SPINOZA'S GHOST IN THE EVANGELICAL CLOSET

by Merrill Cohen, M.D., and John Doane, PhD

Abstract

Baruch Spinoza (1632 –1677) developed and gave intellectual credence to thoroughly anti-theistic ideas. During the Enlightenment, Spinozism permeated academic circles and molded the thinking of intellectuals as a bold, anti-Protestant Reformation project. These radically anti-theistic ideas spawned the variety of -isms that constitute modernity, such as materialism (or naturalism), rationalism, Darwinism, and Marxism. The presupposition underlying Western intellectual thought has become, There is no God, or, The God of the Bible can be ignored (or despised). Spinoza's religion, which we term pantheism, is now the foundation of modern Western civilization; humanism, secularism, evolutionism, scientism, etc., are how Europeans and Americans today live out this pantheistic religion. Darwinism is not a scientific explanation of origins; rather, it is a grand thought-project; it's the sacred myth of pantheism. Anti-theistic pantheism is a Satanic strategy to neutralize if not exterminate theistic Christian religion. Evangelical theologians who compromise with Darwinist explanations of origins, including the belief in deep time, rather than adhere faithfully to the literal biblical text, have bought into this anti-theistic project. Biblical authority means evangelicals should eschew attempting to harmonize Genesis with the speculations of pantheists. And Scripture warns against attempting to compromise God's word with pagan beliefs. The issue facing the Church today is not science *vs* religion, nor is it naturalism or any other world-view or philosophy *vs* theism; it is, from Romans 1:25, religion focused on creation, i.e., on nature, *vs* the worship of the Creator God. (12,645 words, 54 references)

Outline of paper:

The origins issue has been (falsely) framed as "science versus religion." If "science" means deriving conclusions from observations of the physical world, then evolutionary ideas are not scientific. That's because nothing about Darwinism is demonstrable. The empirical evidence of fossils, rock strata, mutations, etc., of course is there, but the interpretations of that evidence are purely conjectural.[1] No one has ever

[1] Evidence is not dispositive. Anyone who has watched Perry Mason knows this. Evidence must be interpreted. So statements such as "…the evidence points to a Big Bang..." is nonsense; it's the *interpretation* of that evidence that points to a putative Big Bang, not the evidence itself. But whose or which interpretation gains acceptance in the scientific community? A process similar to the early church's establishing the canon probably obtains, in which the prevailing spirit (of Satan) subtly moves certain elites according to their (subconscious) religious presuppositions (after all, "the whole world lieth in the evil one," 1 John 5:19). For example, when radio telescopes were turned to the heavens, static of certain frequencies was heard. The same static came from every direction to which the telescopes were aimed. One interpretation of this data was that it was not noise at all, but background radiation resulting from a Big Bang billions of years in the past. Other irrefutable explanations that comport with a young creation were offered, but cosmologists assiduously ignored them. So a Big Bang now supposedly explains origins; but it's just dogma, an article of faith. It's conjecture, an interpretation of static. The same thing holds for the rock strata and the fossils in the rocks. These are physical evidence that must be interpreted, and although the Genesis Flood fully explains these evidences, evolutionary geologists mock that interpretation and prefer instead their anti-theistic interpretation.

observed the supposed evolutionary scenario unfolding. The modern Darwinian explanation of origins therefore is essentially a massive thought project, an imagined grand narrative. At best, it is a sophisticated set of hypothetical scenarios based on speculation and inferences, associated with an abundance of technical methodology and scientific jargon. It is pure assertion.[2] And it all derives, as we demonstrate in this paper, from an underlying belief that God does not exist.

To claim that God does not exist, of course, is a religious statement. Holding to evolution as the explanation of origins is actually deeply religious because it ascribes creative ability, i.e., deity, to nature itself.[3] That's why we identify the religion underlying evolution as pantheistic. So the origins issue is really the Darwinists' religion, pantheism, versus Christianity.

Evolution's adherents totally miss the hollowness of Darwinism because they are committed to its underlying religious presupposition; speculation, inferences, computer models, and biased interpretations fully satisfy them. The bamboozle is highly effective in the academic world, in the media, and in government because (almost) everyone there aspires to being an intellectual, and the falsehood that to be an intellectual requires holding to evolution grips them all. Unfortunately, most theologians today lack the grounding in science necessary to see how empty Darwinism actually is. Thus the evidence, alternate interpretations, and arguments that creationists bring to the debate seem foreign. But theologians should be able to fully grasp the historical and theological issues involved. Thus this paper explores how Darwinism arose and spread and what it means to the church.

Embracing -- even if only in part -- a Satanic strategy to destroy the Church should horrify any Bible believer. But strangely that hasn't been the case. A torrent of books by evangelical authors attempting to harmonize evolution with belief in the Bible has been aimed squarely at church leaders, and a concerted effort by ostensibly Christian organizations is underway to bring Darwinism into the Church.[4] We can safely predict

---

Interpretations of evidence from the past necessarily involve speculations that might account for the physical evidence, perhaps certain (often unprovable) assumptions, as well as underlying religious presuppositions. Such interpretations are not the same type as interpretations of observations from repeatable events in the present. Hence they may rightly be termed "so-called" science. It is preposterous that so-called science should be accorded an authority greater than that of God's Word. Concerning events in the past, there's no such thing as "solid science," or "fact of science," although science popularizers throw these phrases around in the media. Unfortunately, the public uncritically takes the word "science" to mean "certainty."

[2] In the conclusion to his book, *The Grand Design* (Bantam, 2010), physicist Stephen Hawking states, “The laws of gravity and quantum theory allow universes to appear spontaneously from nothing.” Now how does he know that? No mortal can possibly know such a thing. But he believes it with intense commitment; it’s a religious statement. The Genesis narrative has not been – and cannot be – disproved; it is merely repudiated, so that pretentious assertions can supplant truths God has graciously revealed.

[3] The notion that matter has inherent creative ability is nonsense. Only God can create (Psalm 96:5). That the physical world has the ability to create is foundational to evolution, yet it's never been demonstrated. Indeed, the Laws of Thermodynamics forbid nature from creating. Supposing that matter and energy nevertheless can spontaneously create is a faith issue, a deeply religious belief – yet the issue is framed as "science versus religion"! The thrust of Genesis One is that all that exists came into existence *because* a transcendent Being – Israel's God – created it, and He did it purposefully.

[4] The list of books espousing some form of theistic evolution is long. Examples include *Adam and the Genome*, by Dennis R. Venema and Scot McKnight, Brazos, 2017; *How I Changed My Mind About Evolution*, edited by Kathryn Applegate and J.B. Stump, IVP, 2016; *Evolution, Scripture and Nature Say Yes*, by Denis O. Lamoureux, Zondervan, 2016; *The Grand Canyon, Monument to an Ancient Earth*, edited by Carol Hill, Gregg Davidson, Tim Heible, and Wayne Ranney, Kregel, 2016; *Darwin, Creation and the Fall*, edited by R.J. Sperry and T.A. Noble, Apollos, 2009; *Evolution and Belief*, by R.J. Asher, Cambridge, 2012; *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* By C. John Collins, Crossway, 2011; *Seven Days that Divide the World*, by John Lennox, Zondervan, 2011; *Science and Faith*, by C. John Collins, Crossway, 2003; *In the Beginning…We Misunderstood*, by Johnny Miller and John Soden, Kregel, 2012; *When Faith and Science Collide: A Biblical Approach to Evaluating Evolution and the Age of the Earth*, by Gregg Davidson, Malius Press, 2010; *The Evolution of Adam*, by Peter Enns, Baker, Grand Rapids, 2012; and *The Language of Science and Faith*, by Giberson and Collins, IVP, 2011. Organizations and websites devoted to promoting some form of evolution and/or billions of years in the church include BioLogos; the American Scientific

that such capitulation or compromise by church leaders will be disastrous. That's the reason for this paper.

I Where Pantheism Came From

As Christianity was spreading in the early centuries after Christ, Satan not unexpectedly threw up barriers. While Christianity was being increasingly accepted as the religion of those in the Roman Empire, Buddhism was gripping the hearts and minds of people in south China, and Hinduism did the same in north India.[5] Those quickly became national religions and to this day prevent all but a small number from even hearing the Gospel. It thus should be no surprise that history documents Satan's attempt to counter the Protestant Reformation with yet another counterfeit religion.

