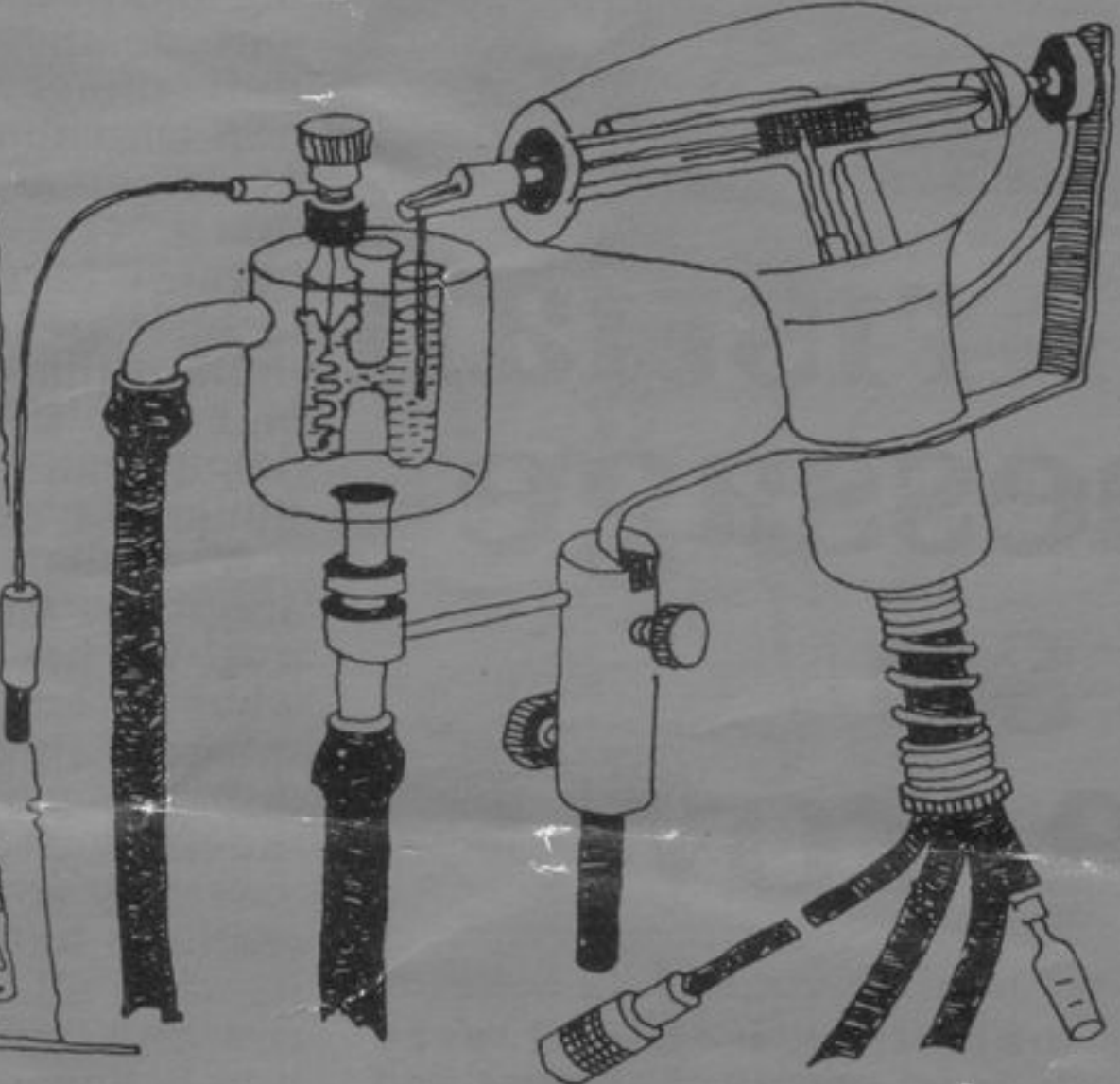
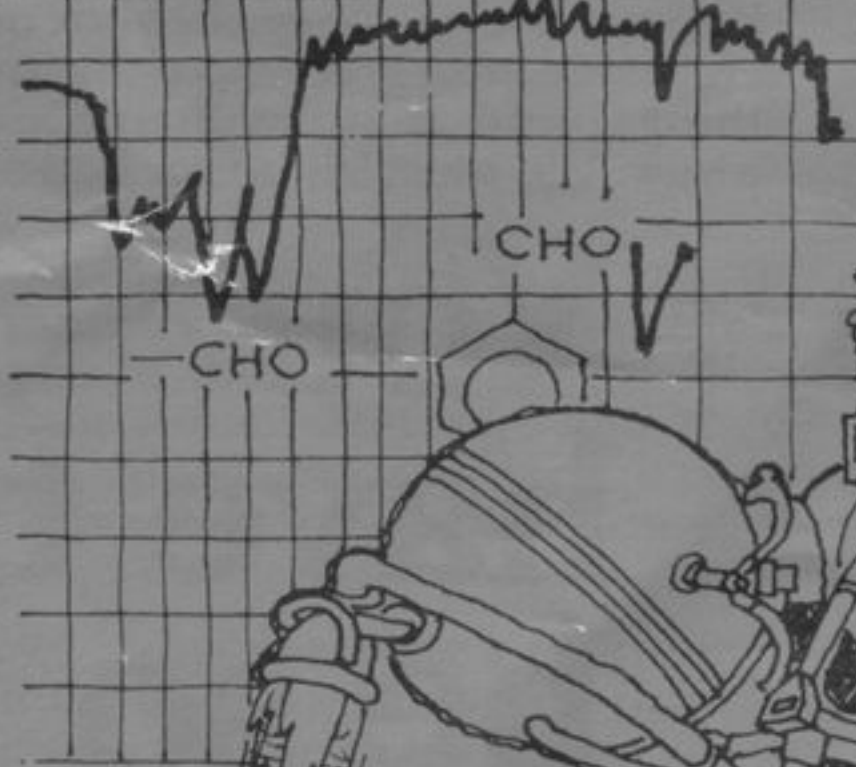
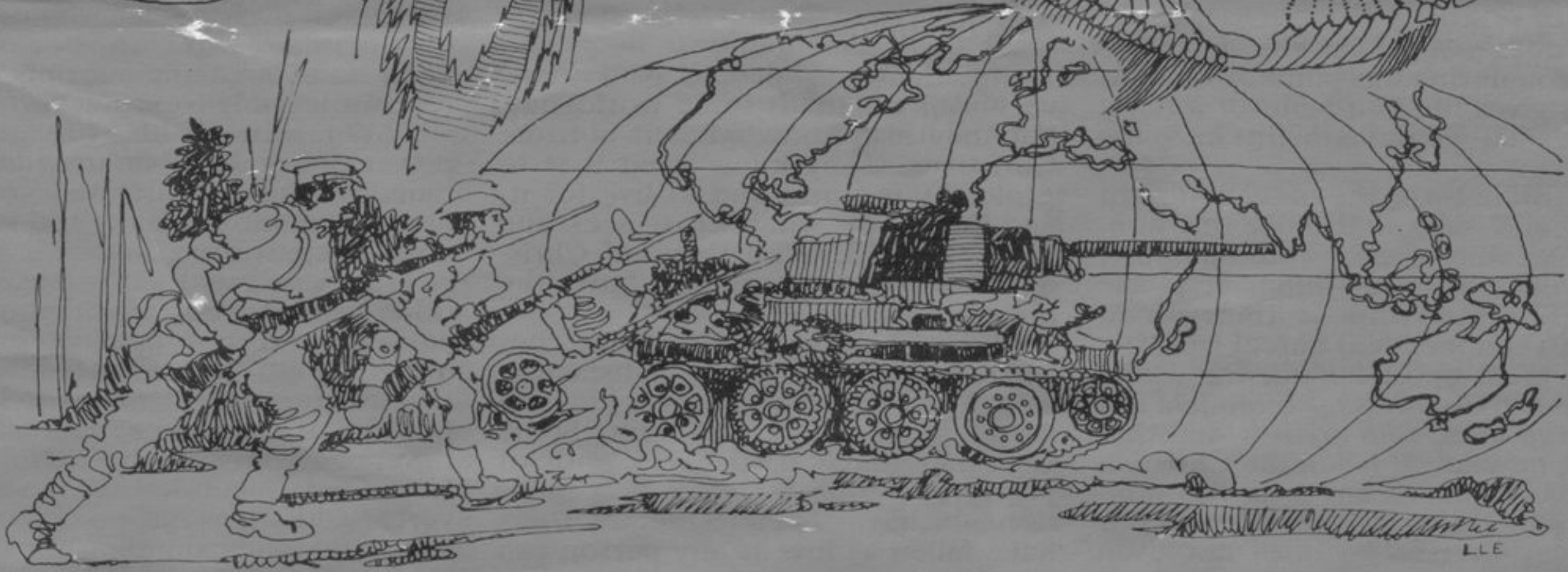
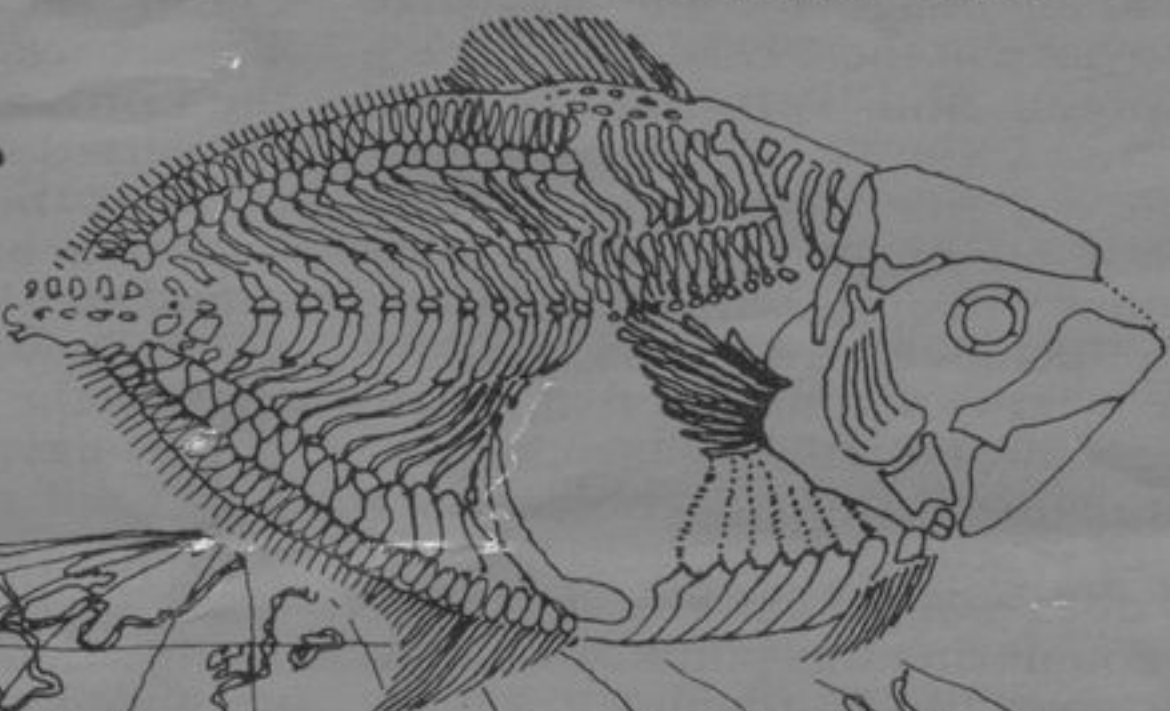


