

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1503



Take a Closer Look – page 3

The Saviour of the World – page 9

Creation, Evolution & Charles Darwin – page 13

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

125th Year

H09

1503

A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ), available throughout the world. Its objectives are – to encourage study of the Bible as God's inspired message; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

**Magazine orders to the address nearest you.
For Free Offers see the back cover**



United Kingdom – Cilla Palmer (Mrs), "Highlands", 78 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Ely, Cambs, England CB7 5NR Tel: (01638) 723959 (24hrs & Fax) cilla@gladtidings.fsnet.co.uk

Australia – K.G. Quixley, 22 Narallah Grove, Box Hill North, Victoria, Australia, 3129 gladtidings@optusnet.com.au

Canada – Vivian Thorp (Mrs), 5377 Birdcage Walk, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, L7L 3K5

New Zealand – Neil Todd, 14 Morpeth Place, Blockhouse Bay, Auckland 7, New Zealand

South Africa – A. J. Oosthuizen, P.O.Box 50357, Musgrave Road, Durban 4062, South Africa antoost@mweb.co.za

U.S.A. – Pat Hemingray (Mrs), 3079 Kilburn West, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, USA.

Other Countries – Geoff Maycock, 8 Hale End, Bracknell, Berks., England, RG12 9YH gmaycock@uwclub.net

Local information is also available from:

Fiji – Bible Mission, Box 1012, G.P.O., Suva

Indonesia – Bible Mission, Gereja Saudara Dalam Kristus, Kerten Rt 01/RW10, JalanMundu 3/40, Solo 57143, Indonesia

Philippines – Mr Albert Cruz, PO Box 991, Manila, Philippines 1099

Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Pacific Islands, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea – Bible Mission, PO Box 42, Wallacia, NSW 2745, Australia

India – T. Galbraith, G.P.O. Box 159, Hyderabad 500001, India

Bangladesh – Christadelphian Bible Students, PO Box 9052, Banani, Dhaka 1213

Editor: Owen Tecwyn Morgan

26 The Crescent, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull, B92 0BP, England, UK glad.tidings@virgin.net

Publisher: The Glad Tidings Publishing Association (a registered charity) number 248352

Bible Talks, Study Classes, Sunday Schools and Youth Clubs are held regularly by Christadelphians worldwide. The address of your nearest group can be obtained from either the Distribution Secretaries or from the local agents or information addresses given above.

Contents

Take a Closer Look3

Take a Closer Look at the Bible5

Bible Prophecy7

The Saviour of the World9

The Natural World....11

Creation, Evolution & Charles Darwin13

Metamorphosis15

Have Faith!16

Being Born Again18

Acknowledgements

Photographs:

Cover and page 3:

Seaton Tramway

Used by permission:

www.tram.co.uk

Illustrations:

All others from Clipart.com

Bible Versions

The version most used in this issue is the New King James Version (NKJV) but other versions are sometimes used.

❖ *The New King James Version is copyrighted by Thomas Nelson.*

❖ *The English Standard Version is published by Harper Collins Publishers © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission.*

❖ *The New International Version is copyrighted 1978 by New York Bible Society*

Take a Closer Look

At first glance you might think that you have stumbled across a bygone age when you see electric-driven trams trundling along ancient tracks, journeying from Colyton to Seaton, on the coast of Devon in the UK.

But take another look at the cover photograph. The trams may be ancient, but look at the people on the top deck. One is using a digital camera and, from their hairstyles and clothing, these are evidently 21st century folk.

So you are not in a time warp after all! Seaton Tramway is a reconstruction intended to give a taste of Victorian times when trams were to be found in most large cities in Britain, and the passengers are tourists.



The Full Picture

Every day we make judgements like that about things we see and hear. We exercise all our senses, when we are alert and thinking clearly, to sort out what is true and what is not.

A letter arrives telling you that you have been left a fortune by someone you have never heard of before and you are invited to send your bank account details so that a money transfer can be made. Walking through the market someone offers to sell you perfume at a vastly reduced price, compared with its retail value. Or you see an advertisement offering a free

holiday in an exotic location. In each case you have to use your critical faculties and decide:

- that the letter is a hoax (and the bank transfer would be out of your account not into it);
- that the perfume is not the genuine article but a fake; and
- that the holiday offer is a way of luring you to a sales presentation.

It's a matter of being able to see beyond the immediate and work out what's behind it all. God has given us the ability to think things through, but we have to use those faculties if we are to make sensible decisions. Otherwise we can be easily fooled.

Think it through...

Over 2500 years ago an Old Testament prophet called Isaiah invited his nation to reason things

through with God their Maker. This is what he said:

“Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword’; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 1:18-20).

