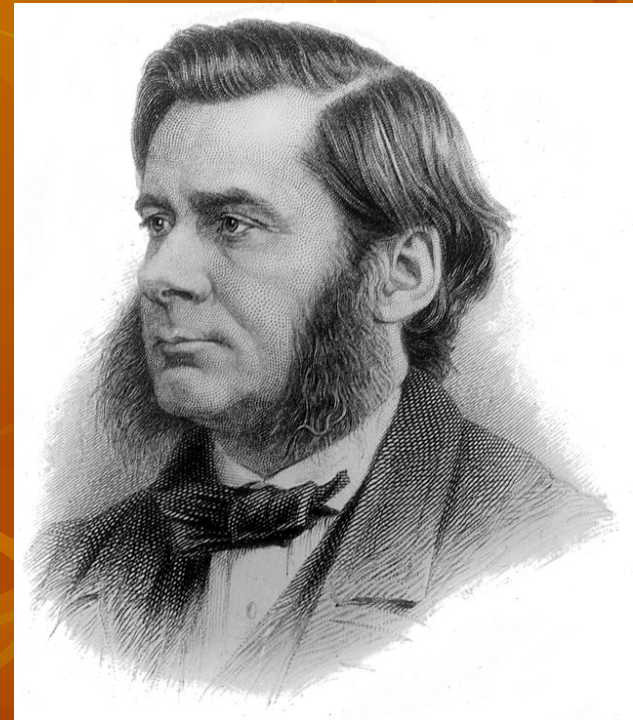


T.H. Huxley

"evolution excludes creation and all other kinds of supernatural intervention."¹

¹ *Evolution and Other Essays*

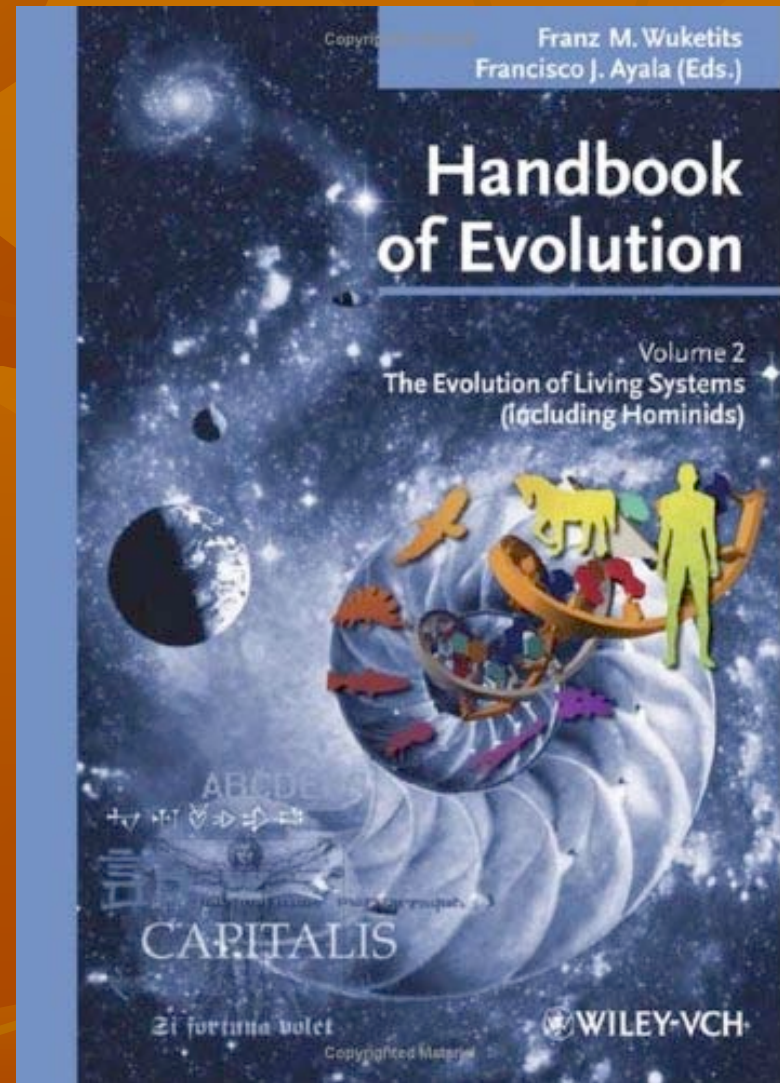
(Published by Kessinger Publishing, 2004) page 8



