

Defense of Christianity
Response by
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This was written as a response to a man who said he was a Christian, but he affirmed evolution, denied free will, evil, and generally attacked Christianity and distorted some things presented in a prior article by Brian Dart in the Student paper at OU.

You are correct, the quote by Gould was an old quote, and it did deal with Punctuated equilibrium. What is your point? It is still true. Punctuated Equilibrium is an evolutionary theory. We are well aware of this. What is your point? Gould is an evolutionist. We are aware of that. As a matter of fact, that is the point. Evolutionism, as taught in state schools, treats evolution as if there are no weaknesses to gradualism or Darwinism in general and all evidence of “intelligent design” is rejected a priori as religion or just simply ignored. Either case means that evolution’s pristine image is protected at all cost. This quote demonstrated that well known evolutionists do have grave problems with gradualism, and other facets of Darwinism, so much so that they have to develop new theories that do not require a fossil record to prove their theory to be true just like P.E.

Yes, it is an old quote, but it is a confusion of categories to equate old with false and new with truth or visa versa. The age of something has nothing to do with the truthfulness of the statement. The quote was not misrepresented nor quoted out of context. If you go back and read the introductory paragraph of my paper, it states the point of the paper is, “Evolution is often presented as the most plausible explanation for the creation of the natural world and mankind. However, there are many weaknesses in Macroevolution that should be acknowledged when arguing for evolution and also many reasons for believing in intelligent design. Thus, you have extricated the quote from the way it was used and created a straw man. In addition, there are many current books written with an extraordinary amount of information that leaves the foundation of evolutionism looking like an earthquake zone. It may do you well to read some of them; so that, you would have been exposed to the scientific evidences for “intelligent design” as well as Macro-evolution, and all of the evidential and logical flaws of Macro-evolution. We Christians do that in our search for truth. It seems a little disingenuous to claim to be a pursuer of truth and yet reject any evidence that is against your theory of life a priori because of where it comes from, which, by the way, is known as the genesis fallacy in logic. Are you really a searcher for truth?

I realize that God’s knowledge being perfect makes the concept of free will a little more difficult to grasp, but it does not change the ontology of the argument or its truth. Knowing is not synonymous with determining if language means anything—I am sure you realize that if knowing and determining are equated we are catapulted into the absurd world of Sartre. Your conclusion is based on a confusion of categories. Knowing is an epistemological issue and free will is a moral issue. Determinism is the way that a computer works. It is determined when to come on by an intelligent free will being. It goes off the same way. It does not choose, know or control; in contrast, the person does, and that is the difference in free will and determinism. Now, it does not even minutely change the free will of the person if I know that he will turn on the computer at 9:00am, nor if I know that perfectly. That I know he will do it is knowledge, and that he does it is free will.

God has determined to give man a certain amount of freedom. He knows that amount, and how man will use it. Free will is free as long as the choice is not coerced which foreknowledge does not do. Knowing that a child will choose ice cream over asparagus is categorically different than making the child choose ice-cream. My foreknowledge of the child’s choice does not diminish his free choice as long as the choice is free. Marketing understands the

difference in presenting something where someone will freely choose to buy it, and forcing them to. One is legal and one is illegal because the former is based on free will and the latter is not. If Adam and Eve ate of the tree, and they were forced by God—like turning on the computer—then they were not free but determined. If they were free to choose, but God knew what their choice would be a priori has nothing to do with the freedom of the choice. It has to do with the nature of the absolute supreme God who by definition knows everything. To deny that attribute of God because it is postulated that it somehow violates free will is a categorical fallacy. This is who God is. It is simply illogical and not affirmable to conclude that knowing equals coercion. Free choice is doing what one decides, and is unrelated to whether someone knows what his choice will be regardless how well he knows it.

Free choice means that a moral act is not caused by another, but it was freely chosen without compulsion. If one's acts are caused by another, then how can he or she be held responsible for them? That would be the epitome of injustice. Further, the denial that some actions can be free is self-defeating. A complete determinist, who you seem to claim to be, insists that both determinists and non-determinists are determined to believe what they believe. However, determinists believe self-determinists are wrong and ought to change their view. However, "ought to change" implies freedom to change, which is contrary to determinism. If God, biology or environment etc., are the cause of all human actions, then human beings are not morally responsible. In addition, it makes no sense to praise human beings for doing good or to blame them for doing evil.