It was a challenging offer which said in effect: “Think about this: obey and prosper or disobey and die!” As it hap-

pened, the nation was facing desperate times; a foreign invader threatened its very existence. If ever there was a time to think seriously about God, this was it. But amazingly many people continued to put their trust in worthless idols and paid no attention to what God had to offer. So Isaiah invited them to take a closer look at their worship.

Worshipping a Tree

In a brilliant analysis, the prophet depicts a man chopping down a tree, using the chippings to make a fire on which he cooks his dinner, and then falling down to worship the rest of the timber which he has carved into an image depicting a god. Read the passage for yourself if you want to chuckle over the stupidity of people from long ago (Isaiah 44:9-20).

But beware! We can be just as stupid today if we spend our energy chasing after material things, and wanting more of them, when we should be using every opportunity to find out about God and His purpose with mankind – ourselves included. As a New Testament writer succinctly observed:

“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5).

The apostle Paul was saying the same thing as Isaiah (who wrote over 600 years before him). It is so easy to waste life’s opportunities on desires,

feelings and wants. All we are really doing then is worshipping things and passions. We need to take a closer look at what God has to say, and what He has to offer.

Using our Senses

The Bible is a book about people who were given the opportunity to encounter God and to establish a relationship with Him. Some did and some didn’t; it was a matter of personal choice. Their experiences are recorded so that we can learn from them if we are willing to take a close look at what happened and why. We can learn the hard way, from our own mistakes; or we can learn from the mistakes and successes of others. It’s up to us to choose. Reviewing some Old Testament history, the apostle Paul once said:

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:11,12).

God challenges us to learn about Him and His ways if we want to. Nobody forces us to but we are assured that if we make the effort it will be the best thing ever. What we need to do is to use all our faculties to consider the facts. In this issue we invite you to look at what the Bible has to say about some key issues and to compare that with man-made notions about such things as evolution and fortunate accidents.

Editor

Take a Closer Look at the Bible

In many countries copies of the Bible are readily available – in all shapes and sizes and versions!

Most bookshops will have a religious section with Bibles on sale. There must be a good market for Bibles because new translations regularly appear. You can also read and download from the Internet any number of different versions and translations.

Bought but not Read

Despite this abundance, ask most people about Abraham, or Moses, or David or Isaiah, or Peter, or Paul – and how much can they tell you? How much could you recount of the fascinating and inspiring lives of these great figures of faith?

And what about Jesus? You may have an idea about his birth, because it comes up at Christmas, and you probably know how he died, as it gets mentioned amongst the Easter eggs. But do you really know why he came and what he set out to achieve? Have you any idea if there is any substantial evidence for the belief that he rose from the dead?

Why should you bother to find out? Because if the Bible is in fact the Word of God, then clearly it deserves our attention! If you read it you will learn what those faithful men believed. You will learn the real truth about Jesus and his teaching. Once we discover

how he will change our troubled world then, if we can be convinced it will happen, it can make all the difference to how we cope with life now and prepare for life then.

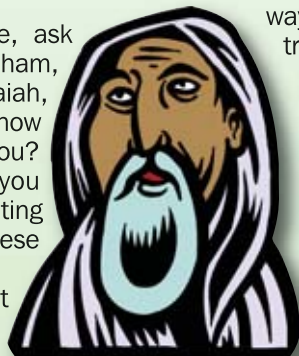
But how can you find out if the Bible really is the Word of God? By taking a closer look! That's where we can help. Christadelphians provide free resources for people to learn about the wonderful message of the Bible. We have a range of courses and guides to the Bible that can help you find your way around it and discover its treasures.

The Bible is Relevant

One of the convincing things about the Bible is the way it has foretold the future so accurately. Do you realise that you can make sense of the world in which we live by taking a closer look at prophecy? Did you know that the complex and difficult situation between

Israel and the Arab nations is foretold in the Bible? Did you know that Jesus spoke of a time when many people would be worried to death about the future?

"...On the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27).



Or alternatively, burying their heads in the sand and just living for the present?

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26,27).

By taking a closer look you can understand better what’s going on and find an assurance about what the future holds – for you personally and for the world.

Guidance for Life

The Bible is full of wisdom. It contains much practical advice about healthy living and positive relationships. Many of the laws from Moses’ time are the bedrock of public health. Jesus shows that to be happy we need to learn from him the secret of peaceable living. The Bible shows us what we can do to rid ourselves of guilt and negative feelings and how to find that peace of mind that passes all understanding. Why not take a closer look for yourself? As the Psalmist said:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” (34:8).

And the New Testament echoes that sentiment when the apostle Peter says:

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if



indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Peter 2:1-3).

