

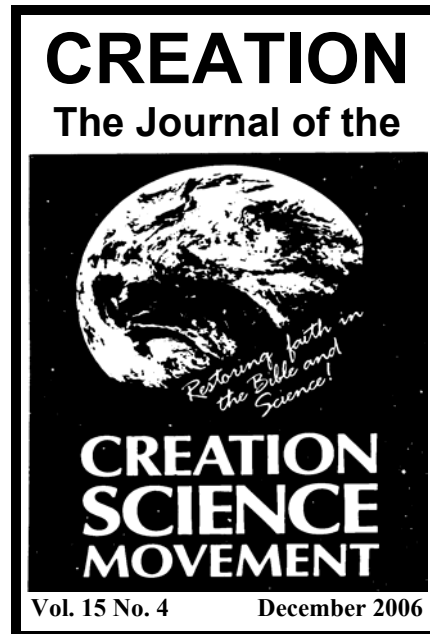
Rapid changes in Galapagos finch beak size

THE TIMES. July 14 2006 reports: "Evolution in action has been observed among the finches of the Galapagos Islands that helped make Charles Darwin's reputation (Lewis Smith writes).

Darwin's study of beak sizes and shapes among finches on the islands guided him toward his theory of evolution. The same finches have now provided scientists with one of the most startling examples of the speed of evolution, according to a study published in the journal Science.

The finch *Geospiza fortis* thrived on the island of Daphne Major until the arrival of competitor species, *Geospiza magnirostris*, in 1982. As the incoming bird established itself *Geospiza fortis* with a smaller beak, found itself in decline as it was comparatively inefficient at breaking open the seeds of the *Tribulus cistoides* plant.

In 2004, however, a drought meant a shortage of the plant's seeds and the bigger-beaked bird was virtually wiped out. Numbers of *Geospiza fortis* also declined and the biggest impact was on those of the species that had the bigger beaks. Individuals with smaller beaks, more suitable for getting at tiny seeds, survived. Measurements of the surviving finches this year, as part of a project begun in 1973, showed that the average beak size had shrunk dramatically whereas body size remained the same.



The report, by scientists from Princeton University, concluded: "This is the strongest evolutionary change seen in the 33 years of the study."

The Times correspondent has made the same mistake that Darwin made, namely confusion of variation within a kind with alleged macro-evolution of one kind into another. The Creator gave finches a set of finch genes. Depending on the availability of suitable food, those with genes for smaller or larger beaks would thrive. The populations of one or other can rapidly respond to changing conditions. The finches remain finches.

Cuttings & Comments from **New Scientist**

5 August p.17 Still juicy after 10 million years.

Fossilised frogs found in Spanish sulphur mines have fossil bone marrow intact. **“The fossil marrow consists of sulphur-rich organic material, and tests for amino acids, proteins and, tantalisingly, DNA are in progress.”** The fossils are dated at 10 million years old, but bone marrow tissue is prone to decay. This is an example of very rapid preservation of the original structure of the marrow a few thousand years ago.

5 August p.18 The bucket of bugs we all came from

“Dip a bucket into the ocean and you are catching a sample of the ‘primordial sea’ from which all complex life on Earth evolved. It turns out that there are hundreds of times more species of microbes in the ocean than we thought... Most microbes were from a small number of known species, but in the background Sogin discovered ‘another world’: millions of previously unknown species present only in tiny numbers. ‘We expected to find a few more species, but we have found orders of magnitude more’, he says.”

So, Mitchell Sogin of Massachusetts has realised how little we know about the variety of species of bacteria he finds in a bucket of sea water, and from this he apparently deduces that he and all complex ‘life on Earth’ has descended from such. There is also the unspoken assumption here that there is life elsewhere as well as on Earth. What faith!

12 August p.8 Latecomer revs up dark energy race.

So what is dark energy? It is **“this unknown force, which is causing the expansion of the universe to accelerate”**.

“JDEM (joint dark energy mission) is a collaboration [of NASA] with the US Department of Energy, designed to plug what is a vast gap in our understanding of the cosmos. Dark energy makes up more than 70 per cent of the total energy density of the universe, dwarfing the contribution of both ordinary matter and dark matter, but its nature is utterly unknown.”

They hope to plot the expansion history of the universe **“over the past 10 billion years”** using measurements of type 1a supernovae, which are thought to have standard brightness. Their apparent brightness will give a measure of their distance from us. JDEM assumes that the velocity of light has always had its present value. Destiny, Adept and Snap are different probes they plan to use. NASA want to measure **“w, which is a measure of how springy dark energy is, and ADEPT could measure it to within 2 per cent, compared with 4 per cent for SNAP and 5 per cent for Destiny.”**

“However, it is not yet clear if any JDEM probe will actually fly. The money should be available by 2009, but NASA will probably have to choose between JDEM and four other missions.”

Yet on December 6th 2003, p.10 *New Scientist* reported: **“Dark energy may not exist, according to an international team of astronomers who have used an X-ray satellite to count galaxy clusters in the early universe. If they are right, the expansion of the universe is not speeding up and the scientific community has been taken in by a huge cosmic mirage.”**

Alice would have been puzzled.

12 August p.12 Big crunches wipe the slate clean

“The cyclic universe model was proposed in 2002 by Paul Steinhardt of Princeton University and Neil Turok of the University of Cambridge. In their model, the universe bounces through a series of big bangs and crunches, with each cycle lasting about a trillion years. The model solves some of the problems with the standard big bang theory, and the researchers have also used it to explain the mystery of why the cosmological constant, which governs the rate of acceleration of the universe’s expansion, is so small.”

So now you know. The big bang is the result of its opposite, the big crunch, which in turn is the result of the previous big bang, and so on.

“But then, that’s the big question for every cosmological model: where does it all come from in the beginning?”

To solve the manifold problems of the big bang theory, these learned fellows have proposed an even more complex and unlikely idea which still ignores the ultimate question.

“I can’t believe that,” said Alice.

“Can’t you?” said the Queen in a pitying tone.

“Try again: draw a long breath and shut your eyes.”

Alice laughed. “There’s no use trying”, she said: “one can’t believe impossible things.”

“I dare say you haven’t had much practice”, said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.” Lewis Carroll. *Through the looking glass*

“How can the human race survive the next hundred years?” Stephen Hawking, also p.12
The One who started it in the beginning will come back to sort it out soon!

19 August p.11 Why doesn’t America believe in evolution?

Creationism is on the march and the evolutionists are worried. Dawkins’ latest book is called *The God Delusion*. Prof. Steve Jones has been busy lecturing against us – his most recent being entitled *Why Intelligent Design is Stupid*. Surveys of public opinion in the USA, Japan and 32 European countries show that creation science / ID is gaining ground. Turkey has 25% evolutionists, almost 25% not sure but over 50% creationists. The UK figures are about 75%, 7% and 18%.

“Miller’s report makes for grim reading for adherents of evolutionary theory. Even though the average American has more years of education than when Miller began his surveys 20 years ago, the percentage of people in the country who accept the idea of evolution has declined from 45 in 1985 to 40 in 2005. That’s despite a series of widely publicised advances in genetics, including genetic sequencing, which shows strong overlap of the human genome with those of chimpanzees and mice. ‘We don’t seem to be going in the right direction,’ Miller says.

In the USA the subject is bound up with politics, and the separation of church and state. The Intelligent Design movement ignores biblical history with its 7 Day Creation, the Fall and Noah’s Flood, in order not to be thought of as religious. They then have a problem explaining bad things such as the worm that bores into the eye of an innocent child. In the UK we have always used ID arguments, but have also emphasised that the Creator made everything perfect. Sin brought death.

Also in the UK, a lot of Christians imagine that God must have used evolutionary mechanisms over vast periods of time. They reinterpret the biblical truth that sin brought death and ignore that Christ and all the New Testament writers were biblical creationists.

19 August p.14 Exposing the dawn of the light-eaters

No, this is nothing to do with dieting! Armen Mulikidjanian has found that cyanobacteria possess all 100 genes used in photosynthesis, while the other four phyla of bacteria use some but not all such genes. He concludes **“that cyanobacteria have ‘invented’ the majority of their photosynthetic genes”**.

“When those pro-cyanobacteria learned to harness light they gained access to an unlimited source of power, says Mulikidjanian. ‘This invention gave an enormous evolutionary advantage to cyanobacteria.’”

And yet these resourceful little single-celled creatures, for all their genetic inventiveness, are still at the bottom of the evolutionary tree of life. You would think that getting together to invent multi-cellular kinds with body plans was a whole lot simpler than inventing the irreducibly complex photosynthesis organised by 100 genes. But no, there they are still at the bottom of the food chain.

26 August p.8 Ether returns in bid to oust dark matter

Cold dark matter was invented by imaginative cosmologists (are there any other kinds?) to explain why galaxies formed despite insufficient gravitational attraction. The problem is that nobody has been able to discover what it is. Until late in the 19th century, it was thought that space was filled with aether or ether, since it was considered that light, like sound, needed a medium through which to propagate. Giving up on CDM, a group of scientists at Oxford **“are now reincarnating the ether in a new form to solve the puzzle of dark matter, the mysterious substance that was proposed to explain why galaxies seem to contain much more mass than can be accounted for by visible matter. They posit an ether that is a**

field, rather than a substance, and which pervades space-time. If you removed everything else in the universe, the ether would still be there.”

This ether, if it exists, increases the flexibility of space-time, so boosting the gravitational pull of stars and galaxies.

Of course all this is conjecture. Another scientist comments: **“We’ve hit some really profound problems with cosmology – with dark matter and dark energy. That tells us we have to rethink fundamental physics and try something new.”**

CSM would recommend that they try something old: scrap the big bang theory with its billions of years and accept that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That way, galaxy formation doesn’t need extra gravity and dark matter and dark energy become redundant.

2 September p.5 Pope to rule on ID

“In what would be a break with his predecessor’s views, it looks as though Pope Benedict is about to deny evolution and embrace intelligent design (ID).”

In the event Pope Benedict said:

“We believe in God. This is a fundamental decision on our part. But is such a thing still possible today? Is it reasonable? From the Enlightenment on, science, at least in part, has applied itself to seeking an explanation of the world in which God would be unnecessary. And if this were so, he would also become unnecessary in our lives. But whenever the attempt seemed to be nearing success - inevitably it would become clear: something is missing from the equation! When God is subtracted, something doesn't add up for man, the world, the whole vast universe. So we end up with two alternatives. What came first? Creative Reason, the Spirit who makes all things and gives them growth, or Unreason,

which, lacking any meaning, yet somehow brings forth a mathematically ordered cosmos, as well as man and his reason. The latter, however, would then be nothing more than a chance result of evolution and thus, in the end, equally meaningless. As Christians, we say: I believe in God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth - I believe in the Creator Spirit. We believe that at the beginning of everything is the eternal Word, with Reason and not Unreason. With this faith we have no reason to hide, no fear of ending up in a dead end. We rejoice that we can know God! And we try to let others see the reasonableness of our faith, as Saint Peter bids us do in his First Letter (cf. 3:15)!” His Holiness continued: “This creative Reason is Goodness, it is Love. It has a face. God does not leave us groping in the dark. He has shown himself to us as a man. In his greatness he has let himself become small. Whoever has seen me has seen the Father, Jesus says (Jnr 14:9). God has taken on a human face. He has loved us even to the point of letting himself be nailed to the Cross for our sake, in order to bring the sufferings of mankind to the very heart of God.”

2 September p.14 Bug-proof fence“Trillions of ‘friendly bacteria’ inhabit our gut and help us digest our food. So it is puzzling that they so rarely invade our tissues. Now Lora Hooper and her colleagues at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas have shown that this may be thanks to an anti-microbial protein produced by cells lining the gut...Humans make a similar protein called HIP/PAP. Hooper says the proteins form a barrier like an electric fence, zapping bacteria if they try to cross.” This safeguard had to be fully operational from the beginning to stop deadly bacterial infection.

9 September p.5 Now that’s what you call an intelligent theory

“We tend not to think of evolution as a predictive theory. After all, the course of evolution is dictated by a series of historical accidents. Yet many predictions have been made using evolutionary theory, such as the existence of a universal genetic code for the translation of DNA into proteins.”

The flaw in this logic is that an intelligent Creator would also use a common genetic code. Unless all animals and vegetation used the same system, no creature could digest its food.

9 September p.35 Meet your ancestor

This article is about a well-preserved fossil named Tiktaalik, claimed to be **“the fish that first dragged itself out of the water, the evolutionary forebear to all land vertebrates – and, as such, our own ancestor... several specimens of an almost perfect intermediate between fish and land vertebrates, or tetrapods. All are so perfectly preserved that the researchers could see almost every detail of their skeleton...Roughly a metre long, this was a vaguely crocodilian fish, with eyes atop a flattened head, front fin bones that are more arm-like in their shape and mobility.”**

It breathed air through the spiracle behind its eyes. Nevertheless it is claimed to have well-developed gills. It had scales. Its front appendages ended in a flat paddle with, inside them, several rows of bones beyond the wrist region. Tiktaalik had a neck, unlike fish whose heads are fused to their bodies. *Nature* reported that an African eel catfish *Channallabes apus* from swampy areas of western Africa has similar characteristics to *Tiktaalik rosea*. This living animal is reported to have the ability to bend its neck in order to capture prey on land, this made possible by specialised vertebrae.

16 September p.9 Hitch-hikers that help a fetus survive

Here is a Just So story – are you sitting comfortably?

“Viral stowaways hidden in the DNA of mammals could be more than just idle passengers – they could be crucial for fetal development. Endogenous retroviruses (ERVs) typically account for 8 to 10 per cent of mammalian DNA, including our own, but until recently were thought to be relics of infection dumped in the genetic equivalent of the attic. Lab studies had suggested that the endogenous Jaagsiekte sheep retrovirus (enJSRV) might help the early embryo implant in the uterus and transform it from a clump of cells into a shape from which the placenta can develop.

“To test this notion in live animals, Tom Spencer and his colleagues...injected the uterine linings of ewes with a drug that blocks the activity of enJSRV. Pregnant sheep given the virus blockers miscarried. Spencer believes that enJSRV probably incorporated itself into the genome of some sheep by chance following an infection, and that it may then have shaped the evolution of the placenta by producing a protein that was better at orchestrating the early stages of fetal development than the sheep’s own protein. Eventually, the enJSRV became part of every sheep’s inheritable DNA, he says.”

And so, from then on, oh my best beloved, all sheep, that hitherto had only miscarried, lived happily ever after.

This genetic information, which also has its counterpart in humans, is part of a complex system of embryonic development. Rather than admit that it was a design feature without which there would be no lamb chops, Spencer believes that it was a serendipitous infection that thereupon permitted the placenta to develop. Some mothers do ’ave ’em!

16 September p.10 Soundbites

“It’s creating a big weapon against Christians that’s killing our faith... when children go to museums they’ll start believing we evolved from these apes.”

Bishop Boniface Adoyo of Kenya who is leading a campaign to have human fossil remains removed from the National Museum of Kenya.

This is the serious side of evolution theory, educating the young to believe a lie that robs them of the Truth. In the UK, the CSM’s Genesis Expo on The Hard at Portsmouth and Anthony Bush’s creationist farm attraction at Wraxall near Nailsea, Somerset deserve our support. The Genesis Expo has plans to double its size in the near future, as the Lord sends in the funds.

23 September p.8 Amazing skeleton of a young ancestor

“The stunningly complete skeleton (actually “at least 50 per cent of the skeleton is there”) of a three-year-old girl (actually belonging “to the species *Australopithicus afarensis*”, an extinct southern ape) who lived 3.3 million years ago has been uncovered in Ethiopia.” It is thought that a flood buried the ‘child’ in sand before the bones could be weathered or scavenged. The brain size is estimated at 330 cm³. **“The exposed leg bones show the child walked bipedally like Lucy. In contrast, the shoulder blade in some ways resembles young gorillas... That supports the inference from Lucy’s long arms that she was a better climber than modern humans.”** **“The Dikika hyoid bone resembles an ape’s, suggesting speech had not begun to evolve in *A. afarensis*.”** (The skeleton has been named ‘Dikika child’). Bonobo chimps spend some of their time walking upright. The feet and pelvis if they are ever uncovered, should settle the question. The ear labyrinth is also diagnostic.

30 September p.12 Silky-footed tarantulas don't come unstuck

Tarantulas are famous for their deadly bite. Other tricks of this hairy spider are an ability to walk up a vertical glass wall, and spinning silk with their feet. There is a connection here because the creatures leave fragments of sticky silk about an inch long on the glass. Their feet are equipped with tiny spigots that look like their abdominal spinnerets. **“With all the work that's been done on spider feet it's amazing to find something like this. Somehow it has been missed before.”**

Because the spinnerets have jointed segments and have been shown to move in sync with the legs when spiders walk, evolutionists have imagined that the abdominal spinnerets are vestigial legs.

However, synchronising foot movements with web spinning seems a smart design feature. Now we find that spinning short strands of sticky silk actually on the feet helps this heavy spider walk securely upside-down on smooth or dirty surfaces. Other creatures such as geckoes achieve the same effect using myriads of tiny hairs on their feet. Tarantulas cannot 'by taking thought' evolve these useful items.

30 September p.54 Interview

Often cited as Darwin's true heir, **E. O. Wilson** “caused a furor in 1975 with his book *Sociobiology*, which was vilified by various groups as the ‘new eugenics.’” In this interview, E. O. Wilson states that during his childhood with Southern Baptists: **“I grew up in the faith. As I like to say: ‘I answered the altar call and I went under the water’. I can understand the culture very well... in spite of the very stark, non-religious world view that I state upfront”.**

The *NS* interviewer asks Wilson how he came to **“lose your faith and end up among the secular scientists?”** He responded **“It happened to me in much the way that**

Darwin said it happened to him. He describes how he left England on the Beagle in 1831 as a devout Christian – I suppose now he would be called a fundamentalist – and then, in gradual degree, he pushed it away.” Wilson now says that intelligent design is **“worse than bad science – non-science.”**

This testimony highlights the danger of preaching the gospel of the saving grace of God through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, without teaching a perfect Creation followed by the Fall and curse. Darwin should not have blamed God for the death of his daughter.

It also highlights the fact that young people brought up under the sound of an incomplete gospel lose that incipient faith at school and college when they learn about evolution theory. The CSM, through its meetings, Genesis Expo, mailings and web site, seeks to lay a firm foundation for the gospel. ‘Sin came by one man, and death through sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.’ So when you send us your subscription for 2007, do also consider the need to support CSM in this missionary work fighting for people's minds and hearts.

7 October p.7 No creationism please

“Christians and atheists joined forces last week to urge the British government to prevent creationism infiltrating school science classes. The UK Christian think tank Ekklesia and the British Humanist Association wrote a joint letter to the Department for Education and Skills after an anti-evolution group (Truth in Science) distributed materials to UK schools.”

Ekklesia is a small anti-creationist pressure group of theistic evolutionists. Their early day motion did not get enough support to be debated. By contrast, Truth in Science had many enthusiastic responses from schools that were sent DVDs.

7 October p.38 My other universe is a Porsche

This article looks at the work of a group who are using their theories and computers to imagine other universes. **“Many people are unhappy with [the Anthropic Principle] because it implies some sort of designer who fine-tuned the universe for life.”**

Since our universe is indeed fine-tuned for life, whether they like it or not, they are searching for the possibility of other universes that have different laws from our own. Then our universe would be suitable for sentient life by chance rather than design. Roni Harnik is one of the dreamers, as is Martin Rees of Cambridge.

“Although we cannot observe alternative universes through telescopes, theorists can explore them on paper or in computer models and see whether galaxies would still form and stars would still shine. Each island in the multiverse is actually [sic] a collection of hospitable universes...”

Harnik claims to have found another universe complex enough to potentially support life. Even more startling is how different this new cosmos is from our own. **“The anthropic principle, say its fiercest opponents, is unscientific because it is impossible to disprove. And talk of a universe that is fine-tuned for life plays into the hands of creationists.”** One could not be blamed for countering that the multiverse theory is unscientific because it is impossible to prove, and plays into the hands of atheists!

One reason for the upsurge in interest in the Anthropic Principle **“is that other theories have failed to explain the observed value of the cosmological constant, a number that describes the repulsive force speeding up the expansion of the universe. This is in stark contrast to the success of an anthropic argument put forward in the late 1980s by Nobel prizewinner Steven Weinberg. He**

showed that if the cosmological constant were significantly larger than it is, its repulsive effect would have scattered matter far and wide before gravity could pull it together to make galaxies.

“Another reason is the buzz around string theory, which holds that all matter is composed of tiny strings of energy vibrating in 10 dimensions of space-time. String theory is the most popular attempt to reconcile quantum mechanics and general relativity, yet it does not just describe one universe. It describes 10^{500} universes, each with different physical properties. ‘String theory appears to provide a theoretical basis for the multiverse,’ says Harnik.”

But would Alice agree with him?

14 October p.14 Searching for ET

“SETI, the \$100-million Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, is the culmination of three decades of smaller scale searches ... The SETI Continuous Wave Signal Detection Computer can carry out one billion tests per second, the equivalent of scanning the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in one second and picking out a three-word phrase. The search assumes that intelligent civilisations are so common that we will find our nearest neighbours within 80 light years of the sun. But what if the SETI search does not succeed? We may then start to question whether the Earth really is just an ordinary planet orbiting an ordinary star, and home to fairly ordinary life forms created by universal laws of evolution.”

All that was written in *New Scientist* 14 years ago. Computing power has multiplied since then, and private people’s computers have been harnessed to contribute when not being used. However ET hasn’t phoned in yet. Maybe we are not so ordinary – maybe in fact unique – and created by an intelligent Designer rather than by the laws of evolution.

14 October p.18 Maggots, just what the doctor ordered

Not only do maggots applied to an open wound eat the dead tissue, but they secrete a fluid containing enzymes to speed up the self-healing process. Protease enzymes in the juice cause specialised repair cells to move more swiftly to the wound. Now researchers at Nottingham University have purified the maggot extract and prepared it on a gel that can be applied to wounds. Not only does this avoid the yuck factor of applying live maggots to the patient, but heals the wound just as quickly. Nurses will also be grateful.

14 October p.62 Hot flowers

The dead horse arum and the eastern skunk cabbage share an unusual property. These less-than-fragrant flowers generate heat and can even melt snow in spring. The latter regulates its temperature between 23 and 26 degrees. However, rubbing them on your feet as a cure for frostbite is not recommended.

21 October p.24 Doing it for the kids

Apparently science education in the USA is failing. And science writers are blaming it on the attitude of many Americans, and particularly George W Bush, to creationism/ID. In a survey of 18 year old students in 21 industrialised nations, the US came 16th. Just 40% of kids grasped such basic concepts as the relationship between pressure and volume of a gas. One might just as easily blame the fact that in America, religion is excluded by law from the schools. Evolutionism has protected status. [But see the 11 November article on Home schooling below that suggests that the achievements of pupils from private Christian education are above those from state schools in the USA.]

The surveyors hope to influence American attitudes to **“issues such as stem cell research, climate change and evolution versus**

intelligent design (ID)”. The atheist/ humanist lobby are holding up their hands in horror at the thought that children might be tainted by biblical concepts such as the sanctity of human life (stem cell research) and responsibility to a Creator/ Designer. **“Witness how, encouraged by political and religious leaders – including President Bush – parents and school board members continue to push for the teaching of ID in science classes, and how groups such as Students for Academic Freedom are agitating nationwide for laws authorising students to sue schools or teachers that don’t provide equal time for ID and other politicised topics.”** The thought police tell parents, students and school board members what they should believe, who then have the effrontery to disagree!

4 November p.17 Humans left chimps behind in ‘evolution’s playground’

Although the writer puts an unwarranted evolutionary slant on it, this little article speaks of further layers of complexity in the expression of genes. This shouts intelligent design. Some 800 pieces of the recently discovered micro-RNA, each a mere 22 nucleotides long, help control gene expression. They do this by blocking the messenger RNA that translates DNA into protein and determines what types of cell form. The human brain has 10,000 cell types. So although the DNA of chimps and ourselves is very similar, these snippets of RNA help to make a massive difference.

4 November p.50 Interview: Tony Blair

The sub-heading in large lettering quotes the PM answering a question about creationism in schools. Although the interview covered questions like the public’s mistrust of GM food and MMR vaccine, climate change as well as homeopathic medicine, the main concern is the emotive issue of creationism. Tony Blair has

staunchly supported faith schools in questions in the House. The interviewer asked: **“One subject that is of great concern to scientists is creationism. There has been a suggestion that creationism is being taught in some British schools. What are your views on this?”** The PM replied: **“This can be hugely exaggerated. I’ve visited one of the schools in question and as far as I’m aware they are teaching the curriculum in a normal way. If I notice creationism becoming the mainstream of the education system in this country then that’s the time to start worrying. As I’ve said, it’s really important for science to fight the battles it needs to fight. When something like the MMR arises, or stem cells, that’s the time to have a real debate.”** Evidently the prime minister recognises the matter as an anti-faith issue for a few vocal humanists rather than a matter of concern to scientists. After all, some of our greatest scientists were men of faith.

11 November p.20 Preach your children well

This special report on home-schooling claims that the motivation for teaching creationism is to produce the next generation of conservative leaders. The author mockingly describes a lesson at a Christian College in the States that receives its intake from home-schooled pupils. Some of its graduates are now in positions in the White House, in Congress and other places of political influence in the USA. **“As the speaker takes to the podium, several students silence their cell-phones. One puts down his copy of *The Wall Street Journal* and takes out his Bible. They bow their heads and pray to Jesus, then stand up and sing a hymn, belting out ‘Holy, holy, holy’ with gusto. Eventually the speaker addresses the crowd...**

“These students are part of a large, well-organised movement that is empowering

parents to teach their children creationist biology and other unorthodox versions of science at home, all centred on the idea that God created the Earth in six days about 6,000 years ago... *New Scientist* investigated how home-schooling, with its considerable legal support, is quietly transforming the landscape of science education in the US, subverting and possibly threatening the public school system that has fought hard against imposing a Christian viewpoint on science teaching... 72 per cent of home-schooling parents interviewed said that they were motivated by the desire to provide religious and moral instruction.”

About 2 million children are home-educated by evangelical Christians. Parents do not need to have a teaching certificate to operate, though there is no shortage of creationists who are graduates.

“This lack of regulation may be skewing science education in US homes, says Alters [of McGill University in Montreal]. ‘Poll after poll shows that approximately one out of two people in America reject evolution. They think the scientists, teachers and textbooks are wrong,’ he says.”

Christian colleges are not without their success stories. Many students end up in high positions. They are taught rhetoric and debate, preparing them to fight legal battles. For the last two years they have won national debating championships, and have twice defeated the UK’s University of Oxford in debating competitions.

Home-schooling textbooks tackle biology, chemistry, geology and astronomy. These give a creationist view of evolution theory, radiometric dating, the Flood as a catastrophic explanation of the rocks, and the age of the universe in terms of a possible decrease in the speed of light. Evangelical Christians dominate the home-school movement. **“It’s disconcerting, to say the least’,”** says Alters.

Altruism

The November 11th issue of *New Scientist* carries an article on altruism. Bees will sting an intruder in the hive and in doing so will die. T. H. Huxley reckoned that nature was red in tooth and claw, brute beasts were self-obsessed and altruism just arose between related individuals. In the mid 20th century, Bill Hamilton suggested that altruism in nature could occur where $r \times b > c$ where r was the degree of relatedness, b was the benefit to the recipient of altruistic largess and c was the cost to the altruist. The date 11th November was surely significant. We remembered those who had sacrificed life and limb for the nation. In the words of Jesus, quoted on these occasions, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He called His disciples friends, and would lay down His life for them the very next day.

Bill Hamilton's calculation hardly applies to Christ's altruism. How do we assess the cost? On the physical plane, His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. He was poured out like water, and all His bones were out of joint. Far greater was the spiritual suffering. He who was without sin became sin for us. His Father averted His gaze.

What is the relatedness of ourselves as the recipients of His grace to our Saviour? We are made in His image. He is the image of the invisible God. So were we His friends? Emphatically not! God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. We were dead in trespasses and sins, without hope, and without God in the world. We were strangers and foreigners, the children of disobedience.

But what about the benefits? For Christ, it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame. He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. We are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And as far as we sinners are benefited, we who were once far off are made near to our Creator by the blood of Christ. We have become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. We are the called according to His purpose. And that purpose is to be conformed to the image of His Son. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him. There is even now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. If God is for us, who can be against us?

Herein is altruism, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sin. We love Him because He first loved us.

From time to time we hear of high-profile evolutionists who say that they cannot believe in a God of love, because of all the ills in the world. Innocents suffer. Natural disasters occur. Nature is red in tooth and claw. Religious people cause hatred and wars. God must be a delusion. These experts haven't read the Maker's handbook.

Firstly we read that at the Creation, God saw that everything He had made was very good. Since things are now less than perfect, clearly something serious has happened. The first man and woman were made in God's image, with the free will that allowed them to love God willingly. They chose not to obey God's prohibition, desiring to have the knowledge of evil as well as of good. This didn't take our God by surprise. He agreed upon the awful remedy before He created mankind. The Lamb of God – slain from the foundation of the world. Greater love ...



Fossils embedded in stone table top, crocodile



Fossil bear claws, fish, ammonites etc.



Layers of sediments form as you watch



Dinosaur eggs and footprint

Some exhibits at the Genesis Expo

Creation Science Movement

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