The story begins in 17th century Holland with the musings of a brilliant and audacious Jewish young man, Baruch Spinoza. A trajectory can be traced from his radical religious beliefs to Enlightenment rationalism to Darwinism and Marxism to today's assiduously secular society and its militant repudiation of Christianity. In his book, *The Long War Against God*, Henry Morris traces in detail the historical origins of evolutionism yet totally misses the impact of Baruch Spinoza![6] In today's discussions of origins, the role of Spinoza and the pantheistic religion he founded, the religion that underlies evolution, are missing.[7]

A. The Life and Work of Baruch Spinoza

Spinoza's antecedents were Sephardic Jews driven by persecution from Iberia to settle in Holland during the Dutch Golden Age.[8] The name Spinoza derives from the town in Portugal, Espinosa, from which the family had emigrated. His first name, given at his birth in Amsterdam in 1632, was Baruch, but after he was excommunicated from the synagogue at the age of 23, he changed it to Benedict (both names mean "blessed").[9] Unlike many famous intellectuals, Spinoza was a kind person who lived humbly and simply.[10] As a child he was taught Hebrew and the Talmudic writings, and he subsequently received tutoring in the usual subjects of mathematics, science, philosophy, etc. He lived by his only religious maxim: the golden rule. He never married and he had no children.[11] He lived alone, supporting himself by grinding lenses for eye-glasses. Spinoza died at the age of 44 of tuberculosis that he probably had contracted from his mother, who died when he was but six. At his death he left behind some exceptionally well-ground lenses, his personal library of about 160 books, some furniture, and a band of disciples in Amsterdam who translated

---

Affiliation; Solid Rock Lectures; and Reasons to Believe. Funding by The John Templeton Foundation also seeks the adoption of evolution by Christian colleges and seminaries.

[5] Michael Scott, *Ancient Worlds: An Epic History of East and West*, Basic, 2016, reviewed by Peter Thonemann, "The Roads That Led From Rome, *WSJ,* Saturday/Sunday, December 10-11, 2016, p. C9.

[6] Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1989. Spinoza's name appears but once in small font within a quotation.

[7] Simon Downing, in his *World Empire and the Return of Jesus Christ* (Xulon Press, 2011), traces pantheistic thought back to the era of the Sumerians. His research leads him to believe it has been a religious current influencing history since Nimrod, and it permeates the world we live in.

[8] The life and works of Spinoza are well known to historians and philosophers. Reviews are readily available in print and on-line. Readers will find helpful the following: Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age*, Princeton University Press, 2011; Rebecca Goldstein, *Betraying Spinoza*, Shocken Books, New York, 2006; and the entries on Spinoza by, for example, Richard H. Popkin: www.brittanica.com/biography/Benedict-de-Spinoza; Joseph Jacobs: www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13964-Spinoza-baruch-; also the entry by Steven Nadler in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/Spinoza; scholarly works by Jonathan Israel are also in print. Monographs on Spinoza's work are in the archives of the North American Spinoza Society at www.spinozasociety.org.

[9] Historians are not clear on the reason for the excommunication. The three heresies he was accused of include a denial of immortality, a denial of the divinity of the Law, and the view that God exists only philosophically. The Jewish community may have deemed excommunication necessary to pre-empt a backlash from authorities.

[10] See Paul Johnson's, *Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky,* Harper & Row, 1988.

[11] Spinoza's physical features have been described as short and thin, with long black hair, black eyes, "a beautiful face," and a pale complexion (Goldstein, p. 197).

into Latin and published his writings and promulgated his teachings.

To say that the two main works Spinoza left, his *Ethics* and his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, have profoundly shaped modern thought would be a gross understatement. Yet all of his writings are notoriously difficult to read. Fortunately, those who have understood and adopted his views have made Spinoza's thought accessible -- though still not without difficulty.[12]

His thought began with typically Jewish values in that he held knowledge as an ideal and joy as one of the highest virtues. And many of his ideas developed from reading the works of Moses Maimonides and medieval Jewish philosophers such as Rabbi Chasdas Crescas, as well as the thought of Rene Descartes and, to some extent, Giordano Bruno.[13] But in his early twenties, he began to express certain radical views that horrified his Jewish community, such as questioning the historical accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures, asserting that there might be other avenues to truth than revelation, and being acidly critical of established religions. In time, as he taught and wrote, his thinking matured and the two works mentioned above contain his most consequential ideas.

Spinoza rejected Descartes' system of thought: He rejected a transcendent God, and he rejected free will for both God and for humans.[14] There cannot be more than one substance in the universe (monism), Spinoza wrote, and that is God. God is the only substance, and all other entities are modes of God. God is the infinite, unique, uncaused substance of the universe, and everything else that exists is God, or is in God. All of nature, everything that exists, is a modification of God. God is everywhere and everything is God. But Spinoza's God is not a personal Being; Spinoza rejected that as an anthropomorphic concept. And his God doesn't have any goals or purposes (he rejected teleology as another anthropomorphic fiction). Nor does God stand over us as judge. He also posited a strict, absolute determinism: Cause and effect means that everything that happens is because of a prior determined cause. Thus there's no free will. He referred to the concept of God's will as a "sanctuary of ignorance."

Spinoza's God is not only the underlying substance of all things, his God also is the *cause* of all that exists. All things follow necessarily -- mathematically necessarily -- from the divine nature, by means of nature's laws. So, everything that exists is part of nature ("Nature"), is brought into being necessarily by Nature, and outside of Nature there is nothing. There is nothing above or beyond Nature. To think otherwise, he said, is

---

[12] The *Ethics* expresses Spinoza's non-theistic metaphysical system. It's largely opaque to all but analytical philosophers and those schooled in medieval thought. An easier read, the *Tractatus* contains most of his anti-theistic thought. Nadler writes, "Unlike the cool and detached tone of the *Ethics*, however, the *Treatise* [i.e., *Tractatus*] is a very passionate, even angry work." (Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.)

[13] Spinoza certainly also would have been familiar with the esoteric and abstract writings of the Cabbalists. Cabbalism is very difficult to understand, but it is pantheistic: it holds that a god-force permeates the universe, and that a direct connection exists between that god-force and everything that exists (thus the doctrine, "as above, so below"). It holds also to an evolutionary process that leads inexorably to a state of perfection -- apart from God. And it believes in the unity of all things (Downing, *op.cit.*, pp.108-9). The extent to which cabbalism influenced Spinoza's thinking however remains speculative (Nadler, *op.cit.*).
Spinoza's thinking may also have been influenced by Galileo's idea that Earth does not occupy a special place in the universe and, therefore, by extension, that man is not the central character in the cosmos. And Spinoza probably was aware of new ideas from Newton and others that nature consists of matter in motion. "In the new philosophy [i.e., Newtonian science] everything was explained in mechanistic terms, through the impact, conglomeration, and separation of material parts according to fixed laws of nature" Nadler writes (*A Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit.*, p. 77).

[14] Spinoza pondered whether God uses reason. If He uses or has reasons for His acts and His will, then reason stood over God and therefore, Spinoza concluded, God was irrelevant. Or, if God had no reasons, then He was being arbitrary in what He willed (Goldstein, pp. 202-203). With this argument, Spinoza attempted to dismiss God's existence and to exalt reason. But reason is not something that God has or uses; it is not a principle outside of God. Reason derives from God's person. It reflects the mind of God. Reason and logic express God's thoughts. They reflect His nature and express His character; they are sourced in Him. God gave us reason and logic as gifts to use, although sadly we use them fallibly.

to fall back into the superstitions of organized religion.[15]

Happiness resides, Spinoza wrote, not in having things, nor in the passions, nor in religion -- which he regarded as superstition (he despised all organized religions) -- but in a life of reason.[16] Even the Bible should be subject to rational study, just as nature should be studied; the Bible was no divine document, its content was merely culturally and historically determined.