We live in a world where pleasure and pain coexist. Sometimes the pain is unbearable. We look around at deeply disturbing scenes of suffering – sometimes because of vile behaviour or heartless cruelty, sometimes the consequence of life’s agonising twists or natural disasters. We may be struggling with some challenging situation in our own lives. We can easily be perplexed and dispirited. What hope is there? Take a closer look at the Bible! There you can find the reason for suffering and death. There you can learn that God knows and cares, that He wants us to learn of a better way, that we can find a true hope to sustain our spirits.

Bewildered?

The number of religions and churches is bewildering. Understandably, many people give up. Maybe you are thinking, “I’ve heard it all before!” But, to be honest, what you hear is often far removed from the Truth. If you want to know the Truth, take a closer look at the Bible! If you don’t have much faith but can see how helpful it would be to have more, take a closer look at the Bible and increase your faith! If you definitely believe in God and would like to know Him better and if you want to understand what the gospel of Jesus is really all about, take a closer look at the Bible!



Michael Owen

Bible Prophecy

One way of establishing the truth of the Bible is by checking out its forecasts about the future. It has an established track record, as **Alex Mothersdill** now explains, for God's prophets foretold events that were due to come to pass in the near future so that we can have confidence that their long-term predictions are equally reliable. God has a plan for this earth which He has told us about in advance.

Jerusalem Besieged

The country was at war. The Assyrian army, the most powerful in the world at that time, laid siege to the capital, Jerusalem. By human reckoning there was no way out. The city was doomed to fall to the cruel Assyrians and their king, Sennacherib. The king of Judea at that time was Hezekiah and, according to an ancient inscription, he was shut up in Jerusalem like a caged bird. The situation was hopeless and all appeared to be lost.

There was, however, a prophet of God named Isaiah in the city and he was sent to King Hezekiah with this message:

"Thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,' says the LORD" (2 Kings 19:32,33).

Any sane person living in Jerusalem at that time would have considered these to be the words of a mad man, spoken perhaps to try to raise the people's spirits. There appeared to be no way at all in which the city could be saved from the powerful Assyrian army which was camped at its gates. But the city was saved and the prophecy was fulfilled as we read a little later in the same chapter:

"It came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out ... and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh" (19:35,36).

Double-Check

It may be claimed that this is not satisfactory evidence of prophecy being fulfilled because it is all contained in the Bible – there is no external evidence that the events ever took place. But there is! The Assyrian kings were very boastful of their conquests. In the British Museum there is a six-sided clay prism, generally known as Sennacherib's Cylinder, which records eight of his expeditions including the siege of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah. Sennacherib speaks of shutting up Hezekiah in a cage and taking vengeance upon anyone who came out of the city, but there is no reference at all to the capture of the city – a major event that he would certainly not have omitted to chronicle had it taken place.

What God's prophet Isaiah had foretold came to pass exactly as predicted, although it might have seemed impossible at the time the forecast was made. There was a reason for this prediction, for it established Isaiah's credentials as a prophet. Earlier in the

Bible God set out the way in which a prophet could be tested:

“When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken”(Deuteronomy 18:22).

Because the word spoken by Isaiah was fulfilled it proves that he was a true prophet of God. Within a short time of his prophecy Jerusalem was saved. There are other prophecies in the Bible which are referred to as medium term; they were fulfilled after the life time of the prophet.

Many of those concern the coming of the Jewish Messiah and his rejection by the people (see especially Isaiah chapter 53), events which were fulfilled some 600 years after Isaiah’s days. As we live after the fulfilment of those events we know that they came to pass precisely as predicted, which gives us further reassurance.

Unfulfilled Prophecy

For Isaiah made many other predictions, about events that reach right down to our day. These long-term prophecies still await fulfilment, but because of the accuracy of the short and medium-term prophecies we can have complete confidence in their fulfilment.

Isaiah and God’s other prophets accurately foretold the return of the scattered Jewish people to their ancient land, an event which many of us have seen fulfilled during our lifetime. But they also predicted the eventual outcome of that return. Here are some of Isaiah’s prophecies about a coming King and Kingdom:

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder ... Of the

increase of his government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (9:6-7);

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”(11:9);

“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her ... For thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees”” (66:10-12).

This will be a marvellous time when Jesus will be sent to rule the world, eventually introducing an era when there will be no more war, no illness, no pollution, no financial problems, no food shortages and no death. All these and other dreadful things that we at present encounter day by day will become things of the past and the whole earth will revert to the full beauty it had before man spoilt it.

These are genuine promises made by God, initially to the Jews, but since the time of Jesus they have been extended to include all who believe, are baptised and then live trying to follow the teachings of our Lord.

