Analysis of Chapter Eight: Faith, Science, and Reason
Analysis of Chapter Eight

Theology can be defined as “the disciplined exploration of revelation.”\(^1\) Chapter Eight of Baglow’s *Faith, Science, and Reason* is an example of a disciplined exploration of Revelation. Baglow approaches science, and in particular the science concerned with the origins of living things, with the goal of better understanding Revelation, God, and our relationship with God. Baglow’s approach begins from a position grounded in faith in Revelation and presupposes the truth of Catholic Christianity.\(^2\) From there, Baglow explores the current science relating to the origins of living things, guided by and through the lens of Revelation.

**A Disciplined Exploration of Revelation**

To be a *disciplined* exploration means to operate from philosophical and/or theological principles of order.\(^3\) Chapter Eight appears to operate foundationally from the theological principle of order that faith and reason, and particularly Revelation and true findings from the physical sciences,\(^4\) cannot contradict each other, and in fact they “mutually support” and illuminate each other.\(^5\) Baglow explored and explained how the Genesis creation account and Catholic teaching are compatible and harmonious with the theory of scientific evolution.\(^6\) For

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example, Baglow explained that the Book of Genesis was not meant to be read as revealing biological truths, but rather as revealing spiritual truths and defining the relationship between God and creation.

There are other theological and philosophical principles of order that help shape and structure Chapter Eight. Baglow used the principle of “primary and secondary causes” to help explain the idea of evolution as a mutual co-creation process engaged in by both creatures and God. Baglow used the principle “that Divine Providence does not exclude fortune and chance” in order to show how “‘chance’ and ‘random’ events” can occur within a creation that is “designed” and has an overarching “purpose”. Baglow used the principle of free will to show how the idea of “chance” (an idea which is imbedded within the theory of evolution) actually helps structure an environment where human free will is possible.

A Disciplined Exploration of Revelation

To be a disciplined exploration means to examine a certain topic or issue in an in-depth manner, from the perspective of faith and Revelation. It is more than just gaining knowledge, or just learning facts; it is seeking understanding on a deep level. An example of Baglow fulfilling this component of theology in Chapter Eight is when he examined biological evolution, and especially when he parses the science of biological evolution from the philosophy of evolutionism. Baglow dove into what the theory of evolution actually holds, explaining different

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concepts within evolution (e.g., natural selection, genetic variations, current research on evolution). Baglow also outlined the Church’s position on evolution. In addition, Baglow showed how the term “survival of the fittest” and the philosophical view that the world is “intrinsically violent and aggressive” are not essential parts of the theory of evolution. Baglow pointed out that “producing offspring, not destroying opponents, is the driving force of evolution”, and that such an interpretation is perfectly aligned with the concept that love is a central organizing principle of creation. Another example of Baglow not settling for a simple understanding, but instead diving deep into the material, is when Baglow discussed beauty vis à vis Darwin’s theory of evolution. Baglow pushes beyond Darwin’s theory, explaining that strict biological evolution does not account for much of the beauty in the world, and therefore “Darwinian biology[] . . . is not wrong; it is merely too narrow.” Elsewhere in the chapter, Baglow goes beyond the words of Genesis and brings out the deeper meaning within the first creation account.

**A Disciplined Exploration of Revelation**

To be a disciplined exploration of Revelation means to approach a topic from the perspective of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. In Chapter Eight, Baglow explored both evolution and Revelation and showed how each one illuminates the other. For example, Baglow

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explored the interplay between doctrine and evolution when he discussed the doctrine that human beings are endowed with a spiritual soul,\textsuperscript{22} examined the first creation account from the book of Genesis,\textsuperscript{23} and highlighted Scripture passages that discuss freedom vis à vis creation.

**Conclusion**

Baglow’s Chapter Eight fulfilled the components of theology as *a disciplined exploration of Revelation* by operating from philosophical and theological principles, by seeking an in-depth understanding of the material, by approaching the material from the perspective of Revelation, and by using Revelation to more deeply inform our understanding of evolution.

\textsuperscript{21} Baglow, *Lesson 1, Part II*, 12–14.
\textsuperscript{22} Baglow, *Faith, Science, and Reason*, 172.
\textsuperscript{23} Baglow, *Faith, Science, and Reason*, 183–188.
References


