

Hallmarks of the Creator

“For 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

It was just after 10 AM on 11th February - the day before the anniversary of Charles Darwin's birthday. I was listening to Richard Dawkins being interviewed on Colourful Radio's Sunday morning religious programme *Faith*. I began to wonder if he had visited a style guru since the autumn when he was 'on tour' promoting his latest book: "There are good people that are religious"; "I don't want to be accused of saying that *all* religion is bad". The presenter, Jan Oliver, a Christian who said she had stopped believing in creation since starting to study psychology, was somewhat overawed by interviewing the eminent professor, so much so that at one point she called him "Professor Darwin"!

I was listening carefully, being the next to be interviewed. The question being asked that morning was, "Can people believe in evolution and God at the same time?" That was the first question put to me and one of the few times I found myself able to agree with Dawkins – it must be possible, as people say they do it. A second point of near agreement was that Dawkins questioned if they really believed in God, whilst I questioned what type of god they believed in. Picking up on John Mackay's central point in his 2005 debate with John Polkinghorne, I pointed out that evolution relies on death, weakness and violence – the very opposite of the good which Jesus Christ did when he healed the sick and raised the dead. Perhaps the biggest surprise for the presenter came when she started a question referring to the beauty of God's creation and I pointed out that whilst there is a remnant of beauty in creation, the world in which we live is actually quite an awful place, having been damaged by centuries of human sin. We will return to that point later.

Does God Exist?

To the great annoyance of atheists like Richard Dawkins, the God question is not dead in post-Christian Britain. This has been shown recently by full houses at several debates between Christians and atheists. The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship organised a tour of English universities by William Lane Craig, Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. He took part in several debates whilst he was here. Two of them were on the theme, "Is God a delusion?" The first at Westminster Central Hall, London was with Prof. Lewis Wolpert, who seems to have become the British Humanist Society's front line media spokesman in recent months. The other, which I was able to attend, was with Mike Begon, Professor of Ecology at Liverpool University. I was interested to see that just as in debates with John Mackay where atheists offer no *evidence* for their atheism, neither did Prof. Begon nor (according to the reports of the other debates I have read) did any of Bill Craig's other opponents. For example, Radio 4's John Humphrys, who chaired the London debate, was able to summarise Craig's five-point arguments for God quite precisely in a subsequent article in the Daily Telegraph (3rd March). However, he could be

far briefer with the case put forward by Craig's opponent: "*And here's the essence of Wolpert's rebuttal: it's all bunkum. Every bit of it.*"

The same thing happened on Tuesday 13th March at Edinburgh University where Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford University, and Peter Atkins, Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University, debated the question "Darwin and humanity: Should we rid the mind of God?" The hall was so full that many who had squashed in were asked to leave for safety reasons. Atkins also sought to assert that atheism did not require evidence and that the burden of proof lay with those who say that a god does exist. However, at best it is agnosticism, not atheism, which is the default position. The agnostics say that for whatever reason they do not know whether God exists. Atheism is an *assertion* and as such should either be made in faith or be based on facts which can be tested. Atkins however repeatedly protested that his atheism was not a faith position.

It is not the atheists' favourite verse from the Bible, but there is no getting away from Psalm 14:1 which states, "**The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'**" For an atheist to demonstrate that their position is one of evidence not faith, they need to show that there is no rock in the universe under which a god might be hidden which remains unturned. It is foolish to express certainty in such an important matter without practically excluding every possible place a superior being might be found. Of course they cannot do that, so they resort to the defence that there is no evidence for God. However, what they fail to do is explain what the evidence for a god would be that can be observed by science. (It has to be noted that these days science has become defined as naturalistic – i.e. its purpose is to explain everything without reference to God. Thus modern naturalistic science has no way of even being able to consider what the evidence for God might be.)

Being involved with the planning of John Mackay's debates in this country, I normally feel I cannot participate in the events themselves, but at the Liverpool debate I was under no such constraints. Craig had presented his five standard reasons why he considers it is reasonable to believe in the Christian God. These were more philosophical than scientific, and Begon dismissed them all. When it came to question time I had the opportunity to ask Prof. Begon if, having set aside the evidence offered, he could give the criteria which any evidence for God would have to meet if it were to be acceptable to him. After quite a while stumbling for an answer, he decided that it was not his task to write the research agenda for those who believe in God. I suspect both he and the majority of the audience were aware that this was a face-saving exercise. For many years John Mackay has been challenging evolutionists and encouraging others to think through the question, "If creation is true, what would the evidence be?" In the same way, atheists must face up to the fact that they cannot say there is no evidence for God

unless they are able to say what criteria the evidence for God should meet.

What is the evidence for God?

