

Publishing Editor's column

MUCH ATTENTION has been paid recently to the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin on 12 February 1809. Later this year it will be the 150th anniversary of his most well-known work, *On the Origin of Species*. Despite the opposition his work initially attracted, when he died in April 1882 he was given a state funeral in Westminster Abbey, and he has continued to be honoured as a great scientist ever since.

This anniversary has led to many articles being published, as well as books, and the BBC has broadcast a number of radio and television programmes. The case for evolution has been put aggressively, with alternative views contemptuously rejected. In running a feature about the anniversary, my local newspaper published articles by Professor Andrew Bourke, professor of evolutionary biology at the local university, in which he asserts regarding evidence for creation, "There is none", and concludes: "Choose your hypothesis; the facts have chosen mine". An American professor of evolution is quoted as saying in an interview that there is overwhelming evidence for evolution, and that the question of evolution versus creation is not worth considering because there is simply no evidence for creation.

When director of education at the Royal Society, Michael Reiss, said last autumn that creationism should be discussed in schools if pupils raised it, he was forced to resign, despite having declared that he himself was a convinced evolutionist. Those who are most prominent in promoting evolution are generally very aggressive in opposing even discussion of creationism or intelligent design. Despite this, however, belief in creation, or at least doubts about evolution, refuse to go away. Last December, a poll of school teachers in the UK showed that thirty-seven per cent of teachers thought that creation should be taught alongside evolution, and sixty-five per cent thought that creationism should be discussed. According to another poll, less than half the population of the UK are convinced of evolution, despite its promotion in schools and the media for decades as the only valid explanation of the origin of life.

In January there was some controversy over the appearance of adverts on buses in London and elsewhere saying, "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy life". But why "probably"? It would appear that even the

atheistic evolutionists behind the advert are not totally convinced of their beliefs after all.

What seems to me to be lacking in the admittedly rather limited amount of material that I have sampled recently is much in the way of arguments for evolution. We seem to be expected to accept evolution as an established fact, beyond discussion. One wonders if those who aggressively dismiss intelligent design as not worth considering are aggressive because they realise that their case is weak. One wonders also if Darwin himself would be so keen on evolution if he was around today, given that in over a century the fossils of transitions from one species to another that ought to exist if evolution has occurred have never been found, and that even the supposed simple cell turns out to be amazingly complex.

I would like to introduce the idea here of common sense. It was surely common sense that the complex debt-based financial systems that were built up over the years would turn out to be unsustainable; and, as we all know, they were. These financial systems were devised by highly intelligent people but lacking in the sense to see the obvious, in all probability blinded by greed. Likewise, it is common sense that things do not make themselves, and the more complex they are the more impossible it is that they should have done so. However, very clever minds seek to prove that evolution is viable and creation impossible, exalting man and seeking to remove a Creator to Whom they owe allegiance.

This last point surely explains why the opposition to the idea of a Creator is so virulent. The creation/evolution debate is not just about the origin of life. Evolution is the basis of modern Western society and civilisation. Man is believed to be moving on an upward path, with scientific development in the end curing all ills. Morality is based on what men think, with no acknowledgement of a higher authority. In practice, of course, this way of thinking is leading man to disaster. Problems are getting worse, and will, we believe, become insoluble; the natural wickedness of man, unrestrained by any idea of Divine authority, is leading to all manner of social evils for which there is no clear solution. Only the Creator can save His creation, and thankfully He will do so, although it will require severe judgement first on man's wickedness.

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