

# Rhetoric v Science in Dawkins!

David Robertson, *The Dawkins Letters*, Christian Focus Publications, 2007

*A series of open letters posted to Richard Dawkins' website.*

If you want an intelligent, rational, candid critique of Dawkins' atheism, you should read Robertson's book. He is a Presbyterian minister in Dundee with a degree in history (Edinburgh) who—at times very humorously! – takes Dawkins apart—but in a courteous, easy-to-read manner.

First, he notes Dawkins' refusal to debate the issue of supernaturalism with those who disagree with him (p13). Like others, he pretends that there is no real debate—although many scientists, who disagree with him, are themselves Christians and even in some cases young-earth creationists!

Why is this? Perhaps it is because Dawkins feels that he has found the 'killer argument': 'Who designed the Designer?' Robertson says that it is the sort of question he expects from a six-year old—'Who made God?' (p66) The answer is, of course, that God is unmade. As Creator of everything He is *not* Himself a created being. [That is part of the Christian definition of God—that He was not designed or created.]

But this is nonsense in Dawkins' view. Evolution began in a simple manner and developed into something very complex. But Robertson (assuming for the argument that evolution is true) argues that even natural selection had to start with something, where did the 'something' come from? How did it get there? (p69)

On page 69 Robertson gives three suggested explanations: 1. Matter came from nothing via Big Bang. But as we all know 'Nothing comes from nothing!' (cf. *King Lear*, Ac.1 Sc.1) 2. Matter is eternal (The 2nd Law rules that out). 3. Matter was created *ex nihilo* by an 'incredibly powerful, intelligent and awesome' Creator. Dawkins imagines that one day scientists will discover where matter comes from—but this is just pie-in-the-sky.

However matter came into existence it is now ordered to a fantastic degree. How come? On page 70 Robertson says that the stars are for him a major reason for believing in God. Francis Collins, the Christian head of the Genome Project (and not

a young-earth creationist) explains in his book *The Language of God*, that the universe is the best evidence for God's existence. Stephen Hawking says that 'if the rate of expansion one second after Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in ten thousand million million, the universe would have re-collapsed before it ever reached its present state' (p71). A slightly bigger expansion-rate would have ensured that stars never formed! Was all that pure accident? Here we are dealing with the conditions necessary for the evolution of life even to begin (if it ever did!). Robertson notes that making biological evolution the model for the development of the universe is a fundamental mistake.

Of course there are various theories about multiverses, parallel universes, &c, but they are all (in Robertson's opinion), 'sc-fi nonsense' (p73) As Dawkins says, 'science...is all about fact and empirical evidence.' *But this is precisely where Dawkins comes unstuck.* He pretends that he leads the forces science and reason against the 'blind irrationality of faith' (p74), but, in his basic inability to tell us how matter come to exist in such an incredibly ordered form, *he is thrown back on faith!* His 'arguments for atheism...are non-scientific'.

Christians, on the other hand, believe in the existence of God for good reasons. As Collins says, 'mathematical principles and order in creation' are better evidence for faith than 'default assumptions based on a temporary lack of knowledge' (p74). Here! Here! Robertson quotes similar views from astronomers Owen Gingerich of Harvard and Nobel Prize-winner, Arno Penzias, for whom astronomy endorses Genesis. Not all the forces of reason and science, it seems, are on Dawkins' side of the argument!

Another formidable intellectual, Alistair McGrath of Oxford University, says that 'There is a substantial logical gap between Darwinism and atheism, which Dawkins seems to prefer to bridge with *rhetoric* rather than by evidence' (p69, italics added). It seems he has to!

**Reading this is no substitute for reading the Book itself! It should be said that WYCG does not endorse Big Ban or Darwinism. But we welcome all intelligent contributions to our side of the 'debate', even from those who do not wholly agree with us**