Christadelphians are happy to do what we can to help you come to an understanding of the wonderful things taught in the Bible so you can see how you can become associated with that glorious coming Kingdom.

Alex Mothersdill

The Saviour of the World

There has been no shortage of people who wanted to change the world, usually for their own advantage. World empires have come and gone; world wars have been fought when tyrants sought to rule the world, and many men and women have left their mark, because of changes they brought about, for good or ill. But, as **Mike Elbro** now explains, there is someone who can do what all other men and women have so far failed to achieve.

Human Institutions

Whilst individuals have made major contributions, people tend to look to national or international organisations for major advances. Worldwide institutions, like the United Nations, came into existence to prevent war and to provide food aid, education and refuge for the poorest peoples, and to protect human rights. The International Monetary Fund gives financial aid and stability to developing countries; and so on. But none of these institutions has been able to solve the many problems our world now faces.

Many people think that, given our sophisticated and technologically advanced civilization, man himself can bring about a world that has lasting peace, with plenty for everybody, and a lifestyle that is environmentally sustainable. But on the basis of what has been accomplished in the past 50 years, do you really believe that to be possible? If you do, you must be a real optimist!

Heaven-Sent

Have you thought that there could be an alternative? If so, do you know where to find out about it? Looking

closely at God's Word, the Holy Bible, should give you some pleasant surprises and a lot of hope for the future. As explained in the previous article in this issue, the prophets who were inspired by God have foretold that better times are coming when a heaven-sent King reigns in Jerusalem over a new government. But the Bible also tells us not to be too hopeful about the plans of mankind:

“Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish” (Psalm 146:3,4).

All men and women have only a limited time in which to achieve anything worthwhile, for then they die. But, says the Psalmist:

“Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God” (146:5).

If we put our trust in God, the Maker of heaven and earth, He can rid the world of oppression and wickedness and provide for hungry and disadvantaged people. Read the rest of Psalm 146 to see what God intends to do. It gives us a glimpse of the wonderful worldwide kingdom that God intends to establish on earth and which will replace the rule of man on Earth.



Jesus is Coming

You might wonder how and when God will bring all this about. The Lord Jesus Christ is to return in person from heaven to establish God's new society on earth, for Jesus is the true saviour of the world. After the crucifixion of Jesus and his marvellous resurrection angels reassured his early followers about this very promise:

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Jesus Christ is the only man who has been made immortal, so when he returns to earth he will have no fear of anything or anyone. He will be sole king, sole ruler and quite unable to be overthrown. So we can take heart. Earth will not disintegrate because of nuclear war. Its inhabitants will not be wiped out because of famine or disease. The planet will not be destroyed by man's greed and abuse of its resources. Instead Jesus Christ will save the earth and reign in righteousness, with mercy and with justice. He will have authority over all things and will have the overwhelming power of God at his disposal.

The Bible describes his regime in Psalm 72. One day soon the whole earth will be full of God's glory. Wonderfully, the Bible also gives us pointers to when this great event will happen. One of the clearest signs has been the regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland, the setting up of the State of Israel just over 60 years ago and Jerusalem being made its undivided capital city.

Even the present troubles between Israel and its near neighbours are fore-

told in the Bible, and we are told what the eventual outcome will be. Jesus accurately predicted the state of our world and the anxiety that would prevail, with people full of fear for the future. This is just how many, many people across the world are feeling right now, vulnerable, insecure and in fear and seeing no future for themselves or their children. But then he added a word to believers – men and women who have heeded the warnings and have done something about it: *“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:28).*

Personal Invitation

When Jesus comes back to the earth he will invite those to be with him who have believed in his words and have been waiting for him. He is coming to save the world, but he can be your Saviour too, here and now. From the beginning of his ministry his message was that we must repent, because the Kingdom of God is near. Christ died so that all who believe on him should not perish but have everlasting life in his Kingdom.

If we ignore his call we shall not be part of the new world order that God will establish. Jesus asks us to change our ways and our thinking (this is the meaning of the word “repent”). His death can save us even though we are sinners. We need to put our trust or faith in God. If we are willing to change, and demonstrate this by being baptised – by immersion in water – and if we will re-order our lives for the future then we have the promise that Jesus will welcome us into his Kingdom.

Mike Elbro

The Natural World

Sitting in my office tapping out these words I can see over the fence into my neighbour's yard where his store-cattle are quietly munching silage.

Beyond the yard, meadows slope down to a river shrouded in willows that are fast turning green in the Spring sunshine. It's a scene that has remained largely unchanged for hundreds of years – not only beautiful but eloquent of our relationship with the land and our eternal dependence on nature for survival.