But Spinoza was more than just a Bible sceptic. In his view, the Bible was historically inaccurate, full of inconsistencies, written not by its purported authors. Its miracles would have to be explained rationally, as entirely natural phenomena, for there could be no such things as miracles in his system as they would be violations of divine, natural laws. He held the view that Adam and Eve were fictional characters. He regarded the Jewish prophets' writings as mere imagination; they couldn't have had knowledge beyond what ordinary humans have.[17] He rejected the Incarnation of Christ as "absurd," a contradiction of terms.[18]

Political philosophy is there too. Aware that his views in the *Ethics* were subversive, before publishing them Spinoza first wrote his *Tractatus* in which he pleaded for religious and political tolerance, for freedom of expression, for democracy, and for severing the traditional link between one's religion and citizenship. Unfortunately, because these views were so radical, so revolutionary, his pleas only brought onto his head the hatred of ecclesiastics and of political authorities.

What should be evident to the astute reader from the above discussion are the elements of Darwinian evolution, higher criticism (Spinoza clearly anticipated Wellhausen), Enlightenment rationalism, and absolute materialism (also termed physicalism). It remained for his followers to develop these anti-theistic ideas, which we could describe as the great project of modernity; the intellectual history of the next two centuries would be the outworking of Spinozist thought. And just as important, because Spinoza elevated reason to the supreme value in his system, the project of modernity would be the domain of the intelligentsia. The intellectuals of the Enlightenment reinforced this with a vengeance, turning the idea around: Anyone who identifies as -- or who aspires to be -- an intellectual, has to adopt Spinoza's legacy.

Three further observations: First, implicit in Spinoza's work is the idea of autonomy. In his mind, there is nothing external to man to which or to whom we are accountable, or to which or to whom we should comport. Spinoza's deity is very decidedly not one who makes demands, has standards, or with whom a relationship is possible. The supreme benefit, therefore, of Spinoza's system is, Man is free. That was intoxicating! Second, Spinoza's focus on reason exalts man. Humanism thus is another by-product of Spinoza's system, it's

---

[15] Spinoza is saying that nature has the inherent ability to create, to bring progressively new things into existence, spontaneously; there is no transcendent Creator. He denied any creation, alleging that the opening chapters of the Bible are fictitious. The world exists, he claimed, due to entirely natural causes. (See Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit*., p. 88.) He opened the door wide to an evolutionary explanation of origins; it remained for subsequent anti-theists to develop the idea further, climaxing with Darwin's, *The Origin of Species*. A core affirmation of pantheism is that meaning can be found in aligning ourselves with the principle behind nature, namely evolutionary progress. That the world is always in process of being created, i.e., that creation is on-going, identifies pantheism (see Lewis S. Ford, "Pantheism vs. Theism: A Re-Appraisal," in *The Monist*, 80(2):286-306, 1997).

[16] Goldstein writes, "Spinoza placed all his faith in the powers of reason, his own and ours." (*op. cit*., p. 11) She says Spinoza's underlying assumption was that "all facts have explanations. For every fact that is true, there is a reason why it is true." (p. 57) In other words, human reason can explain everything, including God, miracles and origins. There is no transcendent cause or explanation of anything.

[17] Spinoza totally rejected revelation. The existence and essence of God, he said, are known solely by natural laws. He wrote, for example, "All things come about in and by Nature…the surest path to the knowledge of God lies…solely in the investigation of Nature's regularities" (Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit*., p. 98). These assertions were an attack on deism as well as theism.

[18] Spinoza valued Christ's ethical insights and gifted teachings. He referred to Jesus as a great moral example for us to follow. And he viewed the Bible as useful for moral understanding and virtuous behavior, but not more than that. It was an ordinary piece of literature of solely human origin. (Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit*., pp. 110-111 and 174-175.) Spinoza's patronizing words continue to be mouthed today.

another way that pantheism is expressed in the modern world. That's why speculation and inferences are preferred to revelation, it's why what humans can imagine takes priority over the Bible. It's why similarities between organisms will necessarily be interpreted as evidence of common ancestry, rather than of common design. Even if it's based on nothing more than unprovable speculation, evolution exalts man the reasoner -- and fallen man has no inclination to praise God. Third, the determinism in Spinoza's thought necessarily means we cannot be held accountable for our behavior. All human acts are amoral. Sin vanishes, and with it the need for salvation.

Spinoza was not influenced by Eastern pantheistic religious ideas. They have no part in his idiosyncratic system of thought.[19] His religious views repudiated both Judaism and Christianity. He founded a totally new religion, and the best term for it is pantheism. Atheism is also anti-theistic, so in practice atheism and Spinoza's pantheism are equivalent.[20] Romans 1:25 indicates that there are but two religions in the world: worshiping and serving the Creator God, i.e., theism, and religion focused on that which has been created, i.e. pantheism.[21] Spinoza's pantheism is an aggressively antagonistic religion that seeks to supplant theistic religion.[22] His pantheism resides in the intellect: it is seeking to understand Nature and its laws thru reason, thru philosophy and science.[23] That's how, he claimed, one can achieve enlightenment and "blessedness" (Spinoza's name).

Of course, other streams of anti-theistic thought flowed into the Enlightenment. The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, for example, deeply influenced European and American intellectuals with his 1651 *Leviathan*. Although he denied being an atheist, Hobbes held highly unorthodox religious views, discounting the role of revelation and promoting a form of materialism (or physicalism).[24] Another example: a document titled *Traité des trois imposteurs* alleged that Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were political imposters, ordinary men who exploited the fears of superstitious ignorant people. Although of uncertain authorship, it circulated widely at first as manuscripts until it was published and disseminated in print form in the late 17th century. It has been described as "one of the most radical anti-religious clandestine works that circulated in

[19] Greek stoicism held that nature was imbued with the divine, and that the cosmos was an immense organism. They also viewed reason as if it were a deity. Spinoza surely was familiar with stoicism, but there's no evidence he derived his pantheism from stoic philosophy. He derived it by reasoning through his axioms.

[20] Atheists, implacably committed to evolution, believe that nature has creative powers. They thus unwittingly ascribe deity to nature. Physicist Stephen Friberg writes, "So where did this modern injection of the divine into nature -- this idea that nature and things like randomness and chance have creative powers formerly reserved for deities, gods, or God -- come from? From the perspective of the European Enlightenment, the answer is the philosophy of Spinoza, the influential 17th century Dutch-Jewish thinker who identified God with nature. If God and nature are the same thing, it follows that nature has divine creative power. Or, if you don't believe in God, the material components out of which nature is constructed are the source of creation." See Stephen Friberg's blogs at www.commongroundgroup.net. Atheism is pantheism in disguise.

[21] Religion is difficult to define, but for this paper it is the set of beliefs in ultimate matters – especially regarding the existence and nature of God -- that lie at the core of one's being that account for the world and our relationship to it. *Everyone* is religious. Spinoza was religious. Because all humans are religious, there necessarily is religion in science; in fact, science is drenched in religion! Unprovable presuppositions subconsciously underlie every interpretation scientists make – especially in the area of origins, in which truth claims are religious statements.

[22] Referring to Spinoza's ideas as religion, by the way, does not mean worship, awe or wonder at Nature are involved; such experiences are not a necessary component of religion.

[23] By claiming that reason and philosophy are avenues to truth, Spinoza legitimated for those who followed him the use of speculation and conjecture as authoritative. Thus today people all over the Western world accept the Big Bang and evolution as truth without questioning the epistemological basis for these other than that some scientists say so! Unless scientists base their views on a plain reading of Scripture, *anything* they say about origins is nothing more than speculation. One of Spinoza's chief inputs to civilization is the great lie that such speculations take priority over revelation.