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Answers to Questions

Number One



LLE

The Christian message is so narrow

This objection is heard very frequently from people of all ages and every possible background. People say, 'How can we possibly take Christianity seriously? It is such a narrow belief. To be a Christian I'd have to be very naïve. The Christian message is so narrow and cramped that its followers have to become like that — limited in their experience, and naïve about life.'

What an image for the Christian faith to have in the 1990s! But this is a widespread and very tightly held opinion.

Some say that only people with a certain kind of personality become Christians; people with dependent, gullible personalities — the kind of people who can shut out reality and believe almost anything.

Before answering the objection a word of warning is necessary. The Bible does not go on the defensive when countering this point of view. In fact, it gives the non-believer a fairly rough ride, going straight into the attack.

The Bible turns the objection right round and says that it is the non-Christian who is narrow and gullible, and will believe anything. It is the non-Christian who is imprisoned within a confined and unreal world.

The great apostle Paul, for example, said, *If our message is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost.* In other words, he said, 'It is not the Christian who has blinkers on: it is the non-Christian. He cannot understand our message. In fact he does not even begin to know what life is about because he is completely lost. The

non-Christian has no idea where he is or where he is going.'

According to the Bible, the meaning and purpose of life, matters of life and death, Heaven and hell — all these things are hidden away from the non-Christian. What would we think of someone who refused to believe that a 747 could take to the air, simply because he could not understand the technology behind it? What would we think if that person looked up at one and said, 'It isn't there; it hasn't taken off; it can't; it's just a myth; such things don't exist.'

Yet this is how we so often behave about the Christian message. We are lost! We have no idea or awareness of what life is for. We do not understand spiritual things, and so what do we do? We simply turn our backs on them.

Is this so broad-minded? Are we really so full of intellectual liberty? Is it, after all, Christians who are narrow and limited in outlook — or is it non-believers?

The crucial thing to remember is that a Christian is someone who *used* to be a *non-Christian*. He was once a non-believer and a worldling. True Christians are therefore people who know two lives, not one. They were once people who put their trust entirely in the things of *this* world; all their hopes were here.

But then something happened. They became anxious seekers after the Lord, and found Him. They were converted to God, and they received another life. Now they taste and experience *spiritual* life, and they sense and know and walk with their God. They also know what it is like to receive the help and blessing of God day by day.

Who is chained?

Christians are people who know very well what it is to be worldlings, but they also know what it is to be Christians. They know what it is to explore this world and to live for it; and they know what it is to seek and find the Lord. Who then, of Christians and non-Christians, have the greater experience?

Many Christians before their conversion tried to derive satisfaction from many different things in life, and found them empty and vain. Some Christians have tried every path of pleasure, culture, power and ambition which was open to them. Others have fallen as low as any person can possibly fall. But subsequently they have come to feel their great need of

pardon, and have yielded to the Lord to experience the transforming of their lives.