It is often said that creation cannot be science because it cannot be falsified – its supporters cannot say what would prove it wrong. First, it has to be noted that the evolutionists are the ones who are unable to say what would falsify their theory. Evidence which challenges evolution is generally responded to by adapting the theory, so it *evolves* into a slightly different theory year after year. By contrast, the Biblical position is clearly stated and can be tested by observable science. In Genesis 1, we read several times that The Lord created animals and plants to reproduce “after their kind”. If the Bible’s account of creation were not true, then we would be able to observe creatures changing from one kind to another – which is perhaps why evolution has become so popular as the bulwark of atheistic thinking, for it claims evidence that *all* kinds have come from *one* kind which happened by chance from a chemical mixture.

What is the observed evidence for this? Not a lot. Dawkins said in Dec. 2004, in an interview on the American TV channel PBS, “*Evolution has been observed. It's just that it hasn't been observed while it's happening.*” More recently, this time in an interview for the BBC World Service *Heart and Soul* programme (25 March 07), he made this bold claim, “*Nowadays even if there wasn't a single fossil anywhere on the earth, we still have cast-iron, water-tight evidence for the fact of evolution.*” Where is this rock-solid evidence to be found? In genetics. But wait a moment, less than 12 months ago his fellow atheist and co-champion of evolution, Prof. Steve Jones said in a lecture at the Royal Society (11 Apr. 06), “*I always think that the finest evidence for evolution comes from fossils...*” The strange thing is that Steve Jones is Professor of Genetics at University College, London. If the genetic evidence is so clear, why can't a leading professor of genetics see it?

The TalkOrigins Archive is one of the most prominent anti-creation web sites and it boasts answers to all the claims creationists make. Its response to the late Henry Morris's statement, “*Species may undergo minor changes, but the range of variation is limited to variation within kinds*” which is fully based upon Genesis 1, is to quote the case of *Helacyton gartleri*. These are better known as HeLa cells and are actually human cancer cells taken from Henrietta Lacks (hence HeLa), an American woman, a few months before she died of the disease in 1951. The only reason they are still alive long after her death, and therefore can be claimed to have some kind of separate existence, is that cancer cells lack the normal checks and balances that stop them dividing. HeLa cells remain cells, not independent organisms. Whilst degenerative mutations have continued to affect them, they still continue to be malignant human cells incapable of independent life outside of specially prepared cultures kept at normal body temperature. One wonders why, if the evidence for one kind of creature becoming another is so abundant, a group of campaigning anti-creationists cannot provide better examples?

Have you ever wondered why it was important to The

LORD that things in His creation would reproduce “after their kind”? We know He always does things for a purpose; in the Ten Commandments He said he took six days to create everything, followed by one day to rest, to set us an example. So why did He create plants and animals with reproductive stability? (To avoid confusing you, I should explain that Biblical kinds are not what are called species today - they are wider than that. For a number of reasons it is not possible to be sure what the created kinds were, but it is best to think of them being more at the level of classification of dogs rather than bulldogs and Alsations, of bears rather than polars and grizzlies, and of cats rather than Bengal Tigers and Siamese.) Why were things created to reproduce after their kind? Could it be because they were created by one who says of Himself, “*For I am the LORD, I do not change;*” (Malachi 3:6) and about His Son, through whom He created all things, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8)?

The verse at the start of this article states that the Creator's “*invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.*” Atheists often ask how we know which god is telling the truth. The Intelligent Design movement has no answer, but Christians do. The creation reflects the nature and power of its Creator. He does not change and neither does what He has made. Yes, for a number of reasons creatures vary over time, but they remain the same kind. In the same way, The LORD allows us to see different aspects of His character – at times we witness His righteousness and his wrath, whilst at others His compassion and mercy – but He remains constant, as James said with confidence, “*with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*” (1:17). The Christian understanding of creation is that all creations reflect the character of their creator. The skilled craftsman turns out a better product than any apprentice would do. Jesus did not need time to create the universe because he had the talent to do so in a moment, just as he could turn water into wine without waiting for grapes to grow and their juice to ferment. He took six days about it to set us an example of how to both work and rest, and He created animals and plants to reproduce after their kind because He is constant.

The Lord's Signature in Creation

Another feature of the creation which reveals its Creator's “*invisible attributes... even His eternal power and Godhead*” is how it reflects the triune nature of the Godhead in so many ways – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is easy to spot several of these examples of the Godhead. How many dimensions are there in physical space? Three. How many aspects to time? Three – past, present and future. How many primary colours? Yes, three. All these basic things remind us that our Creator is three persons and yet one. Many of us find it hard to get to grips with understanding how the persons of the Godhead, commonly called the Trinity, relate to one another. Recently it struck me that when He set about the task of bringing order to the formless earth He had created, the very first thing Jesus Christ did was to command that there should be light. Have you ever wondered what colour it was? Was it red, blue, yellow or purple? Have you assumed it was white? Why should it have been white?