[24] Hobbes' view of religion was that it had grown out of superstition, that religious laws had simply been invented by those seeking power, and that reason superseded revelation. Nadler (in, *Book Forged in Hell*, *op.cit*, pp. 30-31) comments that Spinoza had read Leviathan.

the eighteenth century."[25] The work held that there's no such thing as revelation, and that God doesn't interact with His creation or with people. Deeply naturalistic, it contained the germ of pantheism. Its goal was a completely secular state.[26] Other streams include the medieval Jewish exegetes who were often critical of Scripture, and English Deists who promoted the view that Judaism and Christianity were degenerate forms of an antecedent primitive religion. Nevertheless, it was primarily Spinoza's works that spawned Enlightenment's rationalism and anti-theism.[27]

B. After Spinoza

In Europe during the century after Spinoza's death, as the Protestant Reformation -- as well as the Catholic counter-Reformation -- was underway, spread of his views was slow. That probably was because most intellectuals at the time perceived him simply to be an atheist. Although biographers and historians differ, perhaps the most important person who early on promoted Spinozism was the famous German philosopher and polymath, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, a deist whose philosophic system dominated European intellectual thought in the 18th century. He and Spinoza had communed for about a month prior to his death, and Leibnitz adopted Spinoza's views; after Spinoza died he spread them widely as if they were his own.[28] Others on the continent, the figures who led the Enlightenment, soon picked up Spinoza's system. These included Lessing, Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Goethe, and Coleridge, as well as other free-thinkers such as Shelley, Byron, and a host of others whose names would probably not be familiar to most Americans. The commitment to Spinozism grew. Hegel stated that to be a philosopher, one must first be a Spinozist.[29] Goethe's work expressed Spinozist ideas. Interpreters of Kant say that later in life, he too increasingly followed Spinoza's pantheism. A translation of Spinoza's work into German served powerfully to spread his views, as did lay summaries that opened Spinoza's impenetrable texts to vernacular readers.

Much that was totally innovative appeared in Europe during that era, such as urbanization, the Industrial Revolution, and the introduction of technology.[30] But perhaps the strongest impetus to the widespread

---

[25] Richard Popkin, "Foreword: The Leiden Seminar," in *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early Eighteenth Century Europe*, edited by Silvia Berti, Francoise Charles-Daubert, and Richard H. Popkin, Kluver, 1996, p. viii.

[26] Spinoza undoubtedly was familiar with an early version of this work. Historians suggest Spinoza's first biographer (and follower of Spinoza), Jean Lucas, authored this anti-theistic treatise (Popkin, *ibid*, p. viii).

[27] Nadler writes, "If there is one theme that runs throughout *all* of Spinoza's writings, it is the liberation from bondage, whether psychological, political, or religious…To the extent that a person becomes more free as an individual and more rational in his beliefs, the less likely he is to fall prey to superstition and indenture himself to religious sectarians. And the more a state is liberated from ecclesiastic influence and governed by liberal democratic principles, the more freedom there will be for citizens to engage in philosophy and discover the truths that will liberate their minds. Both the Treatise and the Ethics, in working together to make this case, offer a profound critique of religion: the former from a theological, political, and historical perspective, the latter from a metaphysical and moral one." (*Book Forged in Hell*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33). Similarly, Enlightenment scholar, Jonathan Israel, in his *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2011), finds Spinoza to be the source of Enlightenment ideas. The whole radical project of overthrowing both church and state absolutism by means of materialism, atheism, egalitarianism, tolerance, spontaneous progress, democracy, and separation of church and state, derive from Spinoza's thought.

[28] Jacobs, *op.cit*.

[29] *ibid*

[30] The European century between the end of the Napoleonic wars and WWI was unlike any other century in history. It was a period in which the Industrial Revolution flourished, science, philosophy, and culture developed, as did secularism, a modernist worldview, and ideas of democracy. There were amazing developments of infrastructure, such as waterways, roadways, railroads, and telegraph, of agriculture, and public health. Inventions continually appeared, electricity was introduced, and nations were building empires. It was like an explosion of civilization. And it was in this context that Spinoza's pantheism spread, in the academic centers mainly. The middle class enlarged, so more and more people were exposed to higher education and thus to Spinoza's thought. Cities blossomed, where pantheism flourished. The continual improvement of consumer products and public health reinforced the pantheist belief in inexorable historical progress. And positivism, materialism, Darwinism, Marxism, higher criticism, and uniformitarian geology

adoption of Spinozism in Europe occurred late in the 19th century: the explosive development of science and the profound influence that science had on that society. It was quickly realized that embedded in Spinoza's thought were the very scientific principles scientists were elucidating, such as that the only operations in the cosmos were natural laws acting on matter. In biology, the ardent evolutionists Herbert Spencer and Ernst Haeckel avidly adopted Spinozism. Based on those beliefs, these two declared war on the church, asserting that the issue was science versus religion -- a deliberate misconstrual that persists essentially unchallenged today.

Herbert Schlossberg writes, "In his great work, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (1912), Ernst Troeltsch concluded that in Germany pantheism was 'the secret religion of the educated classes,' regardless of their nominal church membership. He believed that this would have a terrible effect on the nation, destroying community and fellowship."[31] Spinozism became the defining credential of intellectuals whereas those holding Christian beliefs were considered ignoramuses.

In France, one Henri de Boulainvilliers, who had adopted Deistic and Spinozist ideas, interpreted and popularized Spinoza's works, along with the *Treatise of the Three Imposters*. Boulainvilliers was a fierce enemy of religion. John Toland took the *Treatise* to England, had it printed in English and sold it for a penny. And in Germany at the time, the Prussian philosopher-king, Frederick II, was promoting deism. The thought of Spinoza spread widely, such that textual criticism and "scientific" thinking made belief in the Scriptures irrational. God was identified with nature, and all religions were viewed as frauds from which people need to be liberated. God was obsolete. There was no after-life. Revelation was just so much imagination.

While ferment characterized continental Europe, England enjoyed a modicum of peace due to the preaching of the gospel by the Wesleys and Whitefield. Church leaders at first repudiated the new ideas circulating on the continent, terming them "neology" and a threat to the church.[32] Nevertheless, a spirit of rebellion lay latent, erupting at times with *Gulliver's Travels*, *Jane Eyre*, Marxist thought, uniformitarian geologists who denied the Genesis Flood, and other works. In England deism was quite popular among intellectuals. These Deists were deeply influenced by Spinoza's system, as well as by Epicurean writings, to the extent that it became difficult to differentiate these views. Masonic lodges also disseminated anti-theistic or pantheistic writings. But by the end of the Victorian period, England was heavily affected by Enlightenment ideas. Germany's higher criticism and the ideas of evolution and of millions of years shook the nation horribly.[33] David Friedrich Strauss's book, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, alleging there was no historical basis for Christianity, destroyed the Christian faith of many, as did John William Draper's, *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*. The positivism of Auguste Comte found a following in England. So did the pantheism of Ernst Haeckel, along with humanism, agnosticism, Marxism, and atheism. The church went into decline, everything became vague, culture became pagan. In Christianity, heterodoxy reigned.[34]

Rejection of the supernatural and exaltation of reason, the chief characteristics of the European

---

provoked a spirit of rebellion against Christianity. For discussion of these developments in Europe, see British historian Richard J. Evans', "Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815-1915," Viking, 2016.

[31] Herbert Schlossberg , *Conflict and Crisis in the Religious Life of Late Victorian England*, Transaction, New Brunswick, NJ, 2009, page 276.

[32] See the article by Terry Mortensen, "British Scriptural Geologists in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: Part 1" at www.answersingenesis.org/creation-scientists/profiles/british-scriptural-geologists-in-first-half-of-nineteenth-century/

[33] Schlossberg's, *Conflict and Crisis, op.cit.*, masterfully surveys the decline of Christianity in England using primary sources.

[34] According to Benjamin Wolstein, Spinozism came to America indirectly. Nineteenth century American philosophers were enamored of Kant and Hegel, heavily absorbing those German philosophers' thought. But Hegel was influenced by Spinoza. So largely thru their study of Hegel's ideas, they found Spinoza. But many American philosophers of that century choked on Spinoza's deity, finding it repugnant. They failed to understand how Spinozism related to the new natural science of the 17th century. "Notes: The Romantic Spinoza in America," *J. of the History of Ideas*, 14(3), June 1953, pp 439-50, available on the internet at www.jstor.org/stable/2707811

Enlightenment, thus can with confidence be traced back to Baruch Spinoza.[35] Whether they were deists or atheists doing the promotion, it was the ideas of Spinoza that were taking society captive. The anti-theistic religion pervading all of Western Civilization was pantheism. A bloodless revolution was in bloom. Better, it should be termed religious warfare.