Francisco J. Ayala

"Darwin's greatest accomplishment" was to show that the origin of life's complexity "can be explained as the result of a natural process-natural selection-without any need to resort to a Creator or other external agent."¹

1. Francisco J. Ayala, "Darwin's greatest discovery: Design without designer," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, Vol. 104:8567-8573 (May 15, 2007)

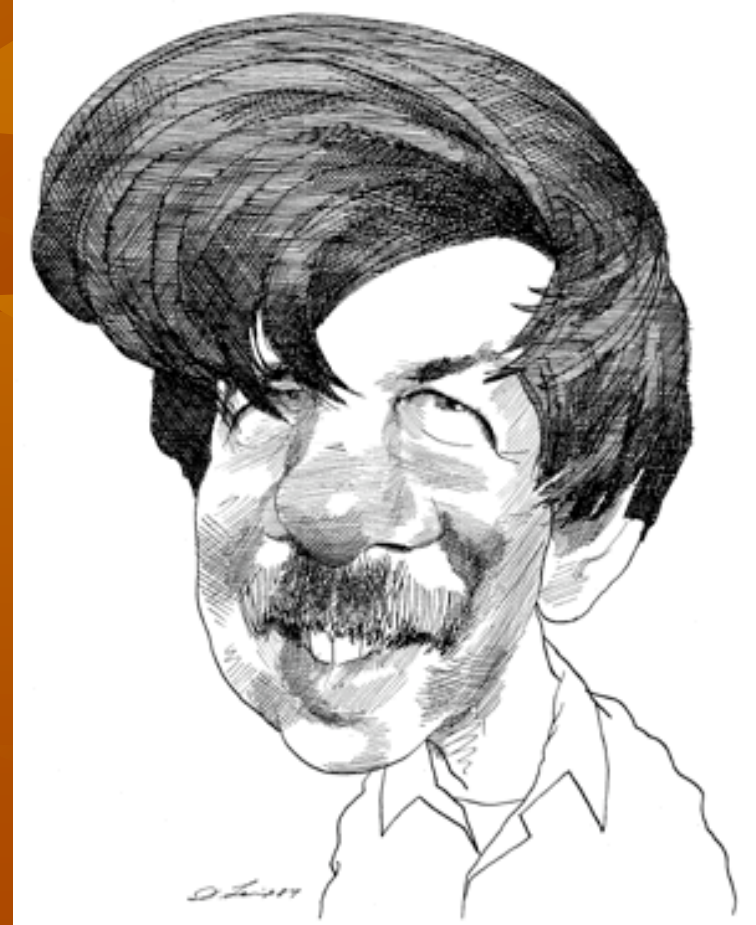


Stephen Jay Gould

"[b]efore Darwin, we thought that a benevolent God had created us,"¹ but because of Darwin's ideas, "biology took away our status as paragons created in the image of God."²

1. Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History*, page 267 (W.W. Norton, 1977).

