Reviews

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The design argument for creation*

John Nicholls

IN ONE OF the creation psalms (107) the writer exclaims no less than four times, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!". It seems that it has ever been a trait in man's character that he prefers not to credit the Creator with the honour that is due to Him, even though, as the psalm so clearly shows, the evidence of His wise and generous provision is to be seen all around us.

The same psalm speaks of those who go down to the sea in ships, who see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep, and who are ultimately brought to their desired haven. The evidence for design is to be observed in the whole of the biosphere, and those who have an honest and humble mind appreciate the hand of our Maker and praise Him, as the psalmist exclaims.

Brother David Pearce has therefore rendered a service to the Brotherhood, and those who are seeking after the Truth, in writing a booklet on the design argument. Paradoxically, in an age when God's wonderful works are revealed in profusion with all the instruments now available to workers in science, there seems to be less and less acknowledgement of the purpose, forethought and design that are revealed.

The booklet is arranged in eight short chapters, the first of which sets out the basic argument against the evolutionary origin of living things and the shortcomings of the evolutionary theory. In the succeeding chapters, a number of interesting examples are given where logic would compel us to conclude that there is a Creator. The tear glands associated with the human eye, which cleanse the cornea, are secreting tears all the time and not only when we cry. They must have been created to work perfectly, with a drain to take away the surplus tears, from the beginning.

Next, the blood-clotting mechanism is considered. More than thirty chemical substances interact in this complex process, but we know from studies with haemophiliacs that only one of the chemicals needs to be missing for a life-threatening condition to arise, for which, in years gone by, there was no remedy. Evolutionists are unable to explain how chemical processes such as blood-clotting could arise so that all the chemicals and enzymes needed were in place simultaneously at the beginning.

A fascinating chapter on the healing and repair of broken and fractured bones follows, and then a chapter on the dispersal of seeds, which the reviewer enjoyed particularly. Common hedgerow trees such as the hawthorn or elderberry need to disperse their seeds away from the area where they are produced so that there is space, light and food for them to germinate and grow to maturity. A bright colour makes them visible to birds, a starchy layer in the seed ensures that the bird gets food, and a hard stone ensures that the embryo of the seed remains intact from the digestive juices of the bird. All three items must be there for birds successfully to disperse the seeds, and the author introduces some simple statistics (which even this non-mathematical reviewer could follow!) to show the probability of all three characteristics evolving at the same time. Read the booklet to find the answer, which you can be assured is very, very small.

The penultimate chapter is about coconuts and how they are dispersed (they are large seeds). Brother Pearce likens the forethought and design of the coconut and its dispersal by sea to the meticulous planning and checking that goes into the design and launching of a space capsule. Read the booklet if you are not convinced, or are just intrigued by this analogy. Finally, the lesson of the spider, which 3,000 years ago Agur was

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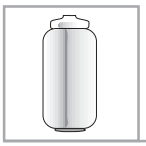
* *Evidence for Design*, David Pearce (2003). The Christadelphian, 404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham, B28 8SZ. £2.25 plus postage.

inspired to write about (Prov. 30:28), is spelled out again for us in the modern terms of the computer programme that is used repeatedly time and again without error. One of the most breathtakingly beautiful sights we can see on an autumn morning is a spider's web in a field or on trees. The author describes the marvellous mechanism, programmed into the spider's DNA, whereby the web is rapidly and unerringly manufactured, and the spider is enabled, as Agur said, to be "in king's palaces".

The booklet ends with a review entitled, appropriately enough, "The Finger of God". The booklet is commended to the children and young people in our midst, who need to be encouraged to see the clear and logical arguments that there are against evolution, and to those who are of older years but who have retained their youthful interest in, and enthusiasm for, the wonderful works of creation which surround us in constant witness to the wisdom and mercy of Him Who has made all things well.



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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The Sinai Peninsula

5. The birds of Sinai (Part 1)*

David Green

THOUGH ANIMALS tend to be rare in Sinai, quite a number of species live there. These include gazelles, ibex, leopards, wild cats, sand foxes, jackals, hares, hedgehogs and moles. In addition there are indigenous birds such as falcons and eagles, together with the temporary presence of a number of migrating species, such as quails, cranes and storks.

As with the trees and shrubs of Sinai, dealt with in the previous article, it is not possible within the scope of this study to give a comprehensive survey of all the species associated with the area. Those selected will be in most cases ones that are mentioned in the Bible. This article and the following one consider some of the characteristic birds of the Sinai region,[1] and a further article will consider some of the animals.

The quail

The quail referred to in the Bible is the common migratory quail, the only migratory species of its kind. It is found in Europe, Asia and North Africa and is a summer visitor to the UK, though usually rather scarce. These birds are small and plump, about seven inches long, with a very small tail. Their plumage is buff and brown mottled, barred and streaked with black, dark brown and white.

In the past, migratory quails were found in tremendous numbers in the Middle East, and were easily knocked down with sticks or trapped with nets, as they fly low, only about three or four feet above the ground. They feed on seeds, green shoots, insects, small snails and other small invertebrates. On migration they tend to keep to small parties of no more than forty birds. The Hebrew name for quail is *selav*, having the meaning of 'sluggishness', from their slowness in flight, and the Arabic is *salwa*, signifying 'to be fat', describing the round form and the fat flesh of these birds.[2]

The children of Israel were miraculously supplied with quail on two occasions during their wilderness journey. The first was while they were in the Wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:12,13), and then again, about one year later, on a much larger scale, after leaving Sinai, at the place called Kibroth Hattaavah (Graves of Craving). On that

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* Quotations from the NKJV unless stated otherwise.

1. The details provided in this article are for the most part taken from *Purnell's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Animal Life* and *The Natural History of the Bible*, H. B. Tristram, second edition, 1868, SPCK.
2. *Strong's Concordance* and Tristram, *op. cit*., p. 231.