Spinoza's political philosophy also strongly influenced the formation of modern democratic, liberal secular political systems. Spinoza's anti-theistic, anti-ecclesiastic philosophy, proclaiming that the Christian religion is just superstition, undermined the prevailing tradition that a monarch ruled a nation as God's agent. Steven Nadler writes, "To the extent that we are committed to the ideal of a secular society free of ecclesiastic influence and governed by toleration, liberty, and a conception of civic virtue; and insofar as we think of true religious piety as consisting in treating other human beings with dignity and respect, and regard the Bible simply as a profound work of human literature with a universal moral message, we are heirs of Spinoza's scandalous treatise."[36] Much of today's political agenda in the West derives from Karl Marx's religion which, like Darwinism (see below) can be identified as based on Spinozistic pantheism.[37] Like Spinoza, Marx was a tool of Satan to carry out Satan's epic rebellious project.[38]

II Pantheism in the Western World

Most people today have no awareness how profoundly Spinoza's ideas have shaped our world, the way we

[35] In her book, *Betraying Spinoza*, Rebecca Goldstein argues that because Spinoza insisted on separation of church and state, trusted in the powers of reason, and required that faith in God needs to be informed by science, what we call Modernity came to us from Spinoza (*op. cit.*, pp. 9-11). The subtitle of her book, *The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity,* reveals her argument. Readers who have studied philosophy would be aware of the thought and contributions of Europe's 17th and 18th century intellectuals, Pascal, Descartes, Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Bacon, Hegel, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, and others. These are the players typically discussed in philosophy courses. For this reason, some will acknowledge that the emphasis on Spinoza in this paper may be a needed corrective to understanding the Enlightenment. But that's not what we are arguing. Our point is that the Enlightenment is not a broad river fed by many tributaries each making its contribution to the flow, but that the river was fed by one gushing spring, Spinoza's radically anti-theistic ideas. And that the other players took Spinoza's anti-theism and expanded it and applied it to Western civilization. Spinoza supplied the religious foundation for the Enlightenment, and the other players processed him in their particular ways. Spinoza's pantheism was attractive precisely because it fully satisfied fallen humanity's yearning for autonomy from God. Absolutizing Nature meant that theology was no longer the "queen" of the sciences, physical (or natural) science was. It nullified the testimony of God that nature declares, it meant that an understanding of nature -- not religion -- held the key to human betterment, and that those whose work was with nature (that is, scientists) had more authority than clergy. And although it wasn't explicit in his writings, Spinoza's underlying premise was progress: the arrow of history sails inexorably from superstition and myth to rational critical analysis and the reformulation of a worldview. None of these implications could have been missed by those who followed Spinoza. If nature creates, no God did. Man is therefore free at last. The seed that was Spinoza grew in the soil of European anti-clericalism and eventually blossomed into what we call Modernity, permeating politics, culture, science, economics, indeed, all of society. To understand today, we need to understand Spinoza.

[36] Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell*, *op.cit*., p. 240. There was no such thing as "secular" until Spinoza conceived it. John Locke visited Spinoza's disciples in Amsterdam shortly after Spinoza's death and adopted Spinoza's need for the separation of church and state. The Western world's fierce commitment to secularism derives from Locke. See Goldstein, *op. cit*., pp. 11 and 260-263.

[37] Gertrude Himmelfarb writes, "What they [Marx and Darwin] both celebrated was the internal rhythm and course of life, the one the life of nature, the other of society, that proceeded by fixed laws, undistracted by the will of God or men" (*Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, Chatto & Windus, 1959, page 348). In Marx's system, there is natural progression of history from primitive societies to more advanced ones, just as in Darwinism there is natural progression of living forms from the primitive to more advanced ones; progress is inherent in the nature of the cosmos. Socialists today seek to help this "progress" advance in the political arena just as some evolutionists seek to help "progress" advance by means of genetic engineering.

[38] Richard Wurmbrand, *Marx & Satan*, Living Sacrifice Book Co., Bartlesville, OK, 1986.

think and what we believe. Spinoza absolutized nature; thus naturalism now rules science. Spinoza's secularism and ideas of spontaneous progress today rule politics, and his rationalism reigns supreme in philosophy. His anti-theistic religion is pervasive and seeks to dominate totally our culture.[39] How did this state develop? We explore here the two areas of evolution as the explanation of origins and the notion of billions of years of earth history to exemplify Spinoza's influence on society.

A. Pantheism and Darwin

It's a fiction that Darwin "discovered" evolution as a law of nature by means of observation. The narrative goes like this: Darwin was a Christian who, on his voyage around the world on the *Beagle*, became so persuaded by scientific observation of living forms that life originated by an evolutionary mechanism that he abandoned his faith. The purpose of the story must be to induce all of us to abandon our faith too. The story is bogus.[40]

Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, followed Spinoza. He wrote a book, *Zoonomia* ("Laws of Life," in this book he reveals his pantheism), stating that all life forms evolved. "Eat or be eaten," he would proclaim at the dinner table. Charles' father, Robert Darwin, a well-to-do physician, appears to have been an atheist. Most of the men in the Darwin family, in fact, were products of the Enlightenment, free-thinkers, holding pantheistic, atheistic, or Unitarian views.

At Edinburgh University, for two years Charles found himself immersed in the ferment of the times, surrounded by free-thinking and atheistic students and faculty. Ideas of evolution swirled about him. He then went to Cambridge University to learn to be a minister in the Anglican church. But instead, while there he came under the influence of the geologist, Adam Sedgwick, and Charles became enamored of the natural sciences. Although Sedgwick was a catastrophist and a creationist, Charles would have become familiar with uniformitarian geology and its corollary of great age of the earth.

The specimens he sent back to England from his five years' voyage brought much fame. But promptly on his return, he began reading and filling notebooks with thoughts regarding evolution. By 1840 his views were fixed: He'd abandoned all belief in the God of the Bible. He embraced Spinoza's naturalism instead. And he longed to reveal his views with his friends and associates. But Charles' father had instructed him when he was a young man that it would be wise to conceal his unorthodox religious views. And so Charles Darwin hid his anti-theistic views from his Christian wife, from the outspoken Christian, Captain FitzRoy, on the *Beagle*, and from Sedgwick, because he was sponsoring Charles for membership in the Royal Society. Perhaps it was due to this internal conflict that Darwin began experiencing debilitating illnesses.

A clever strategist, he concealed his views and delayed publishing what he knew would be revolutionary books until his career was established and the cultural climate was sufficiently accepting. In his *Autobiography*, he acknowledged that he was an unbeliever. His closest colleagues were anti-theists: anatomist Thomas Huxley, for example, "Darwin's bulldog," boasted of his atheism, and geologist Charles Lyell's role in life was to discredit the Bible. It would appear that Darwin was living out an agenda, to use science as a weapon against the Bible, and/or against theism. The great Spinozan project, in other words. If we were to put a label on Darwin's personal religion, it would have to be pantheism.

The connection between pantheism and Darwinism is not opaque. Pantheism holds to on-going creation: a progressive, inexorable process strictly determined by the natural laws that emanate from (or inhere in) deity (or nature). Darwinism likewise is a progressive, inevitable process that is entirely and solely determined by natural laws. Both hold to spontaneous, inviolately occurring, cause/effect processes; there is no transcendent personal Being who is Creator. So Darwinism has a theological basis, and that is Spinoza's anti-theistic religion, pantheism. Evolution is just another outworking or manifestation of pantheist religion.

---

[39] We identify Spinoza's anti-theistic religion as pantheism, not atheism, because (a) all people are necessarily religious, and (b) a deity is necessarily involved in evolution (only deity can create; matter and energy alone cannot create) and evolutionists locate that deity or creative force in nature. Atheists more precisely therefore should be labelled pantheists.

[40] This fable is exposed in many places, for example, www.parentcompany.com/csrc/cdagenda.htm. See also Morris', *The Long War Against God* for a detailed history of evolutionary thought from earliest times.