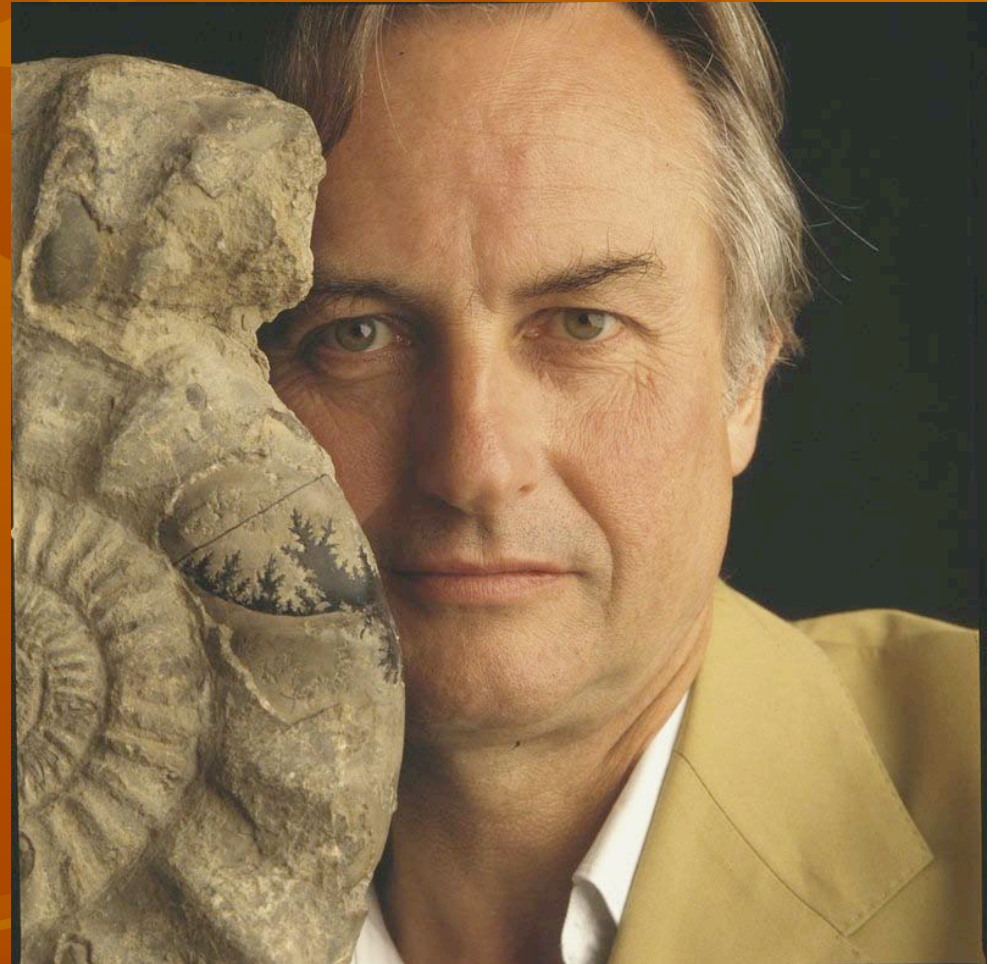
2. Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever Since Darwin: Reflections in Natural History*, page 147 (W.W. Norton, 1977).



Richard Dawkins

Dawkins believes that religion is a 'virus' and that God is a "delusion" and that "Darwin made it possible to become an intellectually fulfilled atheist."¹

1. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, page 6 (W. W. Norton, 1986).



2007 scientific journal *Nature*

"the idea that human minds are the product of evolution" is an "unassailable fact," and thus concluded, "the idea that man was created in the image of God can surely be put aside."¹

