**Down with evolutionism and creationism!**

*Rick Perry, at a campaign event this week, told a boy that evolution is ‘just a theory’ with ‘gaps’ and that in Texas they teach “both creationism and evolution.”*

*According to a 2009 Gallup study, only 38% of Americans say they believe in evolution. If a majority of Americans are skeptical or unsure about evolution, should schools teach it as a mere “theory”? Why is evolution so threatening to religion?*

1. Let’s answer the *last* question first. Darwin feared that evolution would come to be seen as an alternative to religion, and he delayed publication of his *The Origin of Species* until competition made further delay impractical. His fear was justified: connoisseurs of the Enlightenment seized on the opportunity to overread his *Origin* as atheist in spite of its speaking a number of times affirmatively of “the Creator” - and in spite of his using, facing its title-page, a quotation from Francis Bacon, father of modern science, who encouraged “endless progress” in studying both religion and science - “the book of God’s word” (the Bible) and “the book of God’s works” (nature).

 It is not Darwin’s evolution that is so threatening to religion, but the atheist distortion thereof. It’s philosophical base was (as was true of Marxism) materialism. It’s a slander against Darwin to call it “Darwinism,” but “evolutionism” (short for “evolutionary materialism”) is fair and accurate.

2. “Where is God in what you are saying?” was my question when my 1930 science teacher nodded to my raised hand. “Nowhere,” was the reply. “There was no creation.” Three years later, that evolutionism was explicit in *A Humanist Manifesto*, which - unlike its successors - specified humanism as a “religion.” John Dewey, father of modern American education, married evolutionism (a philosophy) with humanism (to him, a religion replacing religions of revelation). Rick Perry seems proud that, he says, the schools in his state are broad-minded, teaching both “creationism and evolution [by which he means evolutionism].”

3. An irony of the American academy’s pressing evolutionism on the public has been not the intended increased appreciation of science but the reverse - alienation from science, especially biology, which (in my experience, for more than 80 years) has been teaching that reality is random rather than directive. For Darwin, reality was not random. In the last three pages of his classic, he speaks of “the plan of creation” and “the law imprinted on nature by the Creator,” and asserts that “as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection.” As materialists, evolutionists consider nonsense Darwin’s biblical belief that in nature we can see God at work (as in Romans 1:20, so “there is no excuse for not knowing God”).

4. I believe, as Darwin did, in both bio-evolution and creation - creation by evolution. And I oppose both materialistic Darwin-abuse (evolutionism) & literalistic Bible-abuse (young-earth creationism). The next stage of Texas school-texts could be honest to both Darwin and the Bible.

5. Young-earth creationism’s fatal flaw is its failure to see that the Bible begins not with a creation story but with two sequence-irreconcilable creation stories. The first story (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) distributes God’s creation on the template of our seven-day week, advancing from lower to higher organisms. The second story (Genesis 2:4b-25) **reverses** the sequence: God makes man first, then (as it were) holds him up with one hand as he creates under him a garden to set him down in. The stories express profound truths; but - unlike the young-earth creationists - the Bible has no interest in the time or sequence of creation.

6. Both -isms are *frauds*. Evolutionism is a philosophy claiming to be science, and creationism is a religion now (as “intelligent design” and “creation science”) claiming to be science. I agree with Rick Perry on Texas text-books, but not in a way he would find pleasing: I believe that teaching too opposing frauds is more educational than teaching either fraud singly.

7. Finally, as to the *first* question, Rick Perry used “theory” in the popular sense of “just a theory .” He did not use the word in the scientific sense. In the scientific sense, gravitation and evolution are “theories,” open to revision. Recently, Newton’s theory of gravitation has been undergoing change in light of dark matter. And some recent changes in evolution-theory are undercutting evolutionism.

Changes to scientific theories could be called the evolution of those theories. And of course religious views of evolution are, in this sense, also evolving.

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-faith/post/down-with-evolutionism-and-creationism/2011/08/24/gIQATS6zaJ_blog.html>

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