And, as it's a particular aspect of the spontaneous, progressive processes of nature, the Hegelian dialectic is an aspect of pantheism. Probably few if any evolutionists or science popularizers are aware of it, but Darwinian evolution is classic Hegelianism. It's obscured by scientific jargon, and we're so used to hearing the supposed mechanism of evolution that we easily fail to recognize it, but the dialectic is certainly there. Consider: Organisms are in conflict with nature. "Thesis" is the need for organisms to adapt to a new or changed environment. "Antithesis" is mutation acted on by natural selection. "Synthesis" is a new species.[41]

B. Pantheism and Billions of Years

Another outgrowth of the Enlightenment that Spinoza fathered is the belief in deep time. The Church had explained earth's morphology as consequent to the great Flood described in Genesis. And, extrapolating from the genealogies in Genesis, it was commonly believed that the earth had been created in the recent past, 4,000 years or so before Christ.[42] A component of the Enlightenment's anti-theistic project was to challenge the age of the earth, thereby impugning the biblical narrative and demonstrating it's neither trustworthy nor authoritative. After all, Spinoza had stated that the Bible was to be interpreted according to a strictly rationalistic, historical and linguistic hermeneutic; it should be studied scientifically.

Terry Mortensen has produced a detailed history of the motives and work of the uniformitarian geologists.[43] We needn't review it here, except to point out the following. First, the presupposition in uniformitarian geology is the rock layers are all there as a consequence of slow gradual processes occurring over vast eons of time;

---

[41] This formulation could be revised (for example, the thesis could be the ability to undergo mutation in order to adapt, the antithesis then would be natural selection, and the synthesis again is a new species), but the dialectic is undeniably present. An incipient dialectic can be located in Spinoza's thought. In *Ethics*, Spinoza's musings on the modes of Deity include the notion of conflict and struggle for existence, and that out of this conflict would arise things and persons. Hegel surely had read Spinoza's thinking, and one can't help but wonder if that's where he derived his idea of the dialectic. Or, Hegel may have gotten it from Johann Fichte, another philosopher of that era. Hegel was a pantheist; he believed that everything is part of an evolutionary process that eventually leads to perfection (Downing, *op.cit*., p.192).

[42] There are only three distinct ways to interpret Genesis One: (1) It is wrong, having come from a pre-scientific past; it's a myth. We needn't discuss this option here. (2) It is figurative, poetic, or metaphorical, and not to be taken literally or as historical narrative. This interpretation opens the door to compromise with anti-theistic explanations of origins and therefore requires some discussion. (3) It is historical narrative, to be read as literally true. Which interpretation is valid? Steven Boyd statistically studied the distribution of finite verbs in narrative and poetic passages and found the preterite overwhelmingly is used everywhere in the Hebrew Bible for narrative history, whereas perfect and imperfect verbs predominate in poetic texts. The Genesis 1 – 2:3 passage, using preterite throughout, exactly fits the pattern of historical narrative with a probability of 0.9999 (1.000 is total certainty). So what is the genre of Genesis One? It is a description of supernatural events that actually occurred in real time, and the text therefore is to be read as literally true. Boyd concludes, "*Scripture* is the standard to which interpretations of scientific data must conform" (p. 170, emphasis added). See "Thousands...Not Billions" edited by Don DeYoung, Master Books, Green Forest AR, 2005, pp 158-170. Theologian and exegete J. Paul Tanner argues that in Genesis One the use of the word "day" with its ordinal conclusively means the text must be read literally. He then goes on to analyze the chronological data embedded in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. And he finds no reason to introduce "gaps" in these genealogies. Thus, working backwards from the battle of Qarqar (853 BC), the creation event of Genesis One can confidently be dated at or about 4200 BC. In J. Paul Tanner, "Old Testament Chronology and its Implications for the Creation and Flood Accounts," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 172 (Jan-Mar 2015):24-44. Lita Cosner and Robert Carter ("Textual Traditions and Biblical Chronology" *J. of Creation* 29(2):99-105, 2015) similarly point out that because the genealogies give the age of the father when the son was born, they are meant to be a timeline, and that the provision of the age when the son was born militates against gaps in the record. That the author of Genesis is so exacting in recording the ages of those men means not only that the whole chronology is meant to be read as literally true, but that the creation event had occurred within the time span of the persons listed. Exegesis of the text demands a recent, literal, 6-day creation. Why else would a timeline of history be so carefully documented?

[43] See for example the article, "Philosophical Naturalism and the Age of the Earth: Are they Related," by Terry Mortensen, in *The Master's Seminary Journal* 15(1):71-92, Spring 2004.

there was no Flood. It should be obvious that the conclusions reached will always confirm the starting presupposition. No evidence ever could be interpreted as contradicting their presupposition. Geologists, indeed all evolutionists, are unable to discover anything in nature that would be inconvenient to or refute their beliefs. They are willfully and uncritically cemented to the unprovable tenets of Spinozistic pantheism. Any number of *ad hoc* explanations will always be adduced so that the evidence always confirms the underlying, starting presuppositions. Second, the uniformitarian geologists approached the rocks with an agenda: They were determined to prove that the Bible was wrong. The earth was, in their thinking, millions of years old. When radiochemistry was later introduced to date the rocks, the premise had already become established dogma, the earth was exceedingly old. The new methodology had to be designed to confirm it, or it would not be deployed. The details of the methodologies and the inherent unprovable assumptions that are associated need not concern us here; creationist scientists have thoroughly explicated and published them in books and articles readily available to the interested reader.

So billions of years is not an observation that scientists have discovered. It's not demonstrable, proven truth. It's the use (exploitation) of science to advance the Spinozan or Enlightenment project.[44] Deep time is an inference drawn from a particular interpretation of certain evidence that is susceptible to alternative interpretation (*viz*, Flood geology) but that *a priori* is disallowed. The chief significance of billions of years is obvious: it establishes that there was no purpose in God having created. Everything is purposeless. There is no transcendent Creator God, the Bible is a myth, and evolution is the most plausible explanation of origins. Deep time encapsulates nearly the entire pantheist project. It is our contention that "billions of years" derives from the same Satanic source that inspired and impelled Spinoza.

The inescapable conclusion to the discussion thus far is that the evolutionist's explanation of origins is a thorough-going, anti-theistic attempt to exterminate Christianity from our world. Darwinism and billions of years are weapons of so-called science in Satan's strategic war against God.

III Spinozism in the Church Today

"Based on our present knowledge derived from science, the origins of the cosmos are to be located in the Big Bang that happened approximately fourteen billion years ago. The creation of *[H]omo sapiens sapiens* occurred about two hundred thousand years ago." With this fatuity, Tremper Longman III begins his commentary on the Book of Genesis.[45]

Denis Lamoureux, who teaches science and religion at the University of Alberta, who claims to be an evangelical Protestant, in his 2008 book, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian approach to evolution* (Wipf and Stock, Eugene OR), similarly tells us that God used the process of evolution to create people. Science has shown, he claims, that there never was any Adam such as we read about in Genesis, thus, he subsequently wrote, there could not have been any "original sin."[46] Lamoureux acknowledges that Scripture teaches Adam's sin of disobedience and that the gospel hangs on it, yet with consummate arrogance he says the Bible is wrong. The problem is, he asserts, those Bible authors were ignorant of what we now know thru science about origins; as Genesis isn't true scientifically, it can't be true historically. As other evangelical scholars attempt to do, Lamoureux explains away the Genesis origins narrative as something that was derived from prior ancient Near East (ANE) myths. (The possibility seems not to have occurred to these exegetes that the ANE myths derived from the prior Genesis narrative.) Lamoureux looks to psychology to explain human wrong-doing. He is willing to corrupt soteriology so that the speculations of science have priority over revelation. Thus evolution, the necessary outworking of pantheism, vitiates the very core of

[44] Today's anti-theists commit the same error Spinoza made, attempting to explain the cosmos from a position of finitude and fallibility. As Spinoza used the logic of mathematics to lend certitude to his guesswork, proponents of evolution use logic and observations of nature. But both Spinoza and they are only speculating. How do they *know* the seemingly plausible and coherent systems they've devised are true? Their only honest answer is, They don't know – and they *cannot* know! They've exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

[45] Tremper Longman, *Genesis, The Story of God: Bible Commentary*, Zondervan, 2016, pages 7-8.

[46] See his 2015 article for the American Scientific Affiliation, "Beyond Original Sin: Is a theological paradigm shift inevitable?" in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Belief* 67(1):35-49, March 2015.

Reformation theology, it fulfills the anti-theistic project of nullifying the cross.