The privilege of living in or near the countryside in the south west of England has been mine from childhood. I grew up surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the natural world at a time when, for me, there was unrestricted access to its delights and far fewer people about. With this background it is hardly surprising that an awareness, however vague, of the creative, sustaining hand of an all-powerful God should have been my unquestioning view. It remains so, though now through a Bible believer's eye.

Conflicting Views

With this year's bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin the debate between evolutionists and creationists has come to prominence, exposing height-

ened passions on behalf of the former and a kind of dogged but growing revival by the latter. Why, one wonders, should the evolutionist be so concerned to convert believers and to what? What benefit is there? Do they pose some threat?

Of course, at the heart of the matter is the interpretation of the origin of the natural world. The quite splendid nature films that now come from places all over the world reveal again and again the same patterns, the same breathtaking handiwork as I see through my window. Viewing the unmistakable evidence for a Creator whilst listening to the authoritative tones of a commentator ascribing it all to evolution is bizarre and, often, ludicrous.

It seems that the pursuit of Darwin's theory is really an attempt to disprove the existence of God – that 'atheism' is the objective, rather than the increase of knowledge by 'research'. Perhaps there is evidence for this in the slogan, "*There probably isn't a God – now stop worrying and enjoy your life*", posted on some city buses. It says more about the ignorance of the advertisers than their targeted audience if they are suggesting that belief in God causes worry and is an obstacle to enjoyment.

The Book of Faith

A major problem for both sides is that there are few Bible believers with a sufficient knowledge of science to argue their case in the evolutionist's camp. And probably there are still fewer scientists who are well enough acquainted with the Scriptures to

argue against them rather than against what they are thought to teach.

The simple fact is that the Bible is the book of faith, and faith is of no use in the work of science. But faith, along with hope and love, forms an integral part of the human experience.

We exist as physical creatures who are able to see, touch and taste, but the unseen things of faith, hope and love are equally real and vital ingredients of the human being, setting us apart as unique in the animal world. How could they be the result of evolution? Where did they come from? The evolution theory gives no answer; but the Bible does.

A real and living hope

“God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

These words from the Genesis account of the Creation reveal that the uniqueness of human beings lies in their capacity to appreciate and to imitate the character of God Himself. When we take a closer look we discover that faith in God can give us a real and living hope, which is why the apostle Paul prays for the believers in Rome:

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13).

The all-powerful Creator of the heavens and earth is not just raw power – a frightening proposition

indeed. The Bible reveals God as a loving God, and much more. He is the epitome of love:

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him ... And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:8-9,16).

Worship God

Looking through the window at my neighbour's cattle I recall God's own words expressed by the Psalmist:

“Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! ... I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine”.

And then the Psalmist explains what we can do for such a mighty and all-providing God:

“ ... Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High” (Psalm 50:7-14).

Our careful observation of the natural world and a close look at what God has revealed in the Bible lead us to one unavoidable conclusion. The God who made the world and who has given us life is a God who deserves our worship!

Tony Jarvis



Creation, Evolution and Charles Darwin

This year has witnessed the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book “*On the Origin of Species*”, with a sub-title “*The preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*”.

Descent

In 1871 Darwin published “*The Descent of Man*” in which he proposed human evolution and the unity of all races of human kind. Darwin was the grandson of Josiah Wedgwood who, with his family, fought for the abolition of the slave trade. Darwin’s letters to his grandparents were discovered recently during exploration of the Wedgwood archives.¹ These showed the depth of Darwin’s feelings on the evil of the slave trade which led him to write “*The Descent of Man*”.

Darwin was also much influenced by the writings of Thomas Malthus on the problems of increasing population in a world of finite resources. Malthus predicted that this would lead to wars and famine. Accordingly, Darwin’s views on “the survival of the fittest” allowed him to approve of colonial genocide, such as the deliberate wiping out of the aboriginal inhabitants of Tasmania by



Darwin House, Shrewsbury, where Charles Darwin was born in 1809

European settlers. A recent television programme on “Darwin’s dangerous idea” noted that his views were taken up in Nazi Germany. Gypsies, criminals, the mentally deficient and six million Jews were exterminated. About 250,000 people with hereditary disease were sent to the gas chambers, while others were compulsorily sterilised.

Designed

The Bible teaches that life was created by God. It is noteworthy that the six fundamental physical constants have exactly the values required to ensure that the universe has a planet capable of sustaining life. If the value of just one of these fundamental constants, such as the speed of light, had been just slightly different then no planet suitable for life would have been formed.