Daylight is not white. What we now know is that white is *complete* light whilst other colours have some part of the spectrum missing.

White light is actually a complete blend of how many different colours of light? Just three; red, green and blue – a different set of primary colours from those in paint and dyes. When you next sit in front of your computer monitor, or watch the television, remember that those numerous dots which flash on and off before your eyes reflect the nature of the Godhead. Three colours blend together to reveal a multitude of shades and hues, but when all three are burning brightly, then perfect white is seen. In the same way we can experience the work of the Father, or the Son or the Holy Spirit in our lives in different ways at different times. However, to be in full fellowship with our Creator we need to walk in the light as He is in the light – to experience the blessing of full fellowship with all three persons of the Godhead. We might not be able to explain how red, blue and green light combine to give white light, but we know they do. In the same way, no-one will ever be able in this life to know how three persons are one in the Godhead, but we can benefit from knowing all three and witnessing their united grace and mercy towards us.

In our new DVD, “**God's Signature in Creation - Allah or Christ?**” John Mackay develops this theme to show how evidence of the Godhead in the world around us is the hallmark of the Creator. By contrast Islam maintains that Allah, though often portrayed as the same as the God of the Bible, has no son. He is a lone god, not a triune Godhead. Does the evidence in creation point just to a designer and leave us to take our pick as to whether that designer was Allah or Christ or a god of one of the many alternative creation stories or just a force in the universe? Or do “*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork*” (Ps. 19:1)? Biblical creation goes far beyond arguments against evolution – it is about declaring the power and nature of the Godhead to men and women who want to go their own way, not His.

Bad things happen. Why?

“Wait!” I can almost hear some sceptical readers of this article calling out, “If what you claim to be creation reflects the character of its Creator, then why is it so bad in so many ways? Does that mean He is a bad guy?” This takes me back to the point I made on Colourful Radio - this world is a pretty awful place. Since then this has been brought home to me very vividly through a number of nature programmes on TV. I realised that these are amongst some of the most violent shows on TV, full of ferocity, slaughter, aggression, blood and even cannibalism. I think it was the collective effect of several programmes showing the horror of ‘*nature red in tooth and claw*’ which impressed itself upon me. This world, it is plain to see, is not a beautiful place - it is quite an awful place, with remnants of beauty left in it.

My lesson in horror extended to human society too. Quite often violence and death pour out in great force as if a dam has burst. I recently watched Spielberg’s “Schindler’s List” for the first time. An account of WWII violence towards Jews by the Nazi movement and how one member of that party, Oskar Schindler, was moved by the unrestrained

violence towards other human beings to do what he could to protect some. No film can fully convey the inhumanities of war, but this one testifies very vividly that man is as bloody and as violent as the animals. How does this awful reality portray the character of the one who claims to be the Creator of everything? To answer that, we need first to establish whether men act like animals because we have evolved from them, or do animals act like men because we have corrupted them?

Whilst there were many things I appreciated about Bill Craig’s arguments, there was one point which concerned me. One of his common arguments is that animal behaviour has no moral value. This means, he explains, if one animal kills another, that is neither right nor wrong, and it is the same when one takes food from another – it is not ‘stealing’ as such. At this point I found myself pondering how Craig might understand Genesis 6:12 & 13, “*So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for **all flesh** had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, ‘The end of **all flesh** has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’*” All flesh includes all animals for they perished in the Flood alongside men and women. Since then, Genesis 9:5 has also come to mind, “*Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; **from the hand of every beast** I will require it, and from the hand of man.*” Does not The LORD in both places speak of animals bearing a moral responsibility for their actions? Yes, He does. The implication is that they are not ‘dumb animals’ driven by instinct, but that they make choices.

This is fully consistent with the Bible’s explanation of why the earth is full of bad things. Life today has not emerged from some primeval chemical soup by a process where the strongest and most aggressive survive. Instead, human rejection of God and His ways introduced sin and death into the universe. After Adam humans have continued to want to make their own moral codes, permitting themselves to do what pleases them rather than their Maker. Thus we were no longer able to look after creation as good stewards. Our sin – laziness, greed, pride, ambition and so on – spread throughout creation. Our privileged position was not lost, but we became an example of all that is bad and we passed on our bad habits to the creatures which had been given into our care. Violence spread throughout the pre-Flood world to the extent that The LORD could not permit it to continue unchecked. Next time someone remarks that a person is acting like an animal, you could remind them that actually it is animals which act like fallen humans.