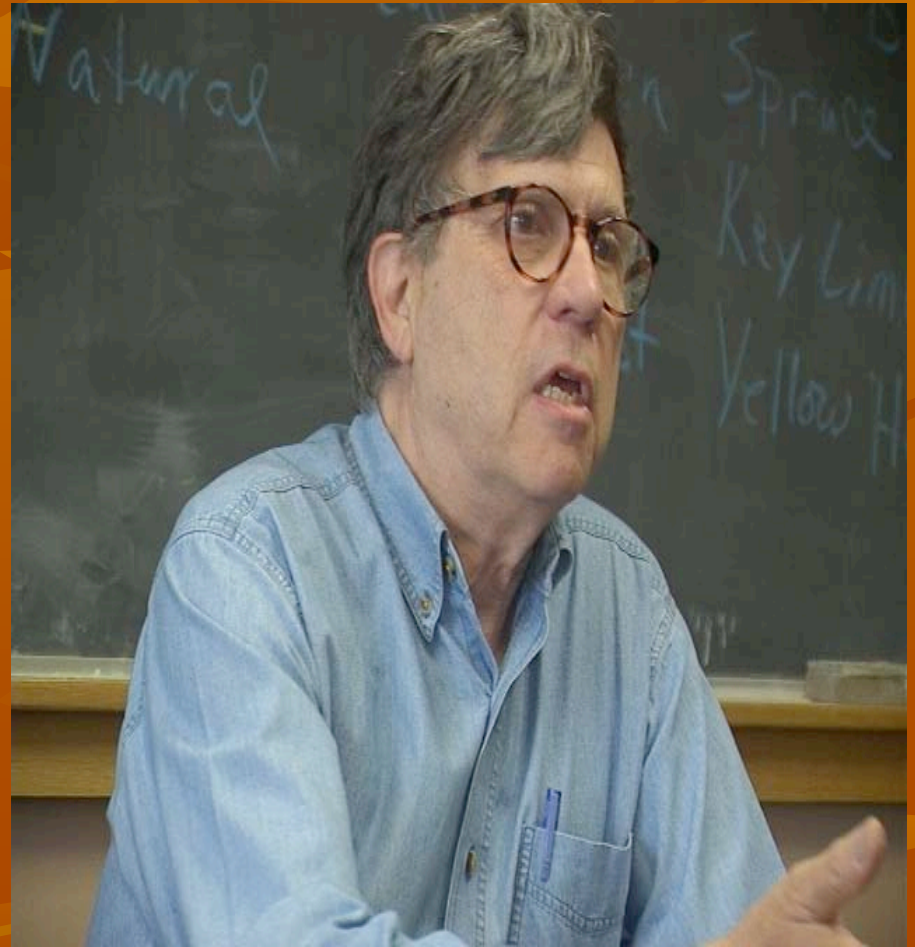


1. "Evolution and the brain," *Nature*, Vol. 447:753 (June 14, 2007).

Richard Lewontin

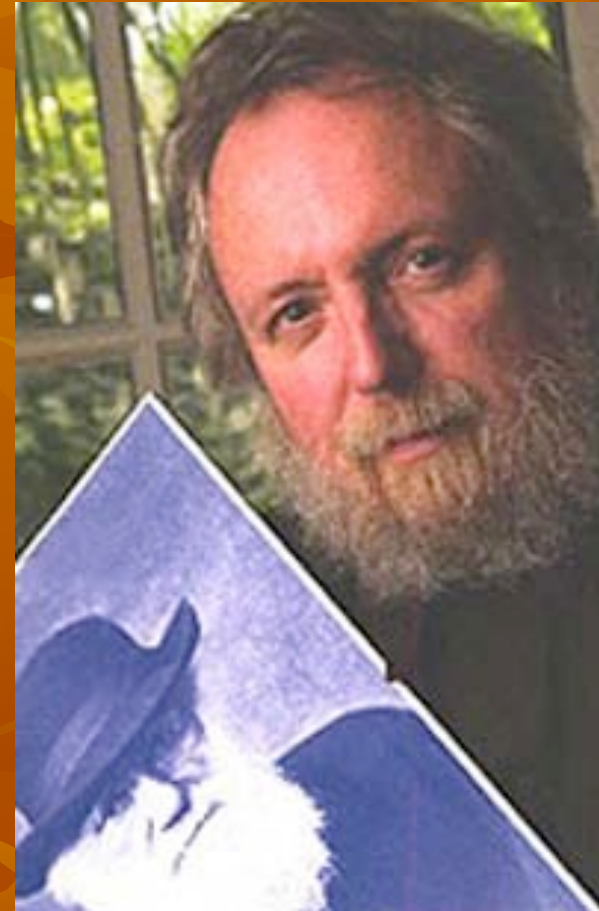
"[W]e have a prior commitment - to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to - produce material explanations- [T]hat materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."1

1. Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," *New York Review of Books*, page. 28 (January 9, 1997).



Michael Ruse

"for many evolutionists,
evolution has
functioned - akin to
being a secular religion"
whose main doctrine is
"a commitment to a
kind of naturalism"¹



1. Michael Ruse, "Nonliteralist Antievolution" AAAS Symposium: "The New Antievolutionism," February 13, 1993, Boston, MA (1993).

Evolution and Christianity

The Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches have officially accepted the view that “the theory of evolution is more than a hypothesis.” (Pope Paul II)



Anglican Church Apologizes

Anglican Church Sends Darwin An Apology,
Promotes Him On Their Website, In Honor Of
His Bicentenary

"Charles Darwin: 200 years from your birth, the Church of England owes you an apology for misunderstanding you and, by getting our first reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand you still. We try to practise the old virtues of 'faith seeking understanding' and hope that makes some amends." ¹