The simplest interpretation of this strong anthropic principle is that the universe was designed by a Creator who intended that it should be populated by intelligent life. The physicist Paul Davies writes “*The impression of design in the universe is overwhelming*”.²

Missing

Charles Darwin was very concerned over the absence in the fossil record of

life forms intermediate between species. Evolution is supposed to have occurred over countless millions of years, with species gradually changing into more complex forms of life. In how many cases has clear, watertight, incontrovertible evidence been found for the existence of fossils corresponding to intermediate species?

Abandoned

The complete lack of such evidence led Eldredge and Gould³ to abandon Darwinism and to suggest the theory of “Punctuated equilibrium”. They proposed that most species underwent little change over long time periods, but when this did happen it occurred very rapidly in a limited number of places. This, they argued, explains why fossil evidence for intermediate species will be hard to find.

But what is the evolutionary driving force of incipient changes in species?

Such changes can be of no value, for only when the changes are complete will the organism be better fitted for survival. For example, an eye will only be of value when it is fully formed and linked to a brain that has been modified to accept signals from light sensitive tissue. Gould pointed out that this is a primary problem for evolution because incipient structures are useless, unless natural selection could look ahead.

Complexity

Believers in Creation argue that the amazing complexity of life provides evidence for the work of a great designer.^{4,5} Today we are more aware of this as a consequence of our much

greater knowledge of biological science. For example, the swimming of bacteria is due to flagellar motors that rotate at 100,000 rpm. The flagellar motor is made up of 30 protein components that carry out functions equivalent to the components of modern engine design, although mechanical engines cannot begin to match the efficiency of the bacterial motors. But what could be the evolutionary driving force for the formation of these proteins? Individually they confer no advantage to be preserved by “natural selection”. They have no value until the motor is fully complete, with all 30 components present. So this motor could not be formed by evolution. It has to be made by the action of an intelligent being, the original designer.

Simple Cell?

Similarly a living cell could not form by accident. Consider the processes needed for a typical cell to function, involving the making and controlled activity of enzymes and other proteins, carbohydrates and nucleic acids: the synthesis of cell walls, with intricate multiple mechanisms for controlling the uptake and efflux of nutrients and metal ions. This is the work of a Creator.

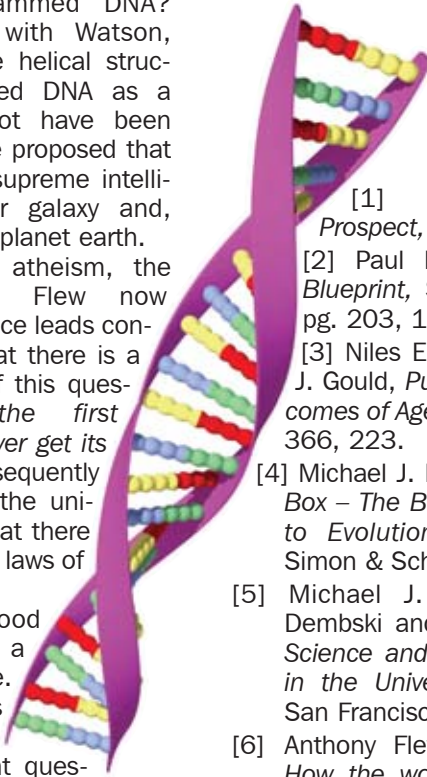
These arguments for an intelligent designer are demonstrated powerfully in the properties of DNA, the molecules in our cells that carry our personal genetic code. Richard Dawkins wrote that the machine code of the genes is uncannily computer-like, and, later, “*Genes are digitally coded text*”. So, we have to ask who



designed and programmed DNA? Francis Crick (who, with Watson, established the double helical structure of DNA) described DNA as a miracle that could not have been formed by accident. He proposed that DNA was made by a supreme intelligence in some other galaxy and, somehow, it arrived on planet earth.

After a lifetime of atheism, the philosopher Anthony Flew now believes that the evidence leads conclusively to the fact that there is a God. He asked himself this question: “How did the first reproducing creature ever get its DNA?” He wrote subsequently that the rationality of the universe convinced him that there is a God, who wrote the laws of nature.⁶

So there are good reasons for believing in a God who created life. This means that there is purpose in life and, consequently, important questions for us all to ask.



References

- [1] Adrian Desmond, *Prospect*, pg. 26, 2009.
- [2] Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, Simon and Schuster, pg. 203, 1988.
- [3] Niles Eldredge and Stephen J. Gould, *Punctuated Equilibrium comes of Age*. *Nature*, 1993, pgs. 366, 223.
- [4] Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box – The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, The Free Press, Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- [5] Michael J. Behe, William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer, *Science and Evidence for design in the Universe*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000.
- [6] Anthony Flew, *There is a God: How the world’s most notorious atheist changed his mind*, Harper One, 2007.