Theology should be based on history

Why then should such an able Christian scholar as Bill Craig miss this important point? At his Manchester lecture, he was asked about Adam and Eve’s role in bringing sin into the world. He responded by describing himself as neutral on the question of whether or not Adam and Eve were actual people. At other points though he gave the impression that he fully accepts secular time-scales for the age of the universe and so on. In his writings he uses the term ‘theological creationist’ to describe his own position. By this it seems he is trying to distinguish himself from Christians like those of us who work with

Creation Research, who are both theological and historical creationists. When one abandons the historical reliability of the Scriptures, problems arise which very easily give wrong perspectives on both the bad news of sin and the good news of salvation. If someone holds a theological position which accepts that death and struggle were part of life on earth for thousands of years before humans brought moral disobedience into creation, then they have no choice but to say that animal violence has no moral implications. In this light we must ask whether nature red in tooth and claw is how God intended things to be? For if it is, what are the theological implications of Him describing violence and death as 'good' at the end of a theoretical creation week? The first is that humans had reached their superior position by being selected as the fittest in the fight for survival!

The French biologist Jacques Monod, in an interview broadcast by ABC (Australia) 10 days after his death in 1976, when asked about possibility of God using the processes of evolution replied, *"If you want to assume that, then I have no dispute with it, except one (which is not a scientific dispute, but a moral one). Namely, selection is the blindest, and most cruel way of evolving new species, and more and more complex and refined organisms. I am surprised that a Christian would defend the idea that this is the process which God more or less set up in order to have evolution."* Christians who say they believe the theological implications of creation whilst not wishing to question evolutionary theory on scientific grounds have to take notice of Monod's objection, which he identified as a moral not a scientific matter. If theology has nothing to say about morals, then it is valueless.

Biblical theology portrays a universe which its Maker could describe on completion as **very good** because it reflected His own character. In His wisdom He then handed the care of what He had made over to a man who was part of that work – though unlike the rest He was created in His Maker's image, which means amongst other things that he possessed free will. Unlike us today, this man had only one matter in which he was able to exercise that free will in contradiction to His Creator's command. When his beautiful wife was deceived into disobedience, Adam, fully aware of the consequences, chose fellowship with her before fellowship with his Lord. In this way he not only introduced death into the good world, but became the source of all rebellion in the universe. Following his bad example, animals in their laziness then began to desert their herbivorous diets (Gen. 1:30) in favour of meat – possibly dead animals at first, but in time aggressively speeding up the process by killing what they wanted to eat. It was just over 1,500 years later when The LORD declared *all flesh* had become **corrupt** and had *filled* the earth with **violence**. A time-out had to be called. He knew that sin was not only firmly lodged in the human heart, but that its consequences had invaded the whole of creation. At the start of the new society on a planet now scarred by

judgement and no longer "very good", He therefore declared that He would require the life of every human **or animal** which killed a human being. In this respect He considered animals as morally accountable as humans.

Violence was never part of His design for this world because it does not reflect His nature. The human race has to hold its hands up and take full responsibility for it all! Next time you are watching David Attenborough on the TV, don't just watch out for his insistence on things being the product of millions of years of blind chance, remember too that it's not '*natural*' behaviour but *unnatural* when a predator kills to keep itself alive. Don't blame them though – remember that if Adam had not opened the door to sin, corruption and death, someone else would have done and it could very easily have been you!

A residue of Divine glory!

I hope this brief study has helped you to look for the many ways in which His creation makes known the character of the whole Godhead in what He has made. For this is one way we can discern between the claims of the one true God and those of alternative deities, whatever their source. There are other areas for you think about. For example, God is a Father and therefore fatherhood is a feature of His creation. How could a god who is not a father understand parenthood well enough to create it?

Sceptics do ask valid questions at times, which Christians need to be equipped to answer. David Attenborough asked one in terms of River Blindness – a question which John Mackay has answered in our DVD, **"Did a Good God Create Bad Bugs?"** Monty Python effectively threw out the same challenge in their parody of the old children's hymn, 'All things bright and beautiful'. The third of their five verses declares, *"All things sick and cancerous, All evil great and small, All things foul and dangerous, The Lord God made them all."* I hope this article has challenged you to understand that **He did not!** And to realise that it is men and women who have introduced all evil great and small into a creation which was indeed very good when it was handed into our care.

The evil within us has been allowed to spill out and spoil creation as a warning of the horror it will be to live with rebellion against a very good Creator for eternity. The good news of Jesus Christ is that we do not have to! The hard part about being rescued from our plight is that we have to humble ourselves before the Creator we have offended and acknowledge that He is right and we are wrong. God in His mercy has not taken the residue of His glory out of this world. Yes, evil warns us of dangers ahead as well as all around, and some beauty remains to remind us of what we can enjoy in the future if we are genuinely sorry for our part in ruining His good creation.

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Creation Research UK Office - PO Box 1, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire. OL6 9WW

Tel: / Fax: 0161-282-1111 Email: CreationResearch@amen.org.uk

Web sites - Australia: www.creationresearch.net UK: www.amen.org.uk/cr