Unlike Longman and all the others stumping to accommodate evolution to the Bible, evidently either unaware of the grievous implications of what they're doing or too timid to state them publicly, Lamoureux is thinking clearly. Billions of years and common ancestry certainly do mean that salvation is not needed, church is unnecessary, and the Bible is a relic from a previous, superstitious era.

Theistic evolutionists like Longman and Lamoureux foolishly yield to these assertions of scientists an authority that they in fact do not have. The pronouncements of so-called science are not more trustworthy than God's revelation. "Authority" means we obey it, live by it. It is catastrophic to misplace authority. Satan craves the authority that rightly is not his to have. The whole Darwinian evolution enterprise is Satan's attempt to deceive man into erroneously interpreting the physical evidence, because Satan cannot change the physical world to make it look as he wants us to suppose it happened.

A secondary issue, though just as important, is one's identity. How does a believer in Christ identify? If as an intellectual, then Spinoza's legacy will prey upon that person's soul. Western civilization is so organized. To be an intellectual in today's world one must, almost by definition, hold to an evolutionary explanation of origins. And to billions of years. Because otherwise, one is deemed an ignoramus. Doubtless, this pantheistic pressure motivates many evangelicals to compromise biblical beliefs with today's *zeitgeist*.[47]
But to argue, as many evangelical theologians sadly are now doing, that the Scriptures need to be re-interpreted to bring them into harmony with the anti-theistic interpretations of physical evidence is the height of irrationality. The Scriptures, as written, explicitly ascribe all of physical creation to direct acts of the Creator God. He did it *ex nihilo*, and He did it in a very brief span of time. Any compromise of any sort with so-called science repudiates the Scriptures, teaches the Church that Scripture is not trustworthy, impugns God, and distorts Christian theology ... a bad deal! Theistic evolutionists dwell in a schizosphere of their own making. They want the super-egotistic perks of modernity and rationality yet at the same time crave the comforting piety of belief in Christ, not realizing that they're living out an oxymoron. As a consequence, the church in the West may be slowly dying, trying to hold on to rituals and forms but lacking the loyalty and commitment that the Scriptures demand. And church leaders seem clueless what's wrong, or even that anything is wrong!

English philosopher and statesman of centuries ago, Sir Frances Bacon, said, "People prefer to believe what they prefer to be true." We believe, in other words, what we want to believe. Religion is an act of the will. That which appeals to people wins, not necessarily that which is true. It's no surprise unbelievers hold to evolution. What's astonishing is that believers want to do that. But we don't have to give priority to the religious beliefs of geologists, biologists, and psychologists; they can believe what they want. We can instead determine to believe God's word, in full assurance that no scientist ever has -- or can! -- prove it wrong. They can only allege that it is wrong, which is simply more of their religious belief.[48]

Bacon understood epistemology better than today's evangelicals. How can we know anything? How can we

---

[47] Evangelical intellectuals seem to be embarrassed by the Scriptures. To maintain their status as respectable intellectuals they suppose the need to harmonize Genesis One with the view of origins our science-worshipping culture embraces. This effort (a) rejects the truth God has graciously revealed in Scripture and (b) subverts Scripture's authority in the church. What's missing is submission to–and humility before–God's ineffable Word. With respect to God, no one is neutral! Unbelieving scientists deliberately "suppress the truth" of God (Romans 1:18-20), so it's expected that they will misunderstand what He has revealed. Believers, in contrast, are expected to be unswervingly loyal to God.
Some evangelicals argue that demonstrating how the Bible is compatible with science is an intentional strategy to help young people maintain trust in the Bible, but this is foolish. It would be easier and intellectually more consistent to go totally to the other side. After all, if billions of years is true, why not let everything else be naturalistic? What young people need desperately to see are courageous church leaders loyal to God's Word *despite* the risk and sacrifice.

[48] Elites arrogantly suppose they are able to reason correctly in all their work. It rarely if ever occurs to them they might be wrong. They display not a shred of humility. They don't even know there's such a thing as not knowing! Yet logic shows we all reason imperfectly about everything. Rational thought is shot thru with potential errors; people don't realize the limits of human reasoning, of human knowledge. See "The Undoing Project," by Michael Lewis, W.W. Norton & Co, New York, 2016.

know that what we know is really true? Revelation is otherwise unknowable truth made knowable by a transcendent, infinite, good God, one of whose characteristics is communication. Scientists, in contrast, can only make observations and draw inferences from them. By themselves, they cannot determine truth, not ever! [49] They certainly cannot know the unknowable remote past. To assign greater authority to what some finite scientists allege than what the Bible reveals is lunacy. Similarly, Spinoza and his many followers are groping in the dark, imagining this or that about the cosmos, which is all they can do if they reject the spiritual truths that Scripture reveals.[50] Spinozists may prefer their imaginings, and staunch evolutionists may prefer their speculations, but evangelicals should willfully glue themselves to the Scriptures.[51]

IV Pantheism and Scripture

A dominant theme in the Old Testament is God's jealousy for His elect. He demands their total loyalty. Probably no writing prophet rebuked Judah as harshly as Ezekiel: "Son of man …Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit...Because of your false words and lying visions, I am against you, declares the Sovereign Lord" (13:1-3,8). Again, "Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces..." (14:3). And this, "You say, We want to be like the nations, like the people of the world...As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will rule over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath" (20:32-33).

The lesson for us from Ezekiel is explicit, God expects His people to take His word very seriously. And He will punish His people severely if they don't. The church cannot with impunity compromise what He has graciously revealed regarding His great and awe-full acts of creating and His judging (the Flood) with the idolatrous and rebellious notions of pagans. Evolution and Big Bang and billions of years are nothing more than the vain imaginings of conceited, unrepentant rebels. Their schemes and grand projects are idolatrous.

---

[49] Paul and Phillip Collins, in their *The Ascendancy of the Scientific Dictatorship*, iUniverse, 2006, marshal abundant evidence to argue that elites are willfully using science to seek hegemony over the western world. They also reveal how Freemasonry's occult ideas influenced Darwin. Science is susceptible to exploitation for ends other than human benefit by those with malevolent goals.

[50] Spinoza understood finitude, he used the word in his writings. He nevertheless arrogantly assumed the finite could comprehend the infinite, the creature could explain the Creator, the physical could know what's spiritual. Spinoza's error was in the realm of epistemology. We only can know God as well as otherwise unknowable spiritual truths because they have been revealed to us. Rejecting revelation, Spinoza "exchanged the truth about God for a lie." In *Betraying Spinoza*, Rebecca Goldstein (*op. cit.*) suggests Spinoza was motivated to reject the biblical God's existence because of the terrible suffering his people experienced in the Spanish Inquisition. He had a problem, in other words, with theodicy. But his system fails to resolve the problem. Doing away with the God of the Bible does not do away with the existence of evil, nor does it explain the presence in the world of good. Deeper knowledge of and reflection on the Scriptures might have rewarded Spinoza with true *baruch* (blessedness). Had the Jews of the Medieval era not deliberately suppressed Isaiah Chapter 53, Spinoza might have seen that Scripture is self-authenticating and of supernatural origin, given by a loving God who desires all His creatures to be blessed by His presence. "Thinking themselves wise, they became fools."

[51] Roman Catholic visionary, Teilhard de Chardin, almost a century ago wrote, "...the experience of the cosmos is a necessary dimension of human experience that must be integrated into the Christian faith," (quoted by James W. Skehan in his article, "Exploring Teilhard's 'New Mysticism': Building the Cosmos" in *Ecotheology* 10(1):18, 2005). This is a subtle way of saying that Christianity needs to be open to pantheist ideas, because nature is sacred. A renewed interest in spiritual things is occurring today in the West, but it's not Bible-based or focused on the God of the Bible. In this synthetic spirituality, evolution and the new physics overlap with mysticism and reverence of nature. It's another outworking of pantheism for young moderns desperate for a more satisfying worldview than secularism, Epicureanism, or materialism provide. Similarly, those in the church who adopt identity politics and Marxist ideas of justice, are processing Spinoza, who said that science must have priority over Scripture. The "science" that is involved today however are the "soft" sciences such as sociology and cultural anthropology. The Spinozist idea that progress must always occur in the social arena refuses to accept the biblical truth that we live in a fallen world, one that God will in His time thru Christ Jesus restore to its created beauty and perfection.

Evangelicals who suppose Genesis can be harmonized with their false narratives have a heart problem. They refuse to commit, by an act of the will, to God's Word. They care more for the praise of men than for the praise that comes from God only. By their books and sermons and classroom teaching, they are causing others of God's people to fall into idolatry. As Ezekiel would say, "Woe...!" We submit that those promoting evolution and/or deep time in the church are modern counterparts to those of the Southern Kingdom who installed idols in the Temple.

Romans 1:25 clearly identifies only two religions on earth: (1) biblical theism, the worship of a transcendent, personal Being, and (2) religion that locates deity *within* creation. Evolutionism and billions of years (like Marxism) are the outworking of pantheistic religion because they (unwittingly) place deity in the natural world in their assertion that nature (physical matter and its laws) has the inherent ability to create. Only the God of the Bible has the ability to create, therefore evolution and its billions of years are idolatrous.

How do we approach the Bible? The Scriptures are a personal, face-to-face encounter with the living God. Reading the Bible is not just a reading exercise; it's communion with God. We stand before Him, and He speaks to us -- albeit indirectly. And it's a deadly serious encounter because He judges us on our response to Him/His word (John 12:48). God so identifies with His Word, we're expected to tremble at it (Isaiah 66:2). Our response to His word is not merely to consent to certain propositions; it is our reply to the transcendent, living God into whose presence we have come. That's why the Scriptures are authoritative. Because we are compelled to hearken to Him -- or not, at our peril. To grant so-called science authority over the straightforward narrative of Genesis therefore is madness.

A misconstrual of the nature of salvation appears to have gripped today's evangelical church. We suppose that if we assent to the necessary propositions that constitute the gospel, we're saved, our eternal destiny is secure, and we then can live our life enjoying all that comes to us as Americans. So if, in the course of our academic work, we find that a certain accommodation with so-called science is reasonable or appropriate, we're free to do so. Of course, it's easier to do that if we invent some unique interpretation that facilitates the accommodation. Such a version of Christianity, however, falls far short of what is expected of a believer.

At the heart of Christianity is weakness. The Son of God came to earth in weakness, vulnerable to suffering and to death. And we're asked to imitate Him, trusting God to vindicate us in His time just as Jesus was vindicated. If we must suffer ridicule because of our stand for the trustworthiness of Genesis One, we are demonstrating trust in, loyalty to, and love for our great Creator God. The alternative is compromising with pagans who demonstrate hatred of God with their Spinozist anti-theistic ideas.

Paul has lots to say about the church and compromise with the pantheistic ideas we discuss. For example, "The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Cor 1:25), and "it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Cor 4:2). And in 2 Corinthians Paul writes, "What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people'...Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (6:14-7:1). Today, as in Paul's era, two mutually exclusive spheres exist; and those in the New Covenant need to separate from the pernicious influence of the ones who oppose them.

In his Letter to the Ephesians, Paul's argument is that the Gospel transforms us into warriors to do battle against the "powers and principalities," which are evil forces maintaining the world in rebellion against God.[52] As members of Christ's body, a new humanity under the Lordship of Christ, we're necessarily engaged in it. Chapter 6, verses 10-18, climax the epistle's argument, sending the new humanity into conflict in the power of the victorious Christ to engage in divine warfare against the malignant powers. The church refuses to

[52] See the following articles by Timothy G. Gombis: "Being the Fullness of God in Christ by the Spirit," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53(2):259-271, 2002; "Ephesians 2 as a Narrative of Divine Warfare," *JSNT* 26(4):403-418, 2004; and "Ephesians 3:2-13: Pointless Digression, or Epitome of the Triumph of God in Christ?" *WTJ*, 66:313-323, 2004; and "A Radically New Humanity: The Function of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians," *JETS* 48(2):317-330, June 2005.

conform to the evil powers' influences, instead it imitates God in weakness and humility and uses the Word to overcome. If theologians and leaders of the evangelical church were living out this understanding of Ephesians, they'd be exposing pantheistic worldviews and evolutionary explanations of origins as rebellion against God that those adherents need to repent of, rather than capitulating to them and acknowledging their authority.

Satan has been using Spinoza's anti-theistic religion and its out-workings to seize control and dominate the minds and hearts of the Western world. Identifying with the despised and rejected One, using the authority of Scripture and the gifts of their intellect, evangelical leaders should be revealing evolution and deep time as nothing more than bluff.

Conclusion

Can science tell us how God created? Do the current dogmas of origins science take precedence or have authority over the obvious teaching of Scripture? Can these dogmas and Scripture be harmonized? The answer to these questions is a voluble No. This paper has attempted to demonstrate that the Enlightenment's great project has as its goal nothing less than a total overthrow of the Christian religion and the extirpation of the knowledge of God from human society. It is obviously Satan's doing. And because it is Satanic, as loyal servants of the living God, Christians should be exposing and opposing it -- certainly not adopting and promoting aspects of it as if there were any truth to it. Evangelicals have no reason to be ashamed of, nor attempt to compromise with, what the Bible reveals just because some scientists allege otherwise. Those anti-theists are merely blowing smoke.

The danger of Spinoza's pantheism as historian and philosopher Isaiah Berlin saw it is that if there is but one single truth into which all other truths must fit (i.e., monism), then any means may be used to achieve the "fulfillment of history." Deception, torture, killing…why not? After all these means are not for anyone's personal benefit but for the "progress of nature."[53]

We however see Spinoza's pantheism as posing a different danger. Spinoza's legacy includes a toxic mix of naturalism, humanism, secularism, notions of spontaneous progress thru history, and militant anti-theism. He bequeathed a religion whose sacred myth (Big Bang, billions of years, spontaneous origin of life, and evolution) necessarily means no God, no commandments, no judgment and no blessings.[54] If we retain belief in the God of the Bible but buy into their grand narrative, it means that God had no real purpose in creating, so we can live as we please. Pantheism is an aggressive counterfeit religion that deliberately contradicts the Bible. It prevents people from knowing the truth of a good God whose attitude toward His beloved creatures is mercy and grace, who gave His life to rescue us from deserved judgment. The conflict going on in the West today isn't between science and religion (an abstract idea that threatens no one), as is popularly supposed; rather, it's an aggressive anti-theistic religion that's at war with Christianity to eliminate it altogether.

---

[53] Isaiah Berlin discusses monism in, "My Philosophy" The History of Ideas, Oxford University Press, 2005, and in his 1998 essay on pluralism, which is on the internet at www.cs.utexas.edu/users/vl/notes/berlin.html.

[54] Evolutionist William Provine exemplifies this with the following: "Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear – and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life, and no free will for humans, either" (in, "Darwinism: Science or Natural Philosophy?" *Origins Research* 16:9, 1994). Provine despised "religion." Yet his words are intensely religious! And the most appropriate label for his religion is pantheism. Of course, that doesn't mean he worships nature; nature doesn't need to be worshipped to make one a pantheist. Spinoza certainly didn't worship nature. But pantheism involves deity, it accounts for the existence of all things, it demands commitment, and it controls a person's total being, his mind, will and values. It's a religion! Christians who suppose they can take Provine's "science" (his billions of years, for example, a sacred myth of his religion) and glue it to their theism have missed the point of this paper. It's idolatry those Christians are toying with, and that makes them syncretists. And it's Satan to whom they are submitting. We should glue ourselves to God's Word instead, for in submitting to it we are submitting to God Himself.

Christianity is the only force that exists that can expose and oppose pantheism so that true freedom and eternal blessing accrue. Out of love for others, we are duty-bound to engage those who oppose us, as Paul commands in Ephesians. But Christians can't do this unless they first recognize this alternate religion that is vying for loyalty, and that is the reason for this paper.

We submit this paper in the hope that, in holding to and faithfully proclaiming the truths of Genesis as plainly and traditionally understood, *viz*, a recent 6-days' Creation followed by a world-wide Flood, the church will not fall victim to the forces of chaos and darkness that rule the unbelieving world, but instead will conquer them in the power of the Spirit.

Let Paul have the last words: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy..." (Colossians 2:8), “Turn away from … falsely called knowledge” (1 Timothy 6:20b), and “Let God be true and every man a liar (Romans 3:4).