Martin Hughes

Metamorphosis

*Caterpillars soon will be lovely butterflies.
What a metamorphosis in colour, beauty, size;
But does the caterpillar know, or does he even care
That with his wings of beauty he will fly into the air?*

*What a transformation – a miracle indeed,
But this is God’s great plan for us, if we His ways do heed;
Our metamorphosis will be a gift for all to see:
To share in God’s own nature – blessed with immortality.*



Colleen Simons

Have Faith!

Faith in Daily Life

In our day-to-day life we have to have faith and belief in people. For example, you have faith that:

- the bus driver will drive you to the destination on the timetable;
- a chef, who you have never met, will prepare a meal that won't poison you and that you will enjoy;
- teachers will give you correct and true information so you can build your knowledge on it;
- the person who gives you assurances of love will enter into an intimate relationship with you, because a good marriage is based on loyalty and faithfulness.

So you see, the things we are most sure about in everyday life begin simply by an act of faith and trust.

Faith in God

Now true Christians have faith and trust in God. Some people may say *"How can you put faith in someone you can't see?"* Yet we have seen how faith exists in daily life.

Consider the chef once again. You didn't see him or her in the kitchen, but you saw the results of his work in the plates of food on the tables. In the same way we can't see God, but we can see the work of His hands in Creation.

We have never seen Sir Christopher Wren, but we believe he existed. For if you go to London you can see evidence that he existed when you look at



St Paul's Cathedral. It was designed and planned by him. He organised the builders, they got the materials and it was created. We can see it today and recognise it as Sir Christopher Wren's design, trusting and having absolute faith that the information is true and correct.

The Evidence

The natural world around us, such as birds, plants and animals, is truly amazing.

- How can a great oak tree grow from a small acorn?
- The birth of a child is a miracle.
- The flight of a bird and their migration to the other side of the world is amazing.

To us they are all indicators of a great Designer and Creator. The laws of nature are all in place to make these things happen. The oak seed needs soil, water, warmth and light and they are provided. The birth and development of a baby from a fertilised egg and the formation of cells to produce a child works in a sequence that is still

not fully understood. And the birds know how to navigate by the moon and stars to get to Africa, as though that knowledge was already programmed into their design.

We think these natural phenomena provide strong evidence that God is the great Creator of life. Just as St Paul's Cathedral is strong evidence that Sir Christopher Wren existed, the natural world is a testimony

to God's existence and the Bible says that very thing. Writing to the Romans the apostle Paul said:

"Since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).

And he goes on to say that people are "without excuse" if they fail to recognise this, and worship God their Creator. So we are expected to take note of what we see around us and respond to it in an appropriate way.

More Evidence

As we have already seen in this issue, if the evidence of nature isn't enough, God has given us His Word the Bible. There we can read prophecies about the Jews and about many other nations, the majority of which have already come to pass.

As we cannot forecast the future with any certainty, such things must come from God. The historical truth of the Bible also comes to light as archaeologists dig to look into the past and expose sites and artefacts which back up the Bible record. For example, in the nineteenth century there was much doubt expressed about the existence of Babylon, which is frequently mentioned in the Bible. Now that archaeologists have found the city, no such challenges are heard!

Believing is doing

So if you believe in God, what's the next step? In the same way that you trust the chef whom you have not seen, by eating the meal he or she has produced, the next step is to take action. Your faith will then live in your life.

In Hebrews 11 we read about men

and women who had strong faith and trust in God. They were confident in His existence, His power and His promises. Their faith meant something to them and produced action to do what was right. They were men and women of action, not words.

➤ Abraham left a settled life and set out into the wilderness in search of a land he had never seen before.

➤ Noah built a huge boat in the middle of the dry land, being persuaded that the flood God warned him about would surely come.

➤ Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.

These faithful men were absolutely convinced that what God had said was true, so much so that it affected their lives and how they behaved. These were not easy things to do, but their absolute faith and belief in God moved them to act accordingly. This is what we are told:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13).

Why was Abraham so sure of the unknown land? Because he was utterly sure of the unseen God. Ordinary people like us did extraordinary things because of their absolute faith in God. So what about us?

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Marcus & Rachel Goodwin

Being Born Again

The phrase, 'a born again Christian' is one that is frequently applied to people who have had an 'experience' in their lives which convinces them that they need to devote themselves to Christ. It could come about as the result of going to a gathering, such as those promoted by a prominent minister such as Billy Graham, or it might be a personal experience that convinces someone to devote themselves to Jesus. Whatever the occasion, the person so influenced feels driven to commit his or her life to Christ.