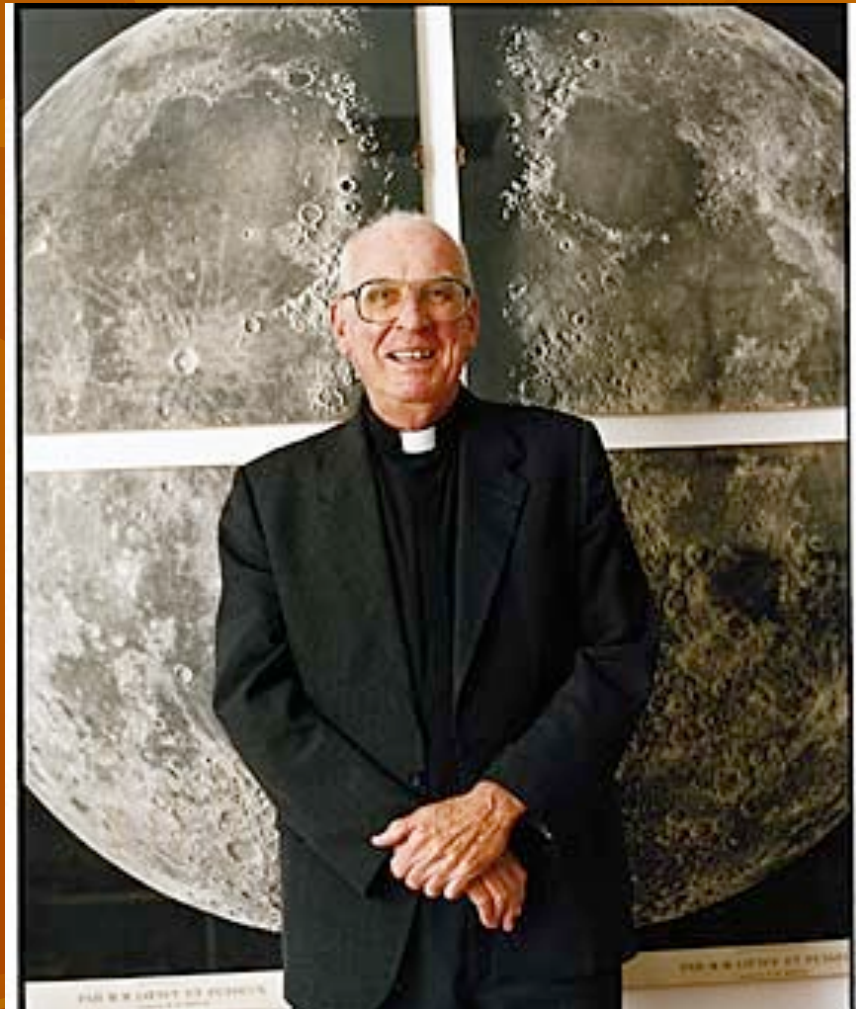
1. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/religion/2910447/Charles-Darwin-to-receive-apology-from-the-Church-of-England-for-rejecting-evolution.html

CAN CHRISTIANITY AND EVOLUTION WORK TOGETHER?

Is acceptance of Darwinian evolution compatible with religious belief?

“Evolution is the best scientific theory for origins and in no way conflicts with Catholic doctrine or teaching”

- George Coyne



CAN CHRISTIANITY AND EVOLUTION WORK TOGETHER?

Is acceptance of
Darwinian
evolution
compatible with
religious belief?

(T)here is "no conflict between science and religion," but, rather, a debate "between a materialist interpretation of the results of science and a metaphysical philosophical interpretation."

- Cardinal Schönborn



Can Christians agree?

“Evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true, but evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense—an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection—is not.”

Cardinal Schönborn

“(T)he scientific theory of evolution, as all scientific theories, *is completely neutral with respect to religious thinking*... neo-Darwinian evolution is not in the words of the cardinal, ‘an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection;’ the *apparent directionality seen by science in the evolutionary process does not require a designer*”

George Coyne

Age of the universe

It is no longer considered a point of doctrine to think of the universe or the earth as “Young” in the Catholic and the Anglican teaching. However there still is controversy among some local churches over the issue of evolution.



24 hour creation days?

Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams,
"[for] most of the history of Christianity there's
been an awareness that a belief that everything
depends on the creative act of God, is quite
compatible with a degree of uncertainty or
latitude about how precisely that unfolds in
creative time."¹

1. Archbishop of Canterbury, Transcript of interview with the Guardian

24 hour creation days?

In 2004, the *International Theological Commission*, then under the presidency of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (*Pope Benedict XVI*), published a paper in which it accepts the current scientific accounts of the history of the universe commencing in the Big Bang about 15 billion years ago and of the evolution of all life on earth including humans from the micro organisms commencing about 4 billion years ago.¹

1. Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God, (July 23rd 2004), International Theological Commission, La Civiltà Cattolica 2004, IV, 254-286

24 hour creation days?