What kind of logic makes the Christian the inexperienced, limited, narrow person? The life of anyone who has never been converted is a life rigidly limited to the things of flesh and time. Such a person cannot reach outside these things, no matter what he or she may do.

The life of the non-believer is chained to bodily, physical, material things. Only these things can be *understood and enjoyed* — things which may be tasted, seen, heard and touched. Only these things may be *possessed* — material things, such as houses, cars, clothes, and so on.

Certainly there are inner emotions, but these can only be activated and excited by earthly things. The non-believer can only *experience and enjoy* or *look forward* to material things, and these will one day fade away. We must all be carried along by

You have to be so gullible...

the ageing process, and the time will quickly come when our faculties will run down and we shall lose the power to enjoy the things we have spent our youth and perhaps our whole lives to obtain.

As non-Christians our only *resources* are earthly resources, together with our own health, strength, and power of mind. If we are non-Christians, we fall victim to this cramped, limited, material realm, and we have nothing apart from this.

Truly converted Christians, on the other hand, have so much more. They certainly do not deserve anything more, for it is solely by God's mercy that any repentant sinner receives the benefits of conversion. Nevertheless, they have immensely rich benefits from God. What do they have? Converted Christians have a clear experience and understanding of spiritual things. They understand the meaning of life, the message of the Bible,

which is God's Word, and the Lord's purposes and plans.

They possess *spiritual* life, so they experience, taste and feel, spiritual pleasures. They can pray and be strengthened and blessed by God. They are guided in their lives by the Lord, and they feel and know the evidence of His presence with them along life's pathway. God overrules in their affairs, often in a most significant manner, intervening in answer to their prayers.

These are very real experiences to Christians. When people are converted, something very profound happens in their lives. God takes hold of them and a radical change takes place within them — a change far greater than any human surgery, such as a heart transplant, can achieve. It is as though the dead soul is brought to life. God, when He converts souls, puts a living spirit within them. As a result, Christians have their tastes and characters completely renewed.

They are given new pleasures and new desires. They look forward to being used by God throughout life's journey, and then to being with Him in Heaven for all eternity, and they *feel* these things. No wonder the converted slave-trader John Newton said so long ago in his hymn —

*Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.*

Who then is the narrow, limited person, the Christian or the non-Christian? 'Even so,' someone will say, 'I still think Christians have to be naïve. They have to shut their eyes to so much that goes on in the world to believe in God.' The fact is that Christians are not naïve about life at all; on the contrary Christians are probably the only true realists.

Let me remind you of some of the things which we all have to believe when we are non-Christians. We must believe the following things, otherwise life would be unbearable and void of all hope. We *have* to believe in the essential goodness of human nature. We have to believe in *this* world, and we have to believe that it is getting better.

We have to believe that everything will be all right in the end, and that national and international problems will eventually be solved. We have to believe that our politicians are reasonably capable and sincere. We have to believe that wars can be ended, and that the last world war *was* the last major war.

We have to believe in luck and good fortune. We certainly have to believe in ourselves, and our capacity to surmount misfortunes and discover lasting happiness.

We have to believe that education will solve our social problems; that the bomb will never be used; that as we educate society and do away with poverty we will build a better world.

A leading expert on marital problems once asserted that if qualified psychologists were installed in all our schools to provide completely frank sex education and counselling, there would be a great reduction in marriage breakdowns. This expert seriously believed that the only cause of disharmony in marriage was a lack of knowledge. Provide the knowledge — he said — and nothing would go wrong. Human selfishness, bad behaviour and promiscuity would evaporate!

Realists or ostriches?

Let me emphasise that Bible-believing Christians never say such things, because Christians are *much more* realistic about human nature. Unlike non-believers, Christians certainly do *not* believe in the essential goodness of human nature. Those who think that Christians live like ostriches with their heads in the sand, imagining that everything and everyone is good, are utterly wrong. The very opposite is the case!

Christian believers are people who have had their eyes opened to see that all people are weak and sinful. A Christian believes that the human race has rebelled against God so that man is inherently selfish and unable to improve without the help of God.

A Christian believes in the *Fall* of man. It is the non-Christian, however educated or intelligent, who forces himself to be gullible and to believe naïvely in human nature, and in *this* world, and that it is possible to be

**...and
naïve
about life**



fulfilled and happy without God.

An old jibe against the Christian faith goes like this: 'Christianity has been around for two thousand years and the world is still no better.' Of course it is no better. It is the non-Christian who expects the world to get better. The Christian believes the Bible and the Bible is most pessimistic about the human race and the progress of world history.

The apostle Paul says plainly that, *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* The Lord Jesus Christ said of human history — *Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars... for all things must come to pass... nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

The Bible teaches that the world is not going to get better. This world is a *doomed* world, because of human rebellion against God. God's plan for this world is to maintain it — for a time — as a kind of entrance-hall to eternity.

The world is the place from which God is gathering out men, women and young people, saving their souls and bringing them to know Him and to walk with Him, so that they may live the rest of their lives for Him and then be with Him for all eternity.

The world itself, however, is a doomed world. It is just a phase in God's timetable, and one day God will roll it up like a piece of clothing, to use an expression found in the Bible. While non-Christians must pin

continued next page

from previous page

all their hopes on this world, Christians are those who have found another life, and are 'passing through' this world to something far better. They will do all they can to improve things while they are here, but they know that the world cannot be greatly improved because it is a world cut off from God and disdainful of His help and blessing.

Christians are people who have realised that they are sinful rebels, wandering far from the Lord. Burdened with their past rejection of God, troubled by their selfishness and sin, aware that their souls are cut off from God, they have gone to Jesus Christ, the Saviour, in prayer. They have prayed earnestly to Him as the One Who died on Calvary's cross to bear the punishment due to sinful people. They have asked for pardon, and yielded their lives, and they have felt the hand of God upon them, answering their prayer and changing their lives. As the result, they have come to know the Lord and live for Him.

The great pretence

Do we hope to find happiness and fulfilment in this life when we have discarded our Creator? Are we shutting ourselves into a box of time, of material experience only? Are we pretending that the entire spiritual realm is just not there; that there is no God, or that God is some kind of benevolent grandfather Who does not really mind what we do?

Do we imagine that when we reach the last day of life, that 'benevolent old grandfather' in the heavens will overlook everything we have done, and all our indifference to Him? Are we counting on that?

May I appeal to readers to see the offensiveness of such attitudes to Almighty God. See how greatly you are insulting God, the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Why make the Lord Jesus your eternal enemy, when He would be your Saviour, Guide, and your greatest Friend? Grasp the seriousness of all your sins. But also, see what you are doing to your own life.

Desire true liberty; pine for real conversion; long for pardon, and say like the prodigal son, *I will arise and go to my Father and will say, 'Father, I have sinned.'* The Saviour is still receiving seeking sinners. Begin to seek Him as a matter of urgency, and make it the most serious search of your life.

HOW CAN I BE SURE THERE IS A GOD?

The key question is, 'How can I be sure that there is a God? How can I be certain?' Let me give some suggestions for thinking through this leading question. I suggest that we ask ourselves the following questions: What do I make of the fact that I exist at all? What do I make of the world around me, the universe? How do I account for it? What is the purpose of it?