Bible Teaching

If we examine the way in which the Bible uses this phrase we find that it crops up in the narrative between Jesus and Nicodemus, a Jewish theologian, as recorded in John chapter 3. Tracking down the context enables us to find out what Jesus was teaching in these verses. That is always a helpful way of making sure that our understanding accords with Bible teaching. Nicodemus evidently had a high opinion of Jesus for his opening words indicated that he and his fellow Jewish leaders recognised something important:

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2).

These remarkable words show that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah – who had

"come from God" – and that the miracles Jesus had performed confirmed that. Jesus responded by saying, in effect: "If you want to be in my kingdom you must be 'born again'". Here are his actual words:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (3:3).

We see from this verse that being 'born again' is linked with being in 'the Kingdom of God.' We cannot be a part of that Kingdom, unless we are born again and this is why it is vital that we understand exactly what 'being born again' actually means.

"Born of water"

Nicodemus mistook what Jesus was saying for, in verse 4, he says how impossible it is to be born a second time in a literal sense. So Jesus repeats the point that he has already made by explaining:

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5).

What exactly is Jesus saying here? First of all, being 'born of water' is a reference to baptism. When we are baptized we go into the water with all our sins clinging to us, but when we come out of the water, our sins are all forgiven. We are then spotless in the eyes of the Lord because our sins have been symbolically



washed away. This is a reference to the death and rising to life of the Lord Jesus (see Romans 6:3-4).

So to comply with the command of Jesus, being 'born again' means that we have to pass through the waters of baptism. Baptism – a burial or dipping in water – is a simple act of obedience that is often discussed in these pages. It is simple, but it is vitally important because through that act we associate ourselves with the Lord Jesus.



“Born of spirit”

But what about being born of the spirit – what exactly does that mean? Well, it cannot mean that we receive the Holy Spirit at our baptisms. Jesus was talking to Nicodemus some three years before the Holy Spirit was given to his apostles during the Feast of Pentecost. Furthermore, in verse 10, Jesus tells Nicodemus that being the master (or teacher) of Israel he should have known these things already!

The key to what Jesus is saying is to be seen in v.7, where he says that one is 'born again' – or 'from above', as the margin puts it. Being 'born of the spirit' means coming to believe in Divine teaching as a result of listening to the words of Jesus, and of his Father in Heaven, and then letting their teaching change our lives. Today, the words of God and His Son, the Lord Jesus, are recorded in His Word, the Bible. We can read and understand them and should make them the basis of our Christianity.

So how are we 'born of the spirit' in this 21st Century? It is when we respond to the words of God and His Son, Jesus, by reading the Bible – the Word of God – and being convinced by them. This means that our whole life will be changed. Instead of living to satisfy ourselves (the Bible calls that "*the works of the flesh*"), we will live to please God and our fellow believers – what the Bible calls "*the fruit of the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:19-24).

New Lifestyle

Describing this change of behaviour in another of his letters, the apostle Paul describes it as putting off the works of the flesh – what he calls "*the old man*" – and putting on "*the new man*" of the spirit. Here are his actual words:

“... that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

So if you want to be a 'born again' Christian, in the way the Bible describes that term, you need to be baptized by full immersion in water and then understand and demonstrate in your life the full truths of God as presented in the Bible. If you want to enter the coming Kingdom of God, which Jesus will establish at his Return from heaven, just remember what Jesus told Nicodemus:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

David Willey

Two Free Offers

Good Reasons

Belief in God and in His Word the Bible is the very beginning of the quest to learn more about the sort of God who made us, and who keeps us alive. It's not a jump in the dark, a blind leap, or anything like that. We are given good and solid reasons for believing the Bible to be the Word of God. And we are assured that the quest will be very worthwhile.



Tecwyn Morgan

To obtain a FREE copy of the above booklet send your name and address to one of the Free Offer addresses opposite. Use the coupon if that is easier.

Your Name (BLOCK CAPITALS please)

Address _____

Post Code _____

Country _____

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If you are not yet receiving the *Glad Tidings* magazine and would like it delivered *FREE* for 6 months – send your name and address to one of the addresses below.



Your Name (BLOCK CAPITALS please)

Address _____

Post Code _____

Country _____

Addresses for the Free Offers:

In the UK write to: Glad Tidings Magazine,
Freepost NAT7259, Ely CB7 5BR

In Africa write to: Anne Bayley (Mrs),
68 Hay Lane, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands,
B90 4TA, England

In other countries, to: Cilla Palmer (Mrs)
"Highlands", 78 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Ely,
Cambs, CB7 5NR, England

Visit our website:

www.gladtidingsmagazine.org

Local Information