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KEITH MILLER, "And God Saw That It Was Good': Death and Pain in the Created Order," *PSCF* 63, no. 2 (2011): 85-94.

Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith has been absolutely instrumental in my own development as a Christian paleontologist. I grew up in a community in which it was simply assumed that Christian faith was incompatible with the notions of an ancient universe and an evolutionary history for life on Earth.

Article

Twenty-Five ASA Fellows and Editors Tell of PSCF Articles That Changed Their Lives

However, the more I studied biology and geology in college, the more I became convinced that living things had a long, complex history on this planet. As I explored these scientific ideas, my professors at Calvin College (now Calvin University) also helped me to see that this did not necessitate a loss of faith—that I could continue to be a strong, committed Christian, even as I studied evolution.

But as I began to intentionally integrate my faith and scientific studies, I began to encounter difficult biblical and theological questions that I was not quite sure how to deal with. My professors were immensely helpful as I thought about these issues, and one of them steered me toward *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. I found the section in the library where back issues of the journal were shelved, and I spent countless hours poring through articles related to evolution and Christianity. These articles helped me to see that I was not alone in having these hard questions—that, in fact, many Christians were thinking through some of the same things that I was, which was an immense encouragement to me as I graduated from Calvin and went on to do a PhD at the University of Michigan.

During my first year as a graduate student in paleontology, I joined the American Scientific Affiliation as a student member and attended my first ASA meeting. I looked forward to each issue of *PSCF* that arrived in my mailbox, and I can honestly say that the ASA and *PSCF* were helping my faith to continue growing alongside my development as a scientist. But that did not mean all of my questions went away. In fact, some of them even became more acute, particularly questions related to the predation, death, and extinction that were so evident in the fossil record. How could those things be part of a God-ordained and God-sustained process? These questions nagged at me as I completed my dissertation and prepared for my first faculty position, but I simply had not had the time or space to devote as much careful thought to these questions as they deserved.

It is in this context that I remember receiving the June 2011 issue of *PSCF*. I had just defended my dissertation, my wife was pregnant with our oldest son, and we were preparing to move to Illinois. Despite all the busyness, I couldn't help but flip through *PSCF* when it arrived. There I found an article from Keith Miller called "'And God Saw That It Was Good': Death and

Pain in the Created Order." Keith's earlier work had been very helpful to me in my undergraduate years as I wrestled with the compatibility of evolution and Christianity, and I remember having a brief (but very encouraging conversation with him at the first ASA meeting I attended. I knew that he had spent a lot of time wrestling with many of the same questions that I had, and in this piece, I encountered such thoughtful engagement with several immensely difficult questions related to the goodness of creation, the effects of sin, and the roles of pain and death in God's creation.

Over the years, I have thought about these questions fairly often, and I even had the chance to explore these issues more deeply through a program sponsored by Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford back in 2018–2019. I have lost count of how many times I have returned to Keith's article to refresh my memory on some of its most salient points, but even as I read it today, with some questions answered to my satisfaction and some that may never have explanations on this side of eternity, I see this piece as a resplendent example of what Christian scholarship can be: careful, thoughtful, and humble, yet courageous in engaging with some of the most difficult questions that Christians can ask.

In its 75 years of publication, *PSCF* has published so many examples of this kind of scholarship; I look forward to what will come in the next 75 years. I imagine that I will continue to find articles from issue to issue that clarify things for me, stretch me, and invite me to consider various topics in new ways. But I also know that there are all kinds of questions that we haven't even thought about yet, and I cannot wait to see what the next generation of Christian scholars has to teach us through the pages of *PSCF*.

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