Determinism denigrates man into nothing more than a machine or an animal. This is absolutely contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture, which declares that man is "created in the image of God". That is the grandeur of man. That man is a cog in the wheel is not only degrading to man but to God whom you claim to believe in. Your conclusion that there is no evil, and that Hitler and mother Teresa just played their equally good or benign parts in the upward evolution of man as a "cog, is not only devoid of logic or proof, but it is shockingly dangerous and baleful. For, if that is true, why have laws, which penalize wrongs and evils—or even acknowledge them since they do not exist—or that thwart the wonderful place the serial killers play in mankind's existence. It does no good to say that the laws play into the whole scheme of things; for then we must ask who determined that, and it is still nonsense since you deny the presence of evil. To say that it better serves man is a statement latent with free choice, which you deny; so, that will not work either. Nor will it work to say that they are determined to keep man alive and a society from chaos since who is to say that is better. If everything is equal, why punish anyone. Determinism may be enjoyable to ponder at times for intellectual activity, but it will not work for a day in the real world. For example, is it ok if I kill your child, spouse or you since it is determined or would something in you say that wanton killing is not right and maybe even evil?

The straw man accusation is just that an accusation. Where are these straw men that you see everywhere? Technically, a straw man accusation is not valid if it arises because the reader does not understand the nature of the argument. Normally, a straw man is obvious. I have argued my beliefs and exposed some of the fallacies of determinism, Darwinism etc., and that was the stated context of my article. Nor should you equate attacking an argument with ad hominem arguments. I did not attack people but their beliefs; although, you have done a more than adequate job of using ad hominem arguments against me in attacking my motives, person etc.

You state that you're a Christian, but then simultaneously say that you do not believe in evil, free will, hell, etc. You have the "free will" to believe what you want, but you should seek to be consistent. Your real problem is not with me, but with Jesus Christ who said that He was the only way to heaven (John 14:6), evil exists (John 17:15) some people are evil (Matthew 13:38) others are righteous (Matthew 1:19) and Christians are commanded to do good and not evil (3 John 3:11). This is not intended to coerce you to be a Christian, but merely to point out that

your beliefs are not Christian. Jesus was emphatically clear on all of this. Jesus said that He came to pay for the sins of the world, which makes no sense if there is no sin. If Jesus was wrong then we should not follow Him because He also claimed to be God and those two ideas are necessarily mutually exclusive. If He lied, then not only should He not be followed, but He should be repugned since He claimed to be “the truth.”

With all due respect, I must choose to believe Jesus over you. I hope that you will do the same. Truth does not, as you suppose, just come over time making itself known, but by searching, humility, and openness to it. Jesus said, “seek and you shall find” (Matthew 7:7). You are correct though in realizing that if Christianity is absolute truth it will make itself known to all, but according to Jesus that will be to late (Matthew 7:21). This is the reason Christians are so tenacious about spreading truth. Please do not attempt the argument that you believe Jesus, but that the Scriptures are inaccurate because the evidence to the contrary is irrefutable if you desire to look into it with an open mind.

As far as the inquisitions, if your studies are thorough enough, you know that the inquisitions were instituted and operated in order to eliminate heretics. Thus, the vast majority of the people killed were Christians. Contrary to the way it is commonly characterized, this was not led or done by Christians. They were in fact the persecuted; because some one claims to be a Christian does not make it so. Jesus said “you shall know them by their fruit.” The act of executing people who disagree with you in their beliefs is not a Christian belief or practice. That some use the Bible to support their aberrant practices is not unusual or reflective of the Bible—serial killers, Hitler ad nauseam claim to be Christian or following God. By the way, did I detect a departure from “determinism” when you labeled the Romans as “evil” and the inquisitions as “more vile and horrid than anything that the Romans ever did” if so, I am thrilled; If not, you have confused me once again.

Your statement that “there is by no means any set Christian doctrine” is grossly in error. It is called the Scripture, and the Scripture makes this lucidly clear. Because some play hermeneutical gymnastics in order to make Scripture say what they want does not change the reality any more than when a student reads a book and misrepresents what it says on a test. I am sure that you have experienced that at least once. I do not attach malice to your statement, but it is patently false. I do not know if your misunderstanding comes from a general lack of knowledge about Christianity, Scripture, history or all three. Maybe, it is that you fail to make the distinction between what is known as “essentials” and “non-essentials.” Essentials are those things which Christians through the ages and regardless of denomination believe. These are things such as Salvation is only received by faith in Jesus Christ, substitutionary atonement, second coming of Jesus etc. To not hold to the essentials is to not believe in the Christian faith. Jesus said that His word is “truth” (Matthew 17:17). Non-essentials are things like form of church government, nuances of various verses that do not affect essentials, how a denomination does missions etc.

While Christianity has a subjective element to it, like being “filled with the Spirit,” it has objective parameters of what is authentic Christianity and what is not. Jesus made obedience to this objective standard, the Scripture, the test of whether a person truly loves him and is one of His disciples, and those who do not follow Him are not His disciples (John 14:23-24).