How do I account for the complexity of life? Can I really shrug it all off as an accident of biochemistry which occurred millions of years ago? Can I seriously believe that all the order, the life cycles, the amazing systems — all the unmistakable signs of a great designer behind the universe — can I seriously believe that it can be explained by pure chance?

We are told by biochemists that a bewildering array of complex chemical reactions would have had to have taken place at precisely the same time and in perfectly correct order and synchronisation to turn non-living substances into the simplest living organism. No one can conceive how such an impossible thing could occur by sheer accident.

Can I believe that one day, millions of years ago, many highly sophisticated components somehow just leapt

together, in perfect synchronisation, by pure chance, in order to create a living cell? And if I can believe that, can I also believe that this first living cell could somehow, unaided, give rise to life as we know it today?

Think of the amazing complexity of everything. Think again of all the life cycles and of the organisation of the human body. Think of the microscopic detail, order and wonder of the created world. Think of our own highly delicate and profound emotional make-up.

Then think of the extraordinary beauty of so many things, a beauty which frequently extends beyond the range of human vision. The microscope shows, for example, that each snowflake is uniquely different, each one resembling a most intricately designed piece of exotic original jewellery. Is it order or chaos? Design or accident — which is it?

Accident or design?

We know that accident and chance in the affairs of everyday life *always* lead to chaos, muddle and confusion. Are we to believe that an accident brought this complex world into being; that chance brought all this order and design into existence? Surely it requires vastly more faith to believe in accident than it does to believe in a Creator; a designer behind the universe.

Accident? Chance? It is impossible to conceive, and it requires the most sublime form of blind faith. Yet we are told that it requires blind faith to believe in a Creator God!

But there is another quite different line of thought which we should pursue, and it is this: how do we account for *the human race*? How do we explain *ourselves*? What a unique

**In these broadcast talks
Dr Peter Masters, Minister
of London's Metropolitan
Tabernacle, answers
some of the questions
which people ask when
they begin to think
about the meaning of
life and about God.**

and strange creature man is! The entire animal kingdom is ruled by instincts and drives, and yet man stands absolutely unique, a thousand times higher, endowed with the power of reason.

How do we account for this? Not only does man possess the power of reason, but he also has a conscience, a mysterious, built-in knowledge of right and wrong; an intricate moral-value system.

We can try to explain this away by assuming that the conscience is something which just appeared because of the laws which some bygone society adopted, but such reasoning is flimsy at best. Ever since recorded human history, man has had this deeply-ingrained knowledge of right and wrong, so that his conscience has troubled him.

The mysterious conscience

You can prove the existence of the conscience by observing its operation at the international level. Every nation in the world is corrupt and breaks its own rules, yet it looks with righteous indignation at the aggression and the unreasonable activities of other nations.

Alternatively, you can see conscience operating in some way in the lives of individuals. What am I? I am a being with a highly-tuned conscience which frequently hurts me, and which I habitually use to judge and criticise others by. Yet at the same time, while I have this conscience, this remarkable piece of equipment, I am utterly incapable of living up to it.

Every time I try to improve my life, turn over a new leaf, advance, or make progress to become the kind of person I would like to be — I fail.

People do not always want to lie; they just lie. They do not always set out to commit sin; they just do it. How do we explain this? What explanation do we have for mankind possessing this knowledge of right and wrong, this highly-tuned conscience, and yet having no power to live up to it?

There is only one explanation for these things and it is the explanation given to us in the Bible. Man was originally made by God and in His image, but he is now a rebel who has



The World from Apollo 11

fallen away from God.

God planted within him this moral consciousness, this awareness of right and wrong, but because he is a fallen rebel he cannot keep these standards.

Has this conscience just developed and emerged during a process of evolution? No, for there is not the least shred of evidence for that. Man is clearly designed differently from the animals. He has in common with them many biological features, but once we take account of *reason* and *conscience* we realise he is altogether different.

The massive contradiction of the human race is that we possess the power of reason and moral values coupled with hopeless weakness and failure! This enigma can only be explained by the Fall — the sinful rebellion of man against his Creator God which is described in the Bible.

When we consider these things, we must surely realise that there is a God, and that there is truth in God's Word — the Bible. The alternative explanations for the existence and make-up of the human race are too far-fetched, too impossible to contemplate.

So far we have glanced at just two lines of argument to help faith. Actually there are many more which

Christians have used down the centuries to help seekers. Yet however convincing they may be, such pieces of reasoning can do no more than persuade us *intellectually*.

The question, 'How can I be *sure* that there is a God?' can only be fully answered by a *felt experience* of God, and this is what Christian conversion brings. It is not a matter of just believing with the mind, and certainly not just knowing *about* God. Neither is it merely going to worship on Sunday.

Conversion is nothing less than undergoing a personal experience of seeking and finding Christ the Saviour, Who suffered the penalty and punishment of sin to make it possible for people to be forgiven.

Proving God is real

Conversion is an experience which answers our greatest needs. It brings pardon and forgiveness, an understanding of God, and a completely new life. It changes us so that we come to feel and know the Lord in a way that is unmistakable.

How can I be really *sure* that there is a God? Only by seeking and finding Him. Contrary to what some think, this is, in a way, the hardest battle of life. To seek and find the Lord I must desire conversion. I must be ready to turn my back on my past life, my greed, ambition, and pride. I must be willing to acknowledge my sin and failure, and to repent humbly and truly. I must sincerely put my trust in God and yield my life to Him.

God is the rewarder of all who earnestly, wholeheartedly seek Him, and He makes them *sure*. For the sake of your eternal soul, you must earnestly seek to know God. Be more serious about this than you have ever been about anything else, because it is possible to know Him, if you sincerely apply for a new life. You must seek the Lord, while He will still be gracious to you.

A sequel to this publication — *Answers to Questions Number 2* — contains further answers to problems about faith, and may be obtained from:
**The Metropolitan Tabernacle,
 Elephant & Castle,
 London SE1 6SD.**

This is a problem which crosses the minds of many of us as soon as we begin to think about God.

'If there is a God, why does He allow wars? Why does He allow suffering and tragedy? And if He is (as Christians say) a God of love, why does He allow such things as the gas chambers and mentally handicapped babies?'

First, the question about wars and suffering. Why does God allow them? The first point which the Bible makes in dealing with all questions of this kind is to demand a certain standard of reverence in order to understand the reply. The Bible begins with God, and reminds us of God's character.

God is perfect, absolutely holy, and infinitely just and fair. He is full of love and mercy, and therefore He must have a very powerful reason for allowing things such as suffering to take place. If God cannot sin, or fail, and if God cannot be unjust — then certainly there must be an unassailable reason.

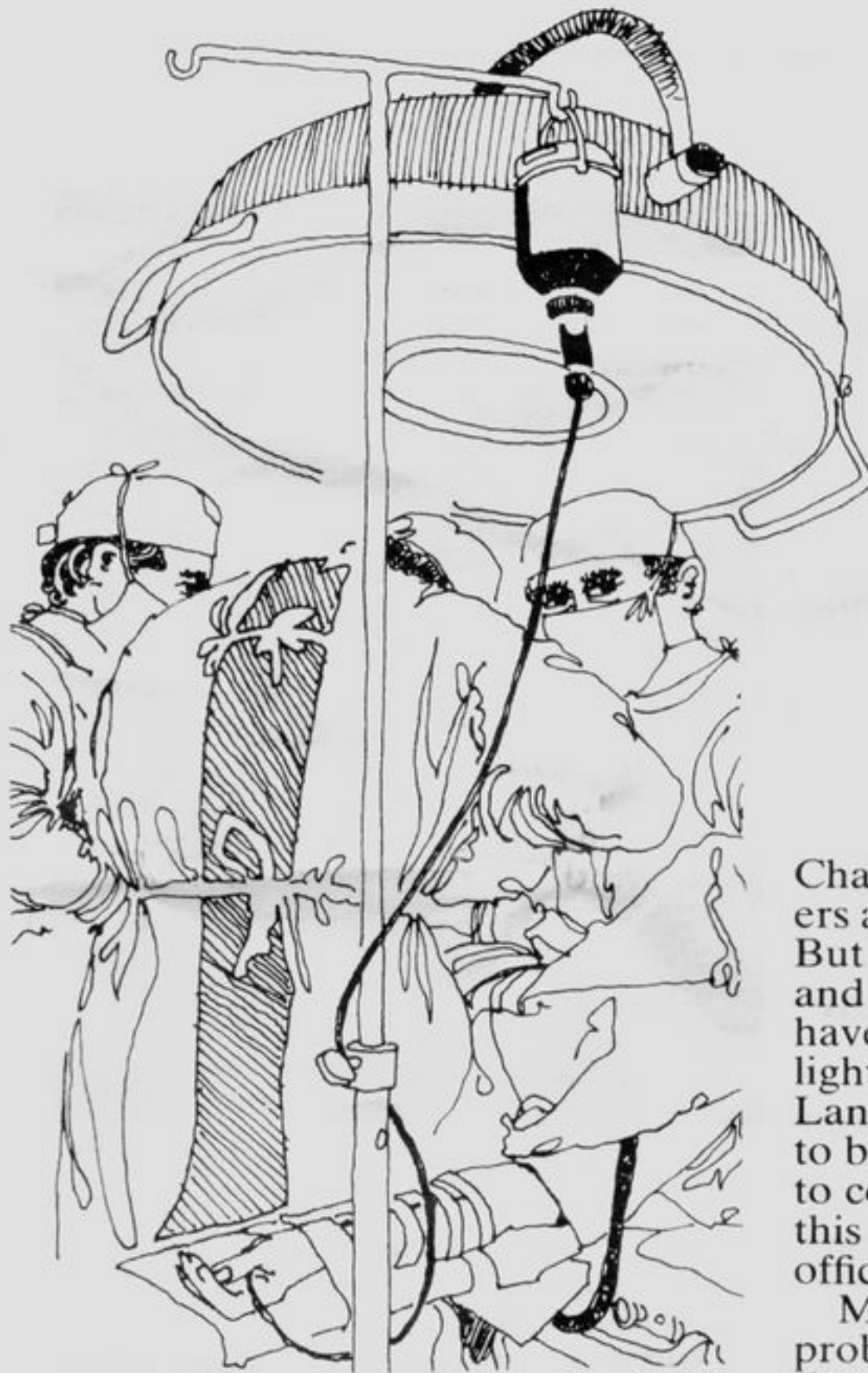
The cause of the trouble

If an air disaster kills three hundred people what happens? Does everyone stop getting into aeroplanes, and do airlines go bankrupt overnight? Do we immediately assume that flying is too dangerous, and say it is not feasible? Of course not. The last thing we want to see is people rushing to shallow, hasty conclusions, driven by mere prejudice. We say, 'What caused the disaster?'

Similarly, in the case of wars and suffering we must ask the cause. It is no use using these things as missiles to throw at God. The important thing is to want to know the reason why God allows suffering.

Sometimes we do not want to know the reason. Or we just do not believe there *is* a reason. We tell ourselves that because wars and suffering occur, therefore there cannot be a God Who cares, certainly not a God of love. But there is; and our thinking should proceed along these lines: 'If a perfect, holy, powerful and loving God allows such things, then certainly there must be a reason of *such* magnitude, that they are completely unavoidable.'

What, then, is the holy, loving, all-powerful Father's unavoidable reason for allowing wars and tragedy? The reason is taught from cover to cover in the Bible. The first book in the Bible, the book of *Genesis*, explains it in great detail, and every subsequent book of the Bible gives exactly the



same reason.

Mankind has seized this world from God and rebelled against Him. We have turned our backs upon God. Indeed, we have spat on Him. We have spurned and rejected God's government of us. We have rejected God's ownership of us, His companionship also, and we have thrown aside His help, protection and love.

We are determined to go it alone, to do everything our own way, and to be captain of our own ship. It is as though we are determined to prove to ourselves that God is not there.

Shifting the blame

We have all abused Him, sinned against Him, fouled up His world, and got into all kinds of trouble. We cannot make things work out, and so we suffer the consequences of our conduct — the forfeiture of God's protection and help. Despite all this, our pride will not let us admit our folly, and we even use the mess which we have brought about (including war and suffering) as a means of disproving that there could be a God of love. If it were not so ugly and tragic, it would be laughable.

Imagine a violent mutiny on a cargo vessel somewhere in the English

Why do allow sickness tragedy

Channel. The crew murder the officers and throw the captain into the sea. But they are incapable of navigation and within twenty-four hours they have fought among themselves, set light to the ship and hit the rocks off Land's End. Would you expect them to blame the owners of the vessel? Or to conclude that because they were in this mess the owners, captain and officers had never existed?

Man has brought about all his own problems and, far from proving that there is no God, wars, suffering, illness and tragedy all serve to prove the teaching of the Bible, which says that man has rebelled against God and is now the victim of his own sinfulness.

Many people think that the Bible is a human production, written over the centuries, and therefore showing a gradual development or evolution of teaching about God. Actually that is a complete misunderstanding.

One of the most remarkable features of the Bible is that although it came into being over a period of nearly sixteen hundred years, and although many different people were used to write down its contents, it has a consistent and uniform message throughout its length.

Can we imagine any human movement, political or whatever, being able to produce the books of its advocates, written over a mere fifty or hundred years, and showing that they perfectly agree? The Bible is unique, for its literature was written down, not over a hundred years but over sixteen hundred years, yet Moses (who wrote the first five books) teaches exactly the same profound truths about God as the disciple John (who wrote the last — the book of *Revelation*).

All the Bible writers say exactly the same things about God and His char-

Does God allow wars, sickness and tragedies?

acter, and about human beings and their rebellion against God. They say exactly the same things about what God will do — how He will forgive and pardon many people when they become ashamed of their sin, end their rebellion, and earnestly repent.

The amazing agreement of every book of the Bible, and the complete absence of contradiction in these things, is one of the great proofs of its inspired nature, showing that it is truly God's Word. The teaching of the Bible is equally consistent in ascribing all war and suffering to the rebellion of the human race. They occur because man has become weak, sinful and depraved.

Human cruelty

Many people say, 'I can't believe that. I can't believe that man is that bad.' But just look at people when they are engaged in the savage annihilation of others. Nations will go to war when practically nothing is to be gained. People will kill for greed and for personal power.

In the last decade countless lives have been lost in bitter and vicious wars — several of which continue even now. In one country thousands of people perish from starvation while civil war racks their land. As a matter of fact the Bible teaches that the human race is so bad that there would be total war all the time but for the restraining hand of God.

Look at the way people exploit each other, tread on each other, and hurt each other. Look at the way men and women will fight in marriage, irrespective of what happens to the children. Look at the horrible selfishness and deceitfulness of which we are all capable.

Every one of us, to some extent,

expects the world to revolve around *me*, as though *I* am the only person who matters. So if I experience a tragedy, or, if I am a parent and one of my children has a terrible illness and perhaps dies, I cry out in bitterness, 'Why does God allow this to happen to *me*?'

We forget that we are part of the human race — a race which has rebelled and is now cut off from God. From man's very first act of vile disobedience until now, men and women have had to struggle unhelped in a world which has God's sanctions applied to it.

God's sanctions are that His blessing and power are taken away from us. Death and decay are now present to remind us that we are temporary here, and soon will have to face God. These troubles are to humble us and make us realise that we are offenders who are separated from God.

God's remedy

We are all instinctively critical and disgusted when we see people, especially children, being utterly spoiled and getting away with everything. Almighty God cannot do that to us. He cannot be indifferent to our sin. He will not bless us while we wander far from Him and sin against Him. He *will* not and He *cannot*, because He is absolutely holy and just. While the Lord is pained at the consequences we bring upon ourselves because of our sin, yet He hates sin.

Once we see these things, we realise we are asking the wrong question. The question to ask is not, 'Why does God allow suffering?' The real question is, 'Why does God allow this

rebellious human race to survive? Why does He not punish us immediately and end this world?' And the answer is, because God has done something about the world's rebellion.

Almighty God has planned to save millions of men, women, young people and children from the consequences of sin and rebellion. The Lord Jesus Christ (Who is God, with God the Father) has come into this world, to suffer and die in our place, and to bear the agonising pain and punishment of our sin so that we may be pardoned and forgiven.

Rebellion against God is a terrible thing. Look at it as far as it affects you and me. My life, your life, has been a terrible rebellion against the Lord. It is no use — as some people do — hiding behind a wafer-thin pretence of respectability. We have all sinned and come a million miles short of the standard which God requires of us. We have all committed so many, many sins.

Sin is not merely what we do. It is the *state* we are in. We sin because we are hopeless sinners by nature. We are rebels, and we are spiritually and morally *fallen creatures*. So we are corrupt, proud, selfish, self-centred, and highly deceitful. We are also malicious and sensual, and we have stolen our lives, our years, our gifts and abilities, and seized them for ourselves. God, as far as we are concerned, might as well be dead.

What suffering tells us

What, then, do wars, tragedies, and sicknesses show us? They show us that God is separated from us and will not bless us. They show us that we are on our own. In fact, they show us that God must punish us for our sin.

And if God cannot have anything to do with us now, what about at the end of this life? What when we draw our last breath and we cross over into eternity — what will He do then? Clearly, if we have never turned to Him in repentance, He must sentence us to everlasting banishment from His presence, and we must bear the punishment which is due to us.

But here is the wonderful grace of God. He is still ready to pardon and forgive all who turn to Him. God is a great God of love, but wars and sufferings warn us that He cannot endure sin, and that He must and will punish rebellion. They warn us to turn to Him while there is still time, and discover His mercy and converting power.



Were we designed or by pure



Dr David Watts, Materials Scientist

Since early teenage years I recall a growing interest in questions about origins. One of the key questions for anyone like myself with an early knowledge of the Christian faith is whether the evolutionary hypothesis is to be recognised as false and incompatible with the book of *Genesis*, or whether it may be true, and legitimately harmonised with biblical teaching.

One approach to this dilemma is a careful scrutiny of the relevant scientific issues, to ascertain whether evolutionary ideas have serious intellectual claims upon a thorough-going scientist. These considerations influenced me to undertake scientific training and I am grateful for the rigorous nature of the discipline of physical chemistry and allied subjects which I have pursued now for many years.

Of course one cannot claim expertise in all areas relevant to the origin of life. But one of the privileges of university study, research and teaching is that one may consult close friends trained in such neighbouring disciplines as genetics, geology, etc.

Analysis of the evolutionary model, however, soon reveals that it

consists of a chain of propositions — *each one* of which must be true if the overall idea is to stand. (Nowadays equal attention is directed towards the concept of chemical evolution, or the origin of the living cell, as towards the issues of biological evolution).

For several years I have given post-graduate lecture courses on the statistical and thermodynamic properties of polymeric chains. I have also published research papers in this area.

This has helped me to evaluate one crucial issue — namely ideas concerning the origin of the highly specific sequences of biomonomers in biopolymer chains. These sequences convey or store information in the cell and their biological function is dependent upon an appropriate sequence being maintained. Random sequences convey only 'noise', not information.

Changing views

At the present time there is a growing interest in the application of information theory methods to the study of these biopolymer sequences. These sharp intellectual tools are having a fatal effect upon the vitality of chemical evolution models. A good example of this tendency is provided by the paper: *A Calculation of the Probability of Spontaneous Biogenesis by Information Theory*, in the *Journal of Theoretical Biology* for 1977 (vol 67 pp 377-398), by Dr Hubert Yockey. He concludes that, 'currently accepted scenarios of spontaneous generation are based on faith, not fact.'

If I may make a general comment on some of the *biological* and *geological* support for the evolutionary case, it is that here the standards of rigour in the scientific discussion are far lower than those prevailing in the *physical* sciences. The overall evolutionary case requires propping up at numerous crucial points by a prior evolutionary philosophy, and therefore lacks definitive scientific credentials.

*David C Watts, PhD, BSc, CChem,
CPhys FRSC
Senior Lecturer
in Biomaterials Science,
University of Manchester.*

Dr Robert Beckett, Animal Geneticist

A farm up-bringing which involves a close working relationship with different kinds of animals provides an ideal launching pad for a scientific career — that has certainly been my experience.

In my early years I grew up on a mixed livestock farm where I was trained to observe and to note both the normal and abnormal patterns of animal behaviour and such things as their reaction to adverse weather and other stimuli.

Many hours spent in the fields and woodlands gave me a sensitive awareness of the numerous factors which blend so perfectly together in the balance of nature. More than anything else I had indelibly printed on my mind something of the perfection and design inherent in the ecosystems with which I came into contact. I grew up with nature and instinctively appreciated its carefully balanced order.

As a teenager, one of my chores was to attend sows during farrowing. This usually involved a long, lonely vigil through the midnight hours. It provided a great opportunity to observe and think. One thing which fascinated me was the uncanny ability of new-born piglets to locate the udder of their mother.

When first born, their eyes were closed and they could not see the udder (even if they could have recognised it for what it was). Most piglets were born head first, but quite a lot also arrived tail first. Regardless of how they arrived they nearly always made straight for the udder where they quickly located a teat and a feed of invigorating colostrum.

I puzzled over how this system operated — was it by smell, or by some other in-built behavioural mechanism? I never did arrive at a completely satisfactory explanation, but one conclusion which firmly established itself was the extreme improbability of such a survival mechanism being the product of pure chance. What impossible odds would be involved in the evolution of such a

did we evolve chance?

reflex behavioural pattern — essential only in the first moments of life? Such a system must surely have been *designed*.

At grammar school in an 'A' level biology course I made a field study of badgers. They were fascinating creatures to watch, beautifully marked and with highly developed senses of hearing and smell. However, one evening when one almost walked into me I was impressed by their extremely poor eyesight.

Forcing credulity

It was highly unusual that evolution and natural selection had not resulted in superb eyesight similar to that of the domestic cat, another nocturnal animal. I was left wondering how this important sense organ had missed the evolutionary boat.

After graduating in agriculture at Queen's University I spent four years at Ohio State University studying reproductive physiology and animal

Dr Robert Beckett



genetics. During this time I was made aware of the fantastic complexity and the degree of detail required for the mammalian male and female reproductive systems to function together to create new life. How did each evolve separately, yet in perfect harmony? What were the structures of the original egg and sperm cells when the sexes first diverged, and what was the selection force which moulded the apparatus for bringing them together?

This apparatus must surely have been in existence immediately prior to the first successful cross-fertilisation, yet until that happened it could have had no selective advantage. These were some of the questions and thoughts which arose in my mind. The intricate balance of numerous hormones, enzymes and prostaglandins placed other major obstacles in the path of a rational belief in evolutionary theory.

In the field of genetics, I became aware of the rapidly diminishing numbers of animal species as a result of selection by nature and man. When I considered this factor in the light of the very small mutation rate and the almost total absence of beneficial mutations, I was forced to conclude that the overall effect of mutations and natural selection must be a *decrease* in genetic variability — the opposite of what is required for evolutionary theory to be an acceptable postulate.

As a scientist, my task is honestly to examine theories in the light of hard facts. I have come to the firm conclusion that the theory that higher life forms all arose from a simple common source, contains too many serious scientific problems to be tenable.

As my awareness of the perfection amidst complexity of natural life increases, my reasoning and logic are compelled to reject the vague possibilities of time and chance, and instead demand the existence of a supernatural architect responsible for it all.

*Robert C Beckett, BAgr, MS, PhD
Animal Geneticist,
Department of Agriculture for
Northern Ireland.*

On these pages five scientists comment on their disagreement with the theory of evolution. Two are medical doctors and professors, one being an expert on medical genetics and the other on rheumatism. Another, also a professor, is an authority on biochemistry. A fourth contributor is a materials scientist, and a fifth is a research scientist in the very relevant field of animal genetics.



Professor Verna Wright

An interview with Prof Verna Wright, Professor of Rheumatology.

What could cause a scientist to develop misgivings about evolution?

Careful scrutiny of data adduced to support the evolutionary model for the origin of man will give cause for considerable reservation, whatever our previous conclusions were.

Do you disagree with the familiar reconstructions of primitive men exhibited in the leading natural history museums, all of which demonstrate the development of man from ape-like predecessors?

The unscientific nature of reconstructions of ancient hominids has been discussed in depth by Malcolm

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Bowden in *Ape Men, Fact or Fal-lacy?*. Such portrayals often owe more to the preconceived ideas of the investigators than to strict scientific observation.

But, as a medical man, what do you have to say to the evidence for evolution shown by vestigial organs?

Few biologists today would attach much significance to vestigial structures, since this description of many organs has been a reflection of our ignorance rather than our understanding (eg: menisci of the knee, ligamentum teres of the hips, thymus gland in the chest, pineal gland in the brain, tonsils, appendix).

From a more positive angle, the evolutionary model poses problems which, at this moment, appear insuperable in relation to man.

What alternative is there to the view that man has developed over millions of years from a more primitive species?

Extrapolation of population growth figures suggests a starting point for man some thousands of years ago — not the relatively vast time scales required by the theory of natural selection.

Moreover, man appears distinct from the animal creation physically, mentally and spiritually. Physically, he has a distinct upright posture and a brain size among comparable mammals which is unique, particularly in relation to the frontal lobes.

You assert that man is distinct from other mammals mentally — can you elaborate?

Mentally, man is unique in that he alone, of the animal creation, can communicate with his fellows in such a way that they can build on that knowledge. This is why man has a technology and other animals do not. It is largely bound up with language and writing, and the comments of linguistic biologists in this context are of interest:—

‘The evolutionary hypothesis, as it relates to language, far from being confirmed by recent research, is without empirical foundation... Language is radically different from all known forms of animal communication, and in spite of the vast accumulation of knowledge, scholars are still unable to propose a biological theory of language.’ (Marshall, J C, 1970. *New Horizons in Linguistics*, pp 229-241. Penguin Books, London.)

‘All the evidence so far accumulated by linguists confirms the view

that...there is no group of human beings in existence at present or known to have existed in the past, which does not possess a “fully developed language”.’ (Lyons, J, 1970. *New Horizons in Linguistics*, p10. Penguin Books, London.)

In what other way is man so unique?

Spiritually, man alone is a worshipping being, and this characteristic is universal. You may hack your way through the densest jungle; you may come on a people untouched by civilisation, and you can guarantee they will be a worshipping community.

Their worship may be hideously distorted, as it is brutally suppressed in some more ‘civilised’ parts of the world, but it is an undeniable fact. There is no evidence of any other animals having any form of worship.

To a medical person who endeavours to deal with the totality of man, the most likely explanation is that man is the special creation of God, intended to have a unique spiritual dimension to his life.

*Verna Wright, MD, FRCP
Professor of Rheumatology,
University of Leeds.*

Professor D B Gower, Biochemist

Having been brought up to accept the biblical story of origins as fact, I found a great conflict in my life when I began to study science. I felt that, as science had supposedly proved evolution, then it must be true.

Eventually, two things happened, more or less simultaneously, which revolutionised my whole attitude. First, I began to realise the true nature of God and that He was able to create all things should He choose to do so. Secondly, a study of the evidence put forward in favour of evolution soon revealed the existence of numerous flaws.

For example, there is a distinct lack of fossilised transitional forms which should link reptiles, birds and mammals if evolution has occurred. Also, isotopic dating methods for rocks and animal remains have been shown to be hopelessly inaccurate.

Furthermore, theories of the origin of life are based merely on laboratory experiments, performed under very specialised and controlled conditions, in which simple compounds, such as amino acids and sugars, are formed. To extrapolate from these experi-



Professor David Gower

ments and assume that they give some indication as to what happened on the

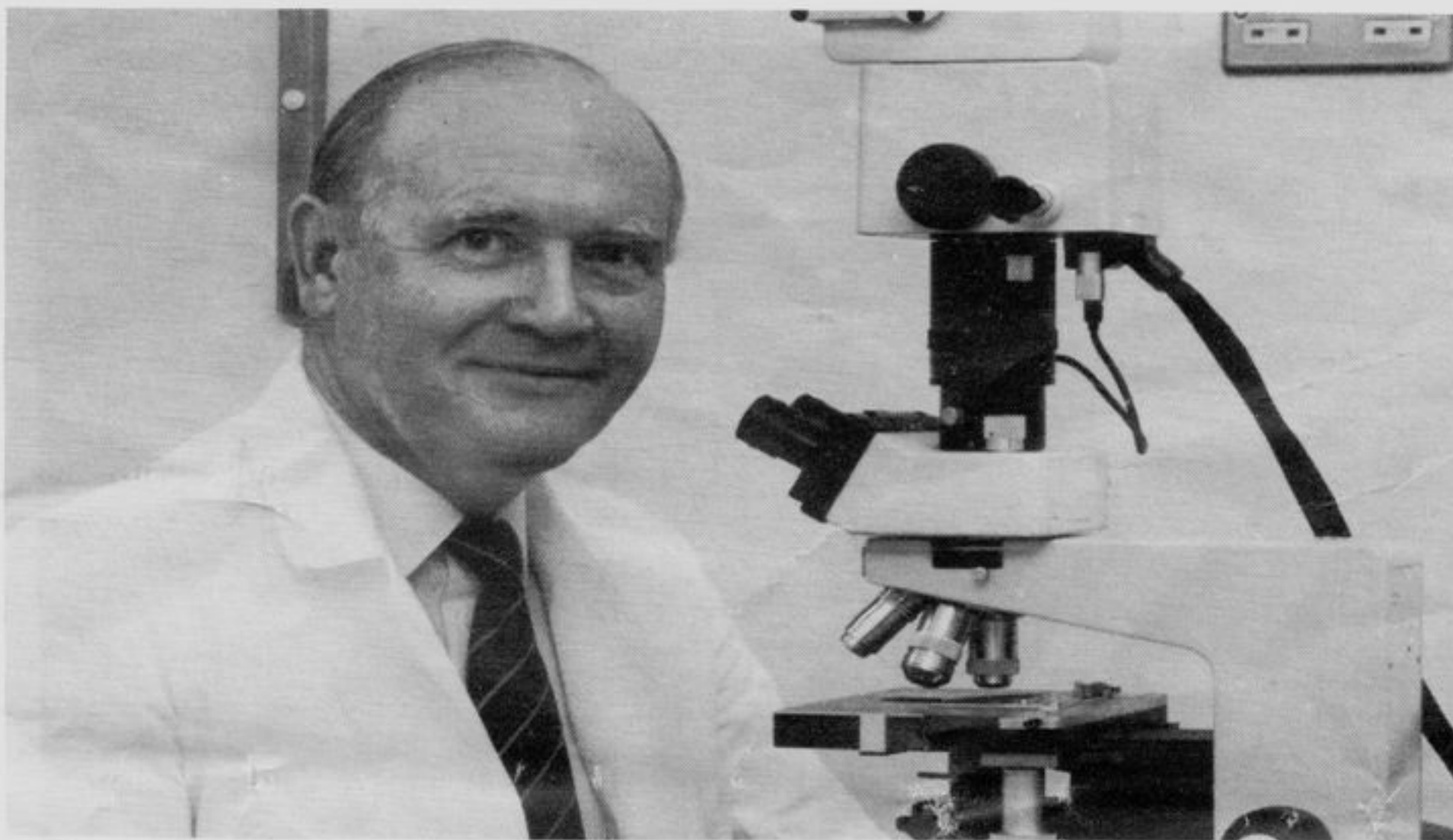
primitive earth is far from scientific.

Criticisms can be levelled at many other aspects of the theory. The mechanism is still based on the possibility of small changes in DNA, even though it is well-known that such changes (mutations) are extremely rare and are almost invariably non-beneficial (and even lethal) to the organism concerned.

Evidence of design

Many biologically important compounds are now known to be the same throughout the animal kingdom; good examples are the corticosteroids and sex hormones (the androgens and oestrogens) which are precisely the same in invertebrates as in ourselves. *This is in direct contradiction to evolutionary theory which requires that such compounds should evolve or become more complex as the organisms become more complex.*

Recent evidence indicates that even the receptors, which specifically bind hormones before they can exert their physiological effects, are the same in all species so far studied.



**Prof Norman Nevin,
Professor of Medical Genetics**

Man's origin — where he came from and how he came into being — has been a great problem to me, and a subject which has occupied my attention for many years.

When studying medicine, and particularly when reading for an honours BSc in anatomy, my Christian faith was challenged by the theory of

There are numerous instances in the field of biochemistry of specialised structures and it is inconceivable that these could have arisen by chance mutations of DNA. To give only two examples: the iron atom of haemoglobin is buried in a 'pocket' of globin surrounded by hydrophobic (water-hating) amino acids, so that it remains in the Fe²⁺ (reduced) state and can bind with oxygen. Should water reach the 'pocket' and oxidation to Fe³⁺ occur, binding of oxygen would be drastically reduced and the results would be fatal.

A second example is the structure of the bilipid membrane of living cells, which is such that proteins are positioned within them, thus being involved in selective transport of materials important for nutrition. Such evidence of design serves not only to strengthen my faith in God as Creator, but also to further undermine the theory of evolution.

*D B Gower, DSc, PhD, CChem,
FRSC, CBiol, FIBiol
Professor of Steroid Biochemistry,
University of London*

evolution. The concept that man had evolved from a primitive, single-cell organism to his present state through nothing but mechanistic and naturalistic processes was taught by many leading scientists.

Man was said to be the result of *favourable change* in his genetic structure, acted upon by natural selection. Like most people, I accepted the theory of evolution as a fact, and endeavoured either to reconcile the account of creation in the early chapters of *Genesis* with the theory, or indeed, to argue that God in the acts of creation *employed* the process of evolution.

It was not until undertaking post-graduate study in human genetics that I examined the theory of evolution in a more critical manner. It was clear that there were usually various other possible interpretations of the same facts or evidence used to support evolution.

The fact that different scientists often differ among themselves, sometimes presenting many possible explanations of the same evidence, showed that evolution was nothing more than an *unproven theory* and not an established fact. Evolution was a theory to explain the existence of living things, but being presented as a fact did not make evolution a fact.

My rejection of the theory on scientific terms began when I realised that the explanations of the genetic mechanisms for evolutionary change were inadequate.

An essential mechanism in evolution is *mutation*, a small accidental change in the biochemical structure of a gene. These genetic changes, so it is thought, are the raw material upon

which natural selection acts to produce new species. Mutations certainly do produce physical and physiological changes in organisms, *but most are harmful, if not lethal.*

In man, mutations are rare events and almost always result in detrimental conditions with physical and mental handicap. Such changes are far from producing vigorous new characteristics which could assist a race of organisms to evolve. After many years of intense experimentation with the induction of thousands of mutations in various organisms, nothing has been observed which could account for the evolution of new species.

However, even if (for the purpose of argument) one accepted that advantageous mutations are occasionally produced, the problem arises as to how they could become established in the population. Mutation did not appear to me to be an adequate explanation for the progressive change of one species into a new species.

Chromosomes

With advances in the area of cytogenetics — the study of chromosomes — changes such as polypoidy, duplication, inversion, deletion and translocation were suggested as possible mechanisms for the evolution of new species. Again, such alterations, particularly in higher organisms, are invariably *detrimental* producing a profound reduction in fertility and severe physiological changes.

A human cell is incredibly complex. To argue that what I see under the microscope has come about by mutation or chromosomal change is incredible. To quote Darwin himself when he was considering the complexity of the human eye — *To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.*

It is clear that the scientific evidence for evolution, particularly in the field of genetics, does not support the assumptions of the theory, and that the alternative, *The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is . . .* does not contradict any established scientific fact.

*Norman C Nevin, MD, BSc, FRCP
Professor of Medical Genetics,
The Queen's University of Belfast.*