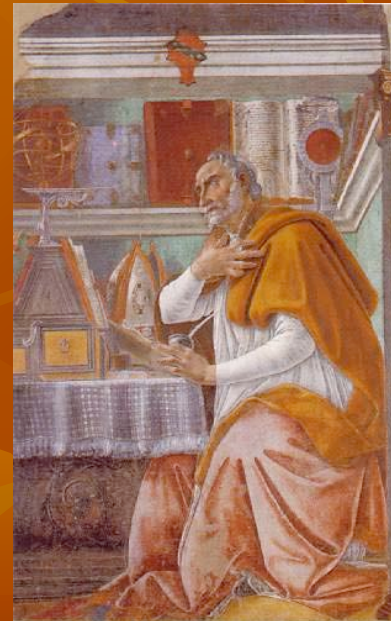
The Reformed Churches believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, but does this include a teaching that Genesis 1:1--2:4 must be understood as a literal 24-hour, six-day creation account?



Reformers

Martin Luther and John Calvin held to a 24 hour day creation.

Partly, they were especially distancing themselves from Augustine's view.



Augustine



Augustine repeatedly stresses that the six days are not six successive ordinary days. They have nothing to do with time. "These seven days of our time, although like the same days of creation in name and in numbering, follow one another in succession and mark off the division of time, but those first six days occurred in a form unfamiliar to us as intrinsic principles within things created" ¹

1. St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, translated and annotated by John Hammond Taylor, S.J., 2 vols. (New York: Newman Press, 1982).

KUYPER



First 3 days of Gen. 1
cannot be ordinary days.

Last 3 days are ordinary
days¹, yet:

*“The creation account of the first
days gives us no more of a right
to specify another period. Nothing
is determined concerning this in
Genesis 1.”²*

1. *Dictaten Dogmatiek, Locus de Creatione, 85* (Translations for this and following passages from Bavinck and Schilder are those of Max Rogland and are from his paper *Ad Litteram: Some Dutch Theologians on the Creation Days. WTJ 63* (2001) 211-33)

2. *Van de Voleinding, 1:23*

BAVINCK



“It is not apriori impossible that the days in Gen. 1 are to be conceived of as ages. But there are also positive evidences, which do not make this exegesis necessary, but nevertheless possible.”¹

AND:

It is not the purpose of Genesis 1

“to show that the creation of all things took place in precisely 6x24 hours, not one minute shorter or longer.”²



Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, 2:479



Ibid 2:481

SCHILDER



*“even the most confident
opponent of the non-24
hour interpretation of
the days can concede to
me that justice is done
to the Scriptures in
principle if three things
stand firm:*

Schilder's Rules

First, whatever your view in good conscience it should be derived from scripture

Second, science can never be a binding standard for our interpretation of scripture

Third, the historicity of Genesis 1, in Time and Space can not be questioned regardless of how we interpret the days of Genesis 1.¹

¹. Schilder *Een Hoornstoot tegen Assen?* 42-43

SCHILDER

“A day of 24 hours, or of 25 hours, or of 240 hours, or 2400 hours, etc., etc., such a ‘day’ still remains a period in an ordinary ‘reality’, a concept of ‘time’...”¹

The debate over the ‘days’ of Genesis 1 remain within the sphere of exegesis.

¹ . Schilder, *Een Hoornstoot tegen Assen?* 42-43

SCHILDER asks

“On what foundation is someone’s argument based, what are the fundamental ideas being presupposed? That is the question.”¹

Evolution and divine revelation are two mutually exclusive presuppositions.²

AND he cautions us:

We must reject the false dilemma that *either* one believes in ‘ordinary 24-hour days’ *or* denies that the days of Genesis are real days.³

1 . Schilder *Een Hoornstoot tegen Assen?* 48-49

2. *Ibid.*

3. *De Reformatie* 12, no.32 (6 May 1932): 254-55

What does Literal Mean?

According to
Kuyper¹, Bavink²
and Schilder³
we need to interpret
Genesis 1 *Literally*

Meaning:

- Actually occurring in history
- *Not* Saga, Myth, Legend
- Occurring in *Space & Time*
- *Capable of being measured in Time*

1880

De Gemeene Gratie 1:100-101; 1:95-100

1880

In the Beginning: Foundations of Christian Theology 124-125

1880

Een Hoornstoot tegen Asen? 39-46

Not A Confessional Issue

the Apostles' Creed

the Nicene Creed

the Belgic Confession

the Heidelberg Catechism

I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible

We believe that the Father created heaven and earth and all other creatures from nothing, when it seemed good to him, by his Word-- that is to say, by his Son.

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; (a) who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence)