

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith"

BE INSPIRED... To run the race

In my first editorial some 7 years ago now, I wrote that one of my ambitions for the SS was to reflect the fact that as Christians we do not live in some kind of God-protected bubble that immunizes us from the effects of the world that we temporarily inhabit. That article reflected on the fact that the practice of Christianity in the real world is every bit as important, if not more so, than the capacity to 'intellectualise' every nuance of scripture. In January 2003 I wrote: "What I'm driving at is that there is a place in your magazine for helping your fellow Christians by telling them how you coped with situations that may be common to many people. Have you had doubts about your faith and come through, or felt lonely at school or in the workplace because of your beliefs, or gained strength from your faith to cope with the sickness or death of a loved one? If you have had experiences in your Christian life that can be helpful to your fellow travellers, then let's share them."

As editor, I've largely failed in that ambition. However this edition contains a poignant example of the kind of openness and frankness that surely can only be of help to other Christian men and women faced with the kind of personal circumstances that Ernest and June Makin from the church in Wigan are having to contend with. For several years now June, a Christian of high intellect, quiet dignity and unwavering faith, has suffered from Alzheimer's disease with all the debilitating and progressive consequences that characterize that condition. As he explains, Ernest, himself a brother of deep faith, has had to come to terms with a changed relationship, a progressive 'emotional' and 'spiritual' loss despite June's enduring physical presence, and clearly it hurts and raises questions.

Of course, Ernest and June are not alone in their trials. Christians do suffer emotionally and physically; in an instant Christians suffer loss and grief; others are faced with the need to become long-term and loving carers as a result of illness or disability. I will always say that I believe that I have learned something of the true meaning of love from the self-sacrifice that has been demonstrated by such people - and of which, of course, the self-sacrifice of Jesus is the ultimate example.

Ernest's 'article' is both sad and poignant, but ultimately it is also uplifting and loving. I hope that many will find comfort in it. Our prayers are with all who suffer, and all who care.

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THANKS BE TO GOD

(Ernest Makin, Wigan)

When we celebrate the coming of Jesus into the world it is apposite to remind the world that at the centre of the greatest love story is the good news narrative of the greatest gift.

'A SAVIOUR WHO IS THE CHRIST THE LORD'

Wrapped in the love of God and additional to the gift of a Son is a precious gift to each of us. We live in this 'earthly tabernacle' for 'three score years', more or less. We use that gift in a life which is ephemeral and transient as we see fit, exercising the wonderful quality of freedom of thought and action to a degree which offends or pleases our Creator; which improves or damages the society in which we temporally reside; which is either God oriented or motivated by selfishness to the detriment of our fellows. We will never earn an eternal home with God by the exercise of goodness or Godlike living; who knows what that is? It is by the faith of the individual, a surrender to the Christ of the New Testament, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, that we will overcome and be welcomed into eternity by a Father whose essence is love and a delight in His faithful children.

That faith in the Christ is the dynamic that, by the exercise of individual choice, drives and controls the believing life in every corner of its existence. I am not unique, nor special nor different from my fellows. I spend my life, exercising my free will in the pursuit of an understanding of what my Father, through the Christ and indwelt by His Holy Spirit, demands of me. This pursuit is lifelong, exercises every human emotion and passion we possess in our psyche and is an essential part of the life of every Christian in every living situation, every conversation and in the very essence of our being. We dare not forget for one jot of time that we are the children of God stewarding a life given to us for safe and faithful keeping until a loving Father reclaims the soul, which is His.


We each experience joys and sadness, times that the late Leonard Morgan described as 'mountain top and dark valley' experiences. Some of us will become the victim of life tragedies of varying degree while others will enjoy a strife free living. I write this article in the hope that it may encourage my fellows along the way; and it is about a debilitating and enervating ten year experience which has been the experience of my family since 1999 and which, without faith in the Christ, I would not have been able to understand, cope with and emerge from, in my humble view, victorious. It is about a terrible mental disfiguring disease classified as Alzheimer's to which my wife June fell prey in 1999 and has been experiencing a downward mental spiral ever since.

June, a member of Mensa, with degrees and higher degrees in English Literature and studying for a doctorate, collapsed in the Rhine Valley in 1999 and on recovery wanted only to be with her mum and dad; unfortunately they had both died so fifteen years previously. And sadly I no longer was recognised as her husband but was 'that man over there'. Short and long-term memory was quickly dissipated. No longer able to speak, walk, complete the most simple of social tasks nor feed herself she now lives in a world of the demented, to which there is no key nor any door of which I am aware; nor is there a cure.

I am your son, Abba; why June? Have I displeased you? How can a Father's love allow this to happen to a believing son and daughter? All these questions and many more crowd in the mind. I have come to the conclusion that this is destructive negativity, morally and philosophically untenable; and why shouldn't it be my family rather than another? The initial desire to join the imprecatory psalm writers was there, but very

soon was so apparently pointless. There was a need to be faithfully positive. We had a caring situation on our hands and care had to be exercised in the best way possible. And what better way than in a faith driven care. Jesus cares, Jesus is compassion, Jesus does grieve, Jesus cried, Jesus went without sleep and He was a man who experienced all, and in a much greater degree than I would ever have to face. The Man was humiliated, He was brutalised, He was let down and betrayed by His friends and ultimately He was murdered - and while this was happening He was caring for me. By exercising the same love, fortitude, patience and understanding I too could 'give thanks to God for my life'. It becomes relatively easy to live when the dynamic is Jesus. But one has to understand who He is; what He has done; why He did it and how much He loves. When one finds answers to these questions you develop a philosophy of life; grief is dammed; compassion becomes keener; love is exercised and strengthened and all the qualities of divinity find play in the caring life.


I regularly sit, kneel, lie down and pray to a loving Heavenly Father. HE ANSWERS ME THROUGH HIS WORD. My Father knows what we face in this life and He will not tempt us beyond our endurance; and He will give us answers as we read His Word, enter into His mind and faithfully exercise our character as His faithful children and disciples and give full and free play to His Holy Spirit in our daily living.

 I grieve and shed tears for what June and I had before this awful disease claimed her; I mourn what she was and what she has become. But 'thanks be to God' that He has given us life and a blueprint for living which allows us the freedom to care, to love, to grieve, to shed tears, to laugh when small things go awry, to exercise compassion and above all to share in His divine nature in this life so that we may meet every situation that comes our way.

Disease will not depart the human landscape until Jesus comes again. No matter how long is the gift of our transient lives; be they long or short, God would have us order our daily living by a faith in His Son, Jesus, the Christ. That faith is defined for our salvation in the Word of God. Hence only by immersing ourselves in that Word do we begin to understand the mind of a loving Father who gives us the knowledge, the fortitude the perseverance and the joyfulness to cope and live victoriously.

June's Alzheimer's must not be regarded as an intractable problem; it is a cause for grief, tears and sadness; but above all it is an opportunity in which I, as a Christian, must order my life by faith and love. That faith and love, even before time itself, ordained that the Christ would die caring for me and for you. Such faith and love combined are very powerful elements in ordering one's life and they were the dynamic which drove the Son of God along the desert tracks to Jerusalem to a cruel death of which He was aware.

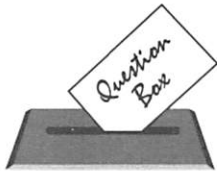
We are not alone in our grief nor is despair the victor. We share with our faith and our love a divine hope that the God, whose promises are reliable, will reward a faith in His Son, the Christ. Hope is a sign-posted pathway to eternity and a palliative to those sad affairs we experience in this life. God has designed hope to be comforting

 His children who suffer; hope carries us through the dark night of grief and destroys despair. Faith, love and all embracing hope are God given gifts to combat the wiles of the Prince of the Air and will result in ultimate triumph. There is no mental or physical cure waiting around the next corner for June but 'THANKS BE TO GOD' that we are given the spiritual gifts and the personal qualities to overcome that which is evil in this life. God will bless all His children in this life and we are multi blessed if we allow hope, love and a faith in the Christ to become the mainspring of our living.

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QUESTION:

Has evolution been proved to be a fact?
Does it disprove the Biblical account of
creation?



We looked at a similar question some time ago, but the current celebration of the birth of Charles Darwin, who was born in 1809, has brought the subject into the limelight again, because he is popularly credited with the discovery of 'Evolution'.

Of course, it is quite impossible to deal with it at length, in the space available to us, but here are a few suggestions and facts, with which you may confidently deal with any 'Evolutionist' you may happen to meet.

First I suggest that you should never allow an Evolutionist the luxury of asking all the questions! You should exercise the right to ask a few questions yourself, and the first question I would ask is: "Do you believe in Miracles?" The answer will almost certainly be, 'No!' Ask then how he would define a miracle; in other words: What is a Miracle? And he will be compelled to say that *he* believes it is '*something that is impossible*'.

You may then tell him that he, therefore, cannot believe in Evolution, because it depends on two events, which, by his own admission, cannot happen. These are:

1. Spontaneous Generation
2. The Transmutation of Species.

1. 'SPONTANEOUS GENERATION'

This claims that life came into existence where, before, there had been no life! And this must surely take stronger faith to believe, than to believe that an intelligent Creator, whom we call GOD, created life.

The question - which you should ask - "*Which came first: the HEN or the EGG?*" Yes! It is an old question! In fact, it is a question dating back to PLUTOCRAT, the Roman writer who was born in 46 AD, but it is an important question because it reminds us that everything we see is an 'effect', and an 'effect' must have a 'cause'.

Nothing comes from anything. The Greeks said, "*Something IS, therefore something WAS*". We cannot go back, saying, "*Hen from Egg, Egg from Hen; Hen from Egg...*" We must eventually say that one or other - either the HEN or the EGG - was created: *life is dependent on antecedent life*. 'Antecedent' means 'going before'.

Ask the person who believes in Evolution, "Where did the first living things come from? If they came from NOTHING, please explain how it happened!"

Evolutionists have tried to answer this question in many ways.

They have spoken of the "Nebular Theory", which runs like this: "*Let us suppose that FORCE and MATTER have always existed! (Notice the 'suppose!')* This FORCE - which came from - nobody knows WHERE, exerted itself on this MATTER - which came into existence nobody knows HOW - and the Universe was created."

You will notice that they never offer to tell you where, or how, the Force and the Matter originated. In fact, an item in the "Daily Telegraph" some years ago (*and I have the article in front of me as I write this*) - is headed: "Evolutionary Theories Hopelessly Outdated".

Prof. EDGAR H. ANDREWS, Professor of Materials at London University and Head of the Department of Science, Queen Mary College, gave evidence before an Industrial Tribunal. In his testimony he stated that the theories of people like Sir Fred Hoyle, were '*almost completely discredited*', and he stated that the education syllabus which required teachers to teach Hoyle's theory of 'continuous creation' was: '**An attempt to avoid accepting that there was ever a start in the universe, That it never had a beginning, and that matter was continuously being destroyed and re-created.**

Prof. Andrews also informed the Tribunal, that this theory was different from the 'current scientific view': "**This is, that there was an origin, referred to colloquially as 'the Big Bang', to describe the suddenness of the beginning of the universe**".

He said, "**Evolution is still an unproven hypothesis. There are overwhelming arguments against its**

validity."

So, even according to the latest theory, we are back to a Beginning! But we are still not told what, or who, caused the 'Big Bang', that created the Universe! And to propose an 'effect' without an adequate 'cause', is just as much an act of faith on the part of the person who believes in Evolution, as is the Christian's belief in an Intelligent Creator.

You should persist in demanding to know: "HOW did it all happen? And WHERE did Life come from?"

Incidentally, if you are ever asked, "Who made GOD?" Just point out that this is not the CLEVER question that some people think it is. It is NOT a clever question, because the two words 'made' and 'God' do not belong together. There are words that 'fly apart' the moment you put them together, because they do not 'fit'. Try imagining a 'dry raindrop', or a 'lead balloon'. One word is an adjective = 'dry', 'lead', whilst the others are nouns = 'raindrop', 'balloon'. Adjectives are words, which qualify nouns, and they are meant to belong together. But not all adjectives match all nouns.

So with the words 'made God'. In this case, 'made' and 'God' cannot be joined together. If God were 'made', He would not be 'God', because the concept of 'God' implies a Being who was never 'made', and who did not have a beginning.

But to return to our 'hen and egg'. The hen and the egg are SECONDARY CAUSES, which means that once they have been brought into existence they can continue to produce each other. The PRIMARY CAUSE - the First Cause who created them, is God.

**The logical conclusion is this: either everything we see around us is the result of intelligent, orderly Design or, the Universe and everything in it, is an accident that came into existence by BLIND CHANCE.
I know which view I prefer to take!**

ARISTOTLE, who was known as "*Master of those who Know*", because of his all-round knowledge, spoke of the origin of things and declared that there are THREE FACTORS in the formation of the world.

1. Matter - which is moved, and does not move anything.
2. Nature - which is moved, and which can move itself.
3. God - Who moves everything, and is Himself unmoved.

2. 'TRANSMUTATION

This is the name given to the theory, which *claims* that one form of life - one 'species' - changed into another form of life, or species ('Trans' = across; 'Mutation' = change. 'Evolution' comes from 'e volvo' Latin for 'I turn').

The Question is: Is it TRUE that one KIND of creature has changed - or *can* change - into a creature of an entirely different KIND? Sometimes, those who advocate Evolution do not realise how ridiculous they make themselves.

For instance LAMARCK, the Frenchman advanced a theory known as "The Theory of Acquired Characteristics". This declared that the GIRAFFE acquired its long neck, NOT because it was designed that way, but because, in a time of famine, it had to stretch up to leaves which were high on the trees!

And the SNAKE once had legs, which it lost through crawling through knot-holes in trees, when escaping from birds!

And, speaking of birds...HAROLD FIRBANS, in 'Home Geography', page 142, offers us this piece of 'evolutionist science'.

"If birds could talk, what stories we might hear. We might learn of a time, ever so long ago, when their grandfathers were not birds at all. Then, they could not fly, for they had neither wings nor feathers. These grandfathers of our birds had four legs, a long tail and jaws and teeth."

What a pity! "If birds could talk?" If birds could LAUGH, they would laugh their feathers off at such ridiculous nonsense. But, this is one of the ways in which 'evolution' is supposed to have taken place.

**REMEMBER! We are not denying that changes may take place within the KIND or SPECIES.
MODIFICATION or VARIATION is one thing; MUTATION is another matter entirely!
It delivers the deathblow to the theory of Evolution.**

Why?

1. Because MUTATIONS rarely happen. Most genes mutate only once in 100,000 generations or more ("World Book Encyclopaedia"). One Evolutionist, C.H. WADDINGTON stated that the odds are probably one in a million.
2. Good MUTATIONS are even more rare. HERMAN MULLER says, "Most mutations are bad. In fact, good ones are so rare that we can consider them ALL bad".

Dr. WILLIAM J. TINKLE, who was a noted Geneticist, has stated that; "No mutation is on record which would make an animal or plant better organised, or place it in a higher category than its ancestors."

GEORGE G. SIMPSON, the American Paleontologist, who himself was an Evolutionist, stated that, if there was an effective breeding population of 100 million individuals, and they produced a new generation DAILY, the likelihood of a good evolutionary mutation could be expected about once in 274 BILLION years.

Now, when you consider that evolutionists themselves generally believe the EARTH to be about 4 to 5 billion years old, you can see the problem. And, by the way, Simpson speaks of ONE mutation in 274 billion years. But remember you need TWO to breed! AND to *really* mess things up; let it be stated that Mutations are always sterile!

No wonder Simpson became a little exasperated and said: "Unless there is an unknown factor tremendously increasing the chance of simultaneous mutations, such a process has played no part whatever in Evolution" ("Major Features of Evolution" 1953).

In other words, the case for Evolution *cannot* be supported by the Mutation Theory.

WHY IS TRANSMUTATION IMPOSSIBLE?

There is a simple reason why change from one species of creature to another does not occur. Living cells are composed of protons, neutrons and electrons, and every cell has its own Mitotic Pattern. (Mitosis is the method of cell division in which the nucleus of the cell divides to create 'daughter' cells, each of which contains the same number of chromosomes as its parent cell).

These chromosomes are responsible for carrying the characteristics that are inherited by the offspring. In other words, the law of nature – as the Bible says – is "*Like produces like*". Dogs do not produce cats!

That 'Mitotic Pattern' is like the fingerprint of the cell, and the cell is identifiable by the pattern contained within it. Interfere with the cell – try to change the pattern – and the cell will die. Or, at best, *maybe* produce a Mutant – if you can wait so long!

Suppose the cell was invaded by an alien body. That would break up the pattern and the cell would die. You cannot change the Mitotic Pattern characteristic of one cell, into the pattern that is characteristic of another kind. INTERFERENCE PRODUCES DEATH.

This is one reason why it may be possible to detect the onset of Cancer by observing the condition of the cell. And this is also why Mutations turn out to be bad. Nature has placed boundaries – or limits – that cannot be overstepped without causing damage.

It is interesting to notice that the Bible, in Paul's First letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15:39, hints at this, when it speaks of different kinds of 'flesh' – of birds and fish and other living things. The cell of one KIND of creature cannot be changed into the cell of another. This is why it is nonsense to talk about FISH becoming Amphibian and then Mammals swinging from trees!

Another important fact is that each living cell is extremely complex, containing within itself the coded information that IDENTIFIES the cell, in the form of DNA. "DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID", pronounced 'dee oxy rybo nucleic acid' It is claimed that *each cell* contains enough information to fill a 1000 volume set of Encyclopaedias. ("Reader's Digest" Oct 1962.)

This reveals the extreme complexity of a living cell, and it also reveals why it is impossible for scientists to produce life in a laboratory.

KORNBERG tried to do this. In 1957 he analysed a cell chemically and discovered that it had SIX bits of known DNA, = sugar, phosphates and four bases, amino acids, etc. But he was unable to produce a living cell. The

chances of finding the right chemical combination which might produce Life, has been calculated as 1 x 10,243 Billion!

The French Mathematician, DU NOUY, reckoned that it would take this to produce just ONE molecule of protein.

3. Another topic popular among Evolutionists is the supposed existence of VESTIGIAL ORGANS.

These are organs of the human body, which, Evolutionists claim, have become unnecessary, because, they say, we have outgrown them and are now useless – because we have 'evolved'.

WEDERSHEIM originally listed 180 of these 'now useless' parts of the human body, and the list included TONSILS, and the APPENDIX – to name two with which everyone must be familiar! But SIR ARTHUR KEITH, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, pointed out that it was dangerous to brand as useless an organ rich in blood-supply, and which continues to grow to the 20th year of a person's life and sometimes to the 50th year.

As for the TONSILS: there was a time when doctors removed children's' tonsils 'at the drop of a hat', so to speak! But Tonsils are now back in fashion! We now know that they are important because they produce antibodies, and, to quote SIR ARTHUR KEITH, today "No-one would describe them as vestigial."

In fact, of the list of the 180 human organs originally supposed to be useless, only SIX remain, and the doctors are hesitant to brand them as 'vestigial', because they include the pituitary and adrenal glands. So another alleged 'proof' of Evolution has been demolished!

THE FOSSIL RECORD

If Evolution has actually taken place, the one thing that would prove it conclusively would be for the scientists to produce the Fossils that show the successive links. Notice, I said 'links' – plural. Talk about the 'Missing Link' is laughable, because it is not a 'link' that is missing, but an entire 'chain'. All the so-called intermediate forms are missing.

The fossils reveal evidence of Apes and Men, but in spite of all the fantastic and fanciful claims of Evolutionists, no 'Ape-Men'. And those who really understand Evolution know this is true.

If we had the time we could look at 'the Piltdown Man', 'Nebraska Man', Java Man', Neanderthal Man, all of whom have, at one time or another, been paraded before the public as 'links' between Man and the Apes. We do not hear a great deal about this today! And the reason?

Prof. PATRICK GEDDES, of EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY, and Prof. J.A. THOMSON, of ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY, said, when questioned concerning Man's origin: "We do not know whence he emerged. Nor do we know how man arose, for it must be admitted that the factors of the evolution of Man partake largely of the nature of 'MAYBE'S', which have no permanent position in science."

Prof. JOHN TYNDALL, the Physicist who became Professor at the Royal Institute and who was contemporary with DARWIN and HUXLEY, said candidly, "Those who hold the doctrine of Evolution are by no means ignorant of the uncertainty of their data".

LORD KELVIN, arguably SCOTLAND'S greatest scientist, stated: "I am ready to accept as an article of faith in Science, valid for all time and all space, that Life is produced by Life and ONLY by Life".

Even HERBERT SPENCER, who was nicknamed "Darwin's Bulldog", because he defended Darwin from his critics, and referring to the Theory of Evolution, in a rare moment of candour, "This is an hypothesis, I readily admit. It may never be anything more seems probable. That, even in its more defensive shape, there are serious difficulties in its way, I cheerfully acknowledge."

The question that demands an answer is this: WHY DO SCIENTISTS ACCEPT AN UNPROVEN HYPOTHESIS?

They accept it because they do not wish to accept the existence of a Creator. Many years ago I heard Prof. D.M.S. WATSON state: "Evolution itself is accepted by zoologists, NOT because it has been observed to occur, or can be proved by logical, coherent evidence. But because the ONLY alternative, Special Creation, is clearly incredible". Watson was a confessed atheist.

Prof. L.T. MORE made a similar acknowledgement. "The more one studies Palaeontology (fossils) the more certain one becomes that Evolution is based on faith alone. The only alternative is the doctrine of Special Creation, which

may be true, but is irrational”.

In his “LIFE AND LETTERS” vol. 3, page 25, Darwin himself wrote: “We cannot prove that one species has changed.” “There are 2 or 3 million species on Earth...but it must be said today, in spite of all the efforts of trained observers, *not one change of species with another is on record*”.

In other words, Evolution is a theory - nothing more.

Let us give the last word to CHARLES DARWIN

The first edition of Darwin’s work, ‘*On the Origin of Species*’, which has become the ‘Bible’ of atheistic Evolutionists, and which was first published in 1859, when he was 50 years old, concluded with his own assessment of his theory. **Not surprisingly, this statement was removed in later revisions of the book. He said:** “THERE IS A GRANDEUR IN THIS VIEW OF LIFE, WITH ITS SEVERAL POWERS HAVING BEEN ORIGINALLY BREATHED BY THE CREATOR INTO MANY FORMS OR FEW”.

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Thinking Out Loud

Ian S. Davidson: Motherwell

SPACE. TIME AND ETERNITY

I have always been fascinated by outer space. It is the distances that get me. The moon is 1.3 light seconds from earth; the sun, 8.3 light minutes; Pluto, 5.3 light hours; Big Dipper stars, 100 light years; Andromeda, 2 million light-years and Quasars, 10 billion light-years. I would remind you that the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second. Take the example of Pluto, which, of course, is a planet in our solar system. By jet plane it would take 850 years to reach it. Alpha Centauri is a triple star, the faintest component of which, Proxima Centauri, is the nearest star to our sun, at about 4.3 light-years’ distance. A spacecraft would take 100,000 years to reach it. The Milky Way consists of 100 billion stars. A jet plane would take more than 100 thousand million years to cross it. If the distance from the earth to the sun (93 million miles) is one inch, then the distance to Proxima Centauri would be the equivalent of 4 miles and to the centre of our galaxy 25000 miles. No wonder someone once wrote: “Astronomy hints at God’s eternity, immensity and infinity.”

The best definition of space I have come across is: “Space is the realm in which things exist.” Without space there can be no sun, planets and stars. Without space there can be no earth and, therefore, no us.” We read in Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (1:1). Henry M. Morris has written: “The word in Hebrew is *shamayim*...It seems that the essential meaning of the word corresponds to our modern *space*, such as when we speak of the universe as a universe of space and time”.

TIME

Time is the realm in which things change. The phrase “In the beginning...” in Genesis 1:1 speaks of the beginning of time. As Morris has pointed out: “The universe is actually a continuum of space, matter and time, no one of which can have a meaningful existence without the other two”. We divide time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, years, decades, centuries and millennia. We speak of yesterday, today and tomorrow and past, present and future. Much has been written on the subject of time. We often come upon phrases and sentences such as: “Once upon a time”; “The corridors of time”; “In due time”; “The time has come”; “Time is the great

physician"; "In our time"; "Time is on our side"; "No time like the present"; "No man has seen God at any time"; "The sands of time"; "Peace in our time"; "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away"; "The time is drawing near"; "Time remembered"; and many, many more.

Solomon's words cannot be overlooked. "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to read, and a time to sow; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3: 1- 8).

ETERNITY

W. Carl Ketcherside has written: "As to the question about time, I realise that there are some philosophers who regard it as a dynamic. I disagree with them... And this prompts me to say a few words about those of my good brethren who differentiate between 'time' and 'eternity'. There is no such logical distinction that is valid. Eternity did not end in order for time to begin. Time will not end in order for eternity to begin or resume. What we call time is simply our way of measuring that segment of eternity in which our existence is cast. Eternity has no past, present or future, although man has, so time marks only the scope of existence of humanity in the broader realm of eternity. Time is for man. Neither God nor lower animals would require it!

I took a funeral the other day. I told the hundred plus mourners that the lady we knew and loved was not behind the curtains of the crematorium. Her body was, but she was now in the realm of eternity: a realm as real as the one we experience on earth from day to day. A lot of people think that there is nothing beyond this scene of space and time. They could not be more wrong. The New Testament is clear as to what happens on the death of an individual. A study of *Hades*, for example, is a worthwhile exercise.

God is not subject to time and space as we are. But the wonderful thing to me is that once in the history of the space-time continuum there was a Divine breakthrough in the form of a person - Jesus of Nazareth. It really is staggering to think about that. What a subject God and Eternity is! In his book *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis had this to say: "But suppose God is outside and above the Time-line. In that case, what we call 'tomorrow' is visible to Him in just the same way as what we call 'today'. All the days are 'Now' for Him. He does not remember you doing things yesterday; He simply sees you doing them, because, though you have lost yesterday, He has not. He does not 'foresee' you doing things tomorrow; He simply sees you doing them; because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him. You never supposed that your actions at this moment were any less free because God knows what you are doing. Well, He knows your tomorrow's actions in just the same way - because He is already in tomorrow and can simply watch you. In a sense He does not know your action till you have done it: but then the moment at which you have done it is already 'Now' for Him.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This universe had a beginning and it will have an end. The Bible is clear on that. But God has no beginning or end. He is the eternal one. All of us should seek eternal life. But what is eternal life? Simply, it is nothing other than the life of God Himself. "The gift of Jesus Christ here and now is a foretaste of the life Divine" (William Barclay).

WHY DO WE HAVE PREACHING

(Ian Grant, Corby)

SUBJECT: HISTORY AND LEARNING

While an historical series on the television might well be seen as entertaining, the idea that there might be something to learn from the past is not a thought that 21st century man entertains to any great degree. After all the progress that we have made, and continue to make, what could we possibly learn from the past, other than that life for earlier generations must have been difficult without the benefits of modern technology? How did they ever survive without the mobile phone or the internet or our modern highways? Life must have been very primitive and difficult for them without washing machines, and microwaves and television, to say nothing of gaming consoles, take-away and electric toothbrushes.

Modern man might well see what is new as being very relevant, and history as of little value, other than to history buffs, but God does not see it that way at all. Indeed, the Bible is a history book in that what God has done to save mankind unfolds in history itself; it is the history of redemption. God places a high priority on learning from the past and that can be seen in the Old Testament which was written for our learning (Romans 15:4). This is not learning for the sake of learning, for Paul wrote that by learning from the Old Testament of the faithfulness of God and how it points forward to Jesus and the blessings that God has provided in the past, that it will give us hope today.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

The need to learn from the past is not a new thing dreamt up by God to keep Christians busy. The books of the law were written for more than listing the do's and do nots that were to govern the behaviour of the Jews in the Promised Land. The book of Genesis is a history book and in particular it records the call of Abraham. Should the Jews have learnt from secular history that one of their forbears, Abraham, had left his home in Ur of the Chaldeans and moved to Canaan, why would they have paid one whit of attention to it? People without number have left their homes and moved to another country. Someone with an interest in genealogies might have researched the records and put together a family tree that went back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which would then be likely to have gathered dust on some shelf, only to be dusted off by someone in the future with an interest in his family heritage. Beyond curiosity what would be the point of knowing that the nation was descended from a man who had left Ur?

However, Abraham was important to the Jews of every generation (2 Kings 13:23; John 8:30-59), for God had acted in history to call Abraham out of Ur (Genesis 12:1-9; Acts 7:1-8; Hebrews 11:8-20) and had made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21; Acts 3:25-26) that promised future blessings for his descendants and all nations. The point is, that it is only with knowledge of what had happened in history, that Abraham's move to the land of Canaan could be seen to be relevant to future generations. Further, while what God had done in the past was germane to the Jewish nation down through time, God's act in history in calling Abraham needed to be explained, for without God revealing the meaning of what he had done, how could anyone have known the purpose of what God was doing? Thus the calling of Abraham was not merely of passing importance, but of enduring truth, and relevant to every succeeding generation.

The same is true of the Exodus and the Passover. If secular history had recorded that

the Jews had left Egypt that would hardly have merited a great deal of attention, beyond curiosity. God knew that the past could have a good influence upon the present. Thus, when the children of Israel left Egypt, the Passover was instituted to remind future generations that God, when he had struck the firstborn of the Egyptians, had passed over the first-born of the children of Israel (Exodus chapter 12). The Feast of Unleavened bread had a similar purpose (Exodus 13:1-10), as did the Law of the firstborn (11-16). The meaning of the exodus was to be found in that the children of Israel did not simply leave Egypt, or even escape from Egypt, but God delivered his people from Egyptian slavery, in the face of fierce opposition from Pharaoh and his mighty army, for a future purpose. However, without God revealing the meaning of the exodus, the children of Israel could have concluded that it was all down to Moses ability or that God had delivered them because of their own good character (Deuteronomy 9:1-29), and that was the end of the matter.

When the nation of Israel entered the Promised Land, they set up a pile of stones taken from the river Jordan to remind future generations that the people had crossed over the Jordan on dry land (Joshua chapter 4).

God knew that the past has a real impact upon the present (Joshua 2:10-11; 1 Samuel 15:6). Of such importance was what had happened in the past that each generation was to be taught about their history and about what God had done (Deuteronomy 6:1-25). Moses warned that generation not to forget God's delivering acts and his past mercies, but also to be ready for their children's questions, and to teach diligently their children about God's deliverance and blessings. Each generation was to know their history and its meaning and to teach it and the meaning to their children. Israel failed to take this to heart and as a result God through Hosea warned them, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.' (Hosea 4:6). The nation did not heed the warning, and while it did not happen overnight, around 30 years later, the northern kingdom Israel was taken into captivity.

Again, the kingship of David would perhaps have attracted a little more attention than normal, because of David's remarkable exploits. Nevertheless, his kingship would have been indistinguishable from that of many of the kings of Israel and Judah (whose names and reigns and exploits we have difficulty in recalling); it would have been merely, another king, another reign. However, God revealed in history that he made a promise to David that had real relevance to the Jews of Jesus' day (2 Samuel 7:1-17; Matthew 22:41-46; Acts 13:34). Here again God needed to explain the meaning of the reign of David for future generations for that meaning could not have been discerned simply from David's reign, or from some inner feeling.

APPEALING TO THE PAST

The Old Testament prophets and writers appealed numerous times to Israel's history (Nehemiah 9:5-38; 1 Kings 8:14-61; Isaiah 10:26; 11:16; Jeremiah 2:6; 7:12-14; Ezekiel 16: 1-43; Hosea 2:15; 11:1-7; Amos 2:10; Micah 6:4; 7:15). The aim was for the children of Israel to learn from the past and so change the present. Appeals to their history were to provide comfort, to encourage trust in God to deliver them in the face of calamity, as he had done so convincingly and spectacularly in the past. History warned them of the consequences of disobedience and proved that they ought to believe God when he said that he would punish them; but also it would give hope for the future.

In the New Testament Stephen appealed to the history of the children of Israel and that had a profound impact upon his listeners (Acts 6:8- 7:60). And, in the synagogue in Antioch it was within the framework of what had happened in their history that Paul argued that Jesus was the promised Saviour (Acts 13:16-52).

RELEVANT TO US TODAY

But these events in history where God intervened are relevant, not only to the Jews, but to us today (Acts 13:16-41; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-13; Galatians 3:6-9; 4:21-31; Hebrews 11:32-12:29) because God has revealed their meaning. What has happened in the past has real relevance to our daily Christian walk. A quick look at the New Testament shows how surprisingly often the writers appealed to the past and applied it to the present. Just as it applied to the present in New Testament times so too it applies to the present today. One might ask what people living over two thousand years ago could teach us in our modern post-industrial society. That question could equally have been asked by modern sophisticated Corinth. What could they learn from a bunch of ex-slaves wandering in the wilderness? Paul believed that they needed to learn from the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:11-13), and we too need to learn from their experiences. The writer of the book of Hebrews also saw the past as teaching important lessons to Christians (Hebrews 3:7-13).

The relevance of history is also to be seen in that the truth of Christianity is not to be found in our feelings and intuitions but in objective history. The deliverance of the Jews from Egypt is not something that can be discerned internally, but was an objective event in time, as was God's leading them and providing for them, and giving them a land. The same is true of Jesus' death and his resurrection; it is an historical event.

God's acts in history are public (Acts 26:26), and because they did happen in time and space, are open to historical research; they are not subjective but objective. Because we are dealing with objective history, that objectivity gives us a confidence in that we can be certain that we have the truth. As such it is truth for every generation, and every culture.

WE NEED GOD'S EXPLANATION

Further, while we could learn from secular history that Christ died, we need to hear from God to know what meaning his death has for us. Like the people of old we cannot determine what God is up to unless he tells us. The mystery, of which Paul wrote, has been revealed (Ephesians 3:8-12); God has given us through the apostles, the meaning of what he has done through Christ. The meaning of God's interventions in the world is known to us because God has provided that meaning. The meaning is not to be found in some inner voice or warm feeling, but rather it is objective. It is not subjective and the result of someone's perceptions, and so perhaps true to me but not to you. Rather, it was divinely given and does not change. As such it is truth for all people of all time, in every place.

God's interventions in history and his explanations of their meanings, are public, objective and importantly, authoritative.

A SIMPLE TASK

Learning is essential to discover how God has intervened in history and also to find out the meaning of every act of God, for each act needs to have its meaning divinely revealed for us to know the meaning. This requires serious learning and it is not something that is peripheral or side salad. If learning is not needed then why have the Bible at all? If we can simply do what we think is pleasing to God and that will get us to heaven, then what need is there for the Bible? The problem is: 'O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps' (Jeremiah 10:23). A knowledge of scripture is needed because in its pages we have recorded for us God's interventions in history and their meaning as given by God himself, along with how what he has done should have an impact upon our daily lives (e.g. 1 Peter 1:17-21).

Learning from history seems a simple enough task, but Israel's failure should warn us that it is not straightforward (Hosea 4:6). The poor attendance at Bible classes today also shows that it is not as simple as it at first appears. Other than for a few people for whom history is their thing, most of us find the study of history hard work; that includes studying the scripture.

One reason that we find learning so difficult is that we live in a time when truth is equated with personal insight. Also the experience of the moment is seen as more important than history. When those around us are looking for truth in private intuition, that influences us to also seek it in the self. That of course is self-defeating when truth is to be found in history and not in the self. That we are being influenced by society can be seen in that we are beginning to see testimonials creeping in when the apostles preached Christ and not their experiences.

Further, while sermons and lessons can be about what has happened in history, all too often, there is little reference to the meaning of what happened; in other words an event in scripture is studied historically, but application to life here in the 21st century is either missing or briefly and hurriedly thrown in at the end of the lesson almost as an afterthought. The reality is that we are not very good at going from scripture to life and even less proficient at going from life to scripture.

CONCLUSION

We know that God has acted in history and that culminated in Christ entering the human situation where he died upon a cross some two thousand years ago in Jerusalem. It has been revealed to us by God through the New Testament writers, that as a result of Christ's death God now offers us forgiveness. None of that is a matter of inner feelings and private intuitions; it was not discovered by human insight, for it is a matter of history, which is external. Because it is historical, the apostles delivered the facts that they had received from Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2, 3:10) interpreted them, and then explained the consequences for living life.

Because Christianity is objective then studying, teaching and learning are absolutely essential and necessary. We cannot opt out by claiming that we are not great readers. While we may find it uncomfortable the Bible is full of teaching. The saving word that connects what God has done in history with what is happening in the lives of Christians is to be preached in the worship service (Acts 20:7; 2 Timothy 4:2) and we are expected to read the various New Testament letters (Colossians 4:16).

For the apostles history was not simply a case study of how God operates in the world in order to help us understand his methods. Neither was it simply a study that put some event or writing in its historical context along with the appropriate dates. The apostles not only taught the facts about Christ and what happened in history, but they interpreted the facts and gave the implications for the Christian life; they spelt out in detail the specifics of how God's acts must change our lives (e.g. Rom. 12:1-15:21). They did far more than give us the big picture. But how many of us take the time to look up the meaning of many of the words that we do not use in our every day language? If we are to preach and teach the word, we must make that connection between what happened in history and the implications that has for everyday life in specific concrete terms. That will involve looking up the meanings of many words and explaining to people the implications for their daily lives, as well as practicing what we learn ourselves. If we do not know the meaning of the various words that tell us what to practice and what not to do, then how can we know if we are doing what we are called to do by God?

Without a study of what God has done in the past we cannot know what we are to do in the present, nor prepare for the future. Knowledge of the past is crucial for our present happiness and our future home.

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News and Information

Obituary

PETERHEAD Eric Thom

Brother Eric Thom was laid to rest on May 6th 2009 after a long illness, bravely born for over 2 years.

Eric was a plumber who was a highly respected member of the local community. Over 400 friends, workmates, family and brethren attended the funeral service.

His wife Sheila had died 6 years ago, and he had cared for his 2 sons Warren and Gareth in a selfless demonstration of fatherly love, which had to be seen to be appreciated. We are thankful to God that he had a peaceful passing, and we look forward to being reunited with him on that great day.

Brother Michael Gaunt was privileged to conduct his funeral service, and once again had the opportunity to speak a word at the graveside to those left behind. We solicit your prayers as we mourn the passing of our loved one.

Ella Brown

We wish to report the passing onto her eternal reward, of our dear sister Ella Brown, on Friday 17th April 2009. Ella had not been in good health for over 6 months, but her faith never wavered and she faced the future with the same certainty that she had always shown throughout her life in Christ.

Ella had been a faithful member of the local congregation for over 56 years, and was truly a great encourager to all who knew her. Her door was always open and many can testify to the generous hospitality that they enjoyed around her fireside. She had, for many years, taught bible classes, worked with the girl's class, accommodated visiting preachers and their families, and was a great hostess to the Harding Students. Many were the nights when her home would ring with the songs of Zion, and many were pointed to the Saviour because of her ministry. Her life can be summed up in one word - "service".

She leaves behind her husband Freddy, children John, James and Helen, grandchildren and great grandchildren who have been loved by her and in return loved her with the most practical devotion

She will be missed for her timely help, and whilst the voice that enjoyed singing the songs of the Saviour will no more be heard, what a gathering awaits when we all get home.

A service of thanksgiving was led by Brother Michael Gaunt at the church building, followed by the internment at Balmoor cemetery. Many came to pay their last respects, and we will surely miss Ella's presence in the fellowship.

We commend her and her loved ones to the God of all grace and comfort, and look forward to the time when there will be no more goodbyes.

DARWEN Elizabeth Cavill

(12TH SEPTEMBER 1911 - 16TH OF APRIL 2009)
DARWEN, LANCASHIRE

Sister Elizabeth went to be with her Lord on Thursday the 16th of April 2009. She passed away peacefully in Birch Hall Care Home, Darwen.

The funeral service was conducted by brother Allan Ashurst, Stretford, at the Pleasington Crematorium, Blackburn, on Wednesday the 22nd of April 2009.

Elizabeth's father, Albert Edwin Hirst, was a Methodist lay preacher in Darwen. She survived two brothers, Tommy and Ben and two sisters, Caroline and Doris. Her mother, Jane Alsop, died when Elizabeth was only 6 weeks old. She was adopted by brother Murdock of the Rodney Street church of Christ, Wigan. The other 4 children were first put into a workhouse and then transferred to an orphanage. She did not know she was adopted and that the man, from Darwen who visited her periodically, was her father. When she was 11yrs old the Murdock family moved to Canada and Elizabeth was put in the care of sister Margaret (Peggy) Wilson's blind uncle David, in Darwen. At 16, her brother Tommy took her to live with their father in Pitt Street, Darwen. This was when she learned that Albert Edwin Hirst was her father.

Elizabeth worked as a weaver in the Moss Bridge Silk Mill where she met Fred Cavill, the warehouseman. They fell in love and were married at S. Cuthbert's, Darwen on the 30th of November 1933. Fred was 23 and Elizabeth was 22. They had 61yrs of happy marriage but no children. During the war years she was put in charge of quality control. Thinking that the lives of the air force men depended on the reliability of the goods they produced, she was very strict. One day, in frustration the staff hung her by her coat on a hat and coat hook in the cloakroom. She finished her working life in Bowling Green Mill, Bolton Road, Darwen.

In 1994, when Elizabeth was having a pacemaker fitted in Blackpool Hospital, despite offers of help from his second cousin, Albert, Fred persisted in travelling by public transport to Blackpool to visit Elizabeth. He died on the 3rd of November 1994 while Elizabeth was still in hospital.

In August 2007, unable to look after herself, she went into Birch Hall Care Home, Darwen, where she was happy, appreciative and cared for very well. Even when she would normally have been transferred to hospital, they decided to care for her themselves until she passed away. We are grateful to all the staff for how well she was looked after. There she passed away peacefully and went to be with her Lord on Thursday the 16th of April.

Elizabeth was baptised at Hamilton Street, Church of Christ when she was 18yrs old and remained a faithful Christian all her life. She became one of the founder members of the Mill Hill Church of Christ, Blackburn. After its closure, Elizabeth worshipped with the few remaining members in Peggy Wilson's home, 8 Bowling Green Close, Darwen. Elizabeth was a keen Bible student, and even in the care home she would talk about Jesus because He was the vital part of her life. She was always a cheerful source of encouragement.

Thomas William Walton

(1953 - 2009)

Tom started out in life as the only boy in a family of four children. He was the pride and joy of his parents Walter and Daisy, and grew up in a close and loving household with sisters Pat, Janet and Christine.

Tom obeyed the gospel, being baptised for the remission of sins at Hope Chapel, Kentish Town on 3rd April, 1983. At the time he was living with his mother Daisy; he later moved to his own flat at Belsize Park where he lived as his mother's neighbour until her death in 1996. Daisy's passing left a huge hole in the lives of Tom, his sisters and the extended family. His beloved father Walter had passed away when he was fifteen. It was a huge loss therefore that, before she passed away, Tom was to see his mother Daisy obey the Gospel and become a Christian.

The first five years of Tom's Christian life were spent under the watchful eye of brother R.B. Scott. Initially hesitant and uncertain of his knowledge of the Gospel, Tom gradually increased his faith through diligent scripture reading and by gathering as often as he could with the saints in Bible study and other meetings. Tom's meekness and sincerity were such that, despite his thorough grounding in the scriptures, he never stopped learning new

things from the scriptures, often exclaiming to someone who had made a contribution during a Bible study, "I had never thought of that before!", before going off to search the scriptures and explore this new insight into God's plan. Although not the most natural of public speakers, Tom gradually grew in confidence and, after the passing of brother Scott, began to take on the very responsibilities for teaching and preaching the word of God for which he had initially felt himself so unsuited.

Tom was compelled at various stages to fight off attempts to establish various false teachings in the assembly at Kentish Town. Initially he felt himself not up to the challenge of public teaching at the Wednesday evening Bible Study, so in 1988 he invited brother Derek Daniell from the church at Tunbridge Wells to take this study. Derek was still taking, and Tom still faithfully attending this weekly study, at the time of Tom's passing.

Apart from Derek's assistance with the mid-week Bible Study, there was for a time a dearth of other men who could share responsibility for teaching and preaching with Tom. Nevertheless Tom's perseverance was eventually rewarded when a number of saints emerged to share in the work. Although many of these brothers have now returned to their countries of origin, in due course others emerged that were able both to take a share in the work and to remain at Kentish Town. Such is the providence of the Lord. Tom's meekness, humility, and zeal for the Lord's work has inspired and continues to inspire all who remain at Kentish Town with a burning desire to persevere in the Lord's work and to continue to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

In the last decade of his life Tom was afflicted by Parkinson's disease. He coped with the debilitating effects of this illness in his normal uncomplaining way, and continued working right up to his sudden passing on 4 January, 2009. Tom put his occupational skills to the disposal of the assembly, taking sole responsibility for any repair work that the Hope Chapel building required over the years. Two years ago Tom moved to Borehamwood where he made even more friends with his kindness, generosity and Christian love.

At the service of thanksgiving and remembrance on 19 January so many came to show their love and appreciation that they not only filled Hope Chapel but were standing out on the pavement. In addition to family and friends, there were builders and tradesmen with whom Tom had worked, as well as Christians from far and wide. Messages came in from the many individuals and congregations who knew and loved him.

Tom leaves behind his three sisters, seven nephews and nieces (Ian, Kevin, Sarah, Richard, Angela, Lisa and Lee) and eleven great-nieces and great-nephews.

Compiled by the assembly at Kentish Town with the assistance of Tom's family and Derek Daniell.

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Ghana Appeal

Many thanks to all who have helped and continue to help in the plight of our spiritual family in Ghana. All donations should be sent to the fund secretary:

Peter Sneddon, Ochil View, Keir Street, Dunblane, FK15 9BP (*cheques to be made payable to Dennyloanhead Church of Christ*).

Dale Meikle

Coming Events

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKSHOP 2009

Lancaster University
Thurs 27th Aug to
Sat 29th Aug. 2009

Contact: **Stephen Woodcock**
Tel: (01942) 211 479

Email:
stephen.woodcock@hotmail.co.uk

STRETFORD MANCHESTER

Saturday Gospel Meetings at 7 p.m.

The Green Hut,
538 Kings Road,
Stretford, MANCHESTER M32 8EJ

September 19th, 2009
Frank Worgan, Corby

October 17th, 2009
Samuel Appiah-Anane, Liverpool

NEWTONGRANGE SCOTLAND

Annual Social

Date: **10th October 2009 at 1.00 pm**
when meal will be served.

Speaker:
Niall Scobbie, Dennyloanhead

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