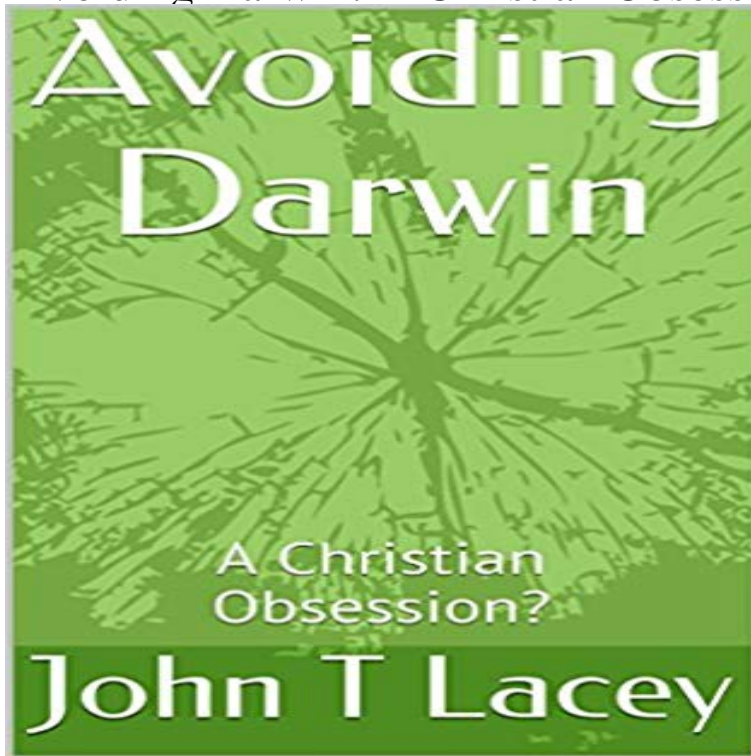


Avoiding Darwin: A Christian Obsession?



This book is about the reception of evolutionary theory and what Christians in the west have believed about creation, both today and in the past, with particular emphasis on biological creation. The author is a Bible believing Christian who holds degrees in the life sciences and in theology and whose evolutionary views and Christian beliefs are in harmony, but on different levels of understanding, held as complementary to each other. Until about the 16th and 17th centuries the Christian Bible was believed to be a valid source of information about the origins of the universe and the history of the first people who were seen as the progenitors of the human race. In the 18th century some natural scientists began to realise that the earth must be very much older than the biblical accounts implied. When Darwin's *On The Origin Of Species By Means Of Natural Selection* was published in 1859, the Victorian public were shocked by the implication that humans were related to the lower orders of creation; more specifically that humans had an ape ancestry. This had the effect of dividing the Christian community into opponents of evolution and those who were able to support it or accommodate it within their theology. The surprising thing is that the battle lines were not drawn as one might expect. In the mid-twentieth century a militant form of young earth creationism emanating from the United States of America, became increasingly popular; a form of Bible science. More recently an Intelligent Design strategy has been proposed, which was originally designed to counter secular atheism. The outcome of these modern form of creationism is that nearly half of the population surveyed in the USA believe that the world was created within the last 10,000 years. In Britain the numbers who believe this are smaller but growing. Young Christians who have been brought up in the environment of young earth

creationism often find it very difficult to maintain their Christian faith when confronted with the findings of modern science and potential converts to Christianity are often resistant to the Christian gospel because they think that this sort of belief is required of them.. The first three chapters of this book are concerned with the history of Christian beliefs about creation and some famous episodes of confrontation between protagonists. The later chapters address some of the scientific and theological issues that stem from a belief that God has created biological species by a process of evolution, so called theistic evolution. How can humankind be created in the Image of God if we share a common ancestor with chimpanzees? Are all humans descended from the biblical Adam and Eve and did they really exist? What is meant by the concept of original sin and how can Christians accept the evidence of contemporary science and believe that God, in Christ, is the creator of the cosmos? A Glossary has been included to assist anyone not familiar with some of the scientific and theological terms and the Bibliography includes the works of reference for those who wish to investigate further.

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