

YPS

Volume 6 Number 4

Inside this Issue

EDITED BY IAN REES

2009 – The Year of Darwin?

Page 1

Singing with Understanding

Page 6

'So, it's Goodbye from him ...'

Page 8

YPS

(Young Precious Seed)

is a supplement of *Precious Seed International* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live.

YPS is published by *Precious Seed International*, P.O. Box 573, Fareham, UK, PO14 9FB, and is also available separately from the magazine.

© PRECIOUS SEED INTERNATIONAL

2009 - The Year of Darwin?

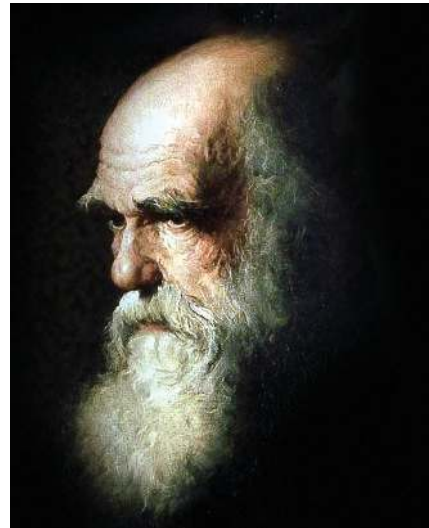
2009 has been called 'The Year of Darwin'. It is the 200th anniversary of his birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his hugely influential book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* - a book greatly applauded by many and yet greatly regretted by not a few. This has been a significant year for promoting evolution even more than usual, with events organized all over the world in Darwin's memory. In the UK a £2 coin has been struck to mark it, on its reverse an image of Darwin facing a chimpanzee.

To many, this milestone marks more progress on the onward march of atheism. But believers in the Bible-based account of divine creation have nothing new to fear, in fact have nothing at all to fear. Our faith rests on the perfect revelation of the Creator God Himself, not the imperfect reasonings and biased proposals of man.

What kind of man was Darwin to have such a deep and lasting influence upon science and popular thinking? How did he reach those conclusions which are now taken for granted? Did he have any encounter with the Bible and Christianity? What about his family life and lifestyle? Here are some answers to these questions [1].

Family Background and Early Life

Charles Robert Darwin was born on 12th February 1809 in Shrewsbury, England, the second youngest of six children. His father Robert Darwin was a wealthy doctor, with a staunch



2009 – The Year of Darwin?

Unitarian religious background, as had his mother Susannah, the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, the pioneer of the elegant blue and white Wedgwood pottery. As a baby Charles was 'baptized' in the Anglican church but attended the Unitarian chapel with his mother. His first school was run by a Unitarian preacher, but when he was eight his mother died, and thereafter he and his older brother Erasmus went to a local Anglican boarding school.

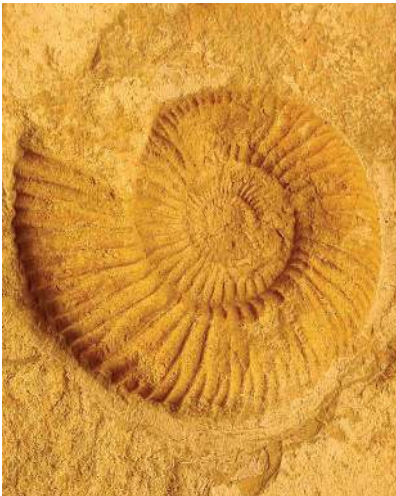
After his schooling, for a short time he was an assistant to his father who sent him to the University of Edinburgh to study medicine at the age of sixteen. But contact with human suffering and the sight of blood proved too much for him. He neglected his medical studies and side-stepped into taxidermy, botany and zoology during his second year. This annoyed his father immensely, who then sent him to Christ's College, Cambridge, to study for a BA degree, intending this to be a step towards 'the ministry' in the Church of England. However, his interest in

natural history developed further at Cambridge, influenced by Sedgwick, a geologist and Henslow, a botanist who believed that scientific work was 'natural theology'. William Paley's writings also impressed him, *Evidences of Christianity*, and *Natural Theology* which argued for design in nature and explained adaptation as God acting through laws of nature (which it is!). In his final examination in January 1831 he came tenth out of a pass list of 178.

The Famous *Beagle* Voyage

He spent the rest of 1831 doing field work in geology and biology, then in December, he found a place as a self-funded naturalist on *HMS Beagle* under the command of Robert Fitzroy, a strict man with fundamentalist religious beliefs. The voyage was to take two years charting the coast of South America, but it lasted for five years and circumnavigated the globe. Darwin was often badly seasick, for many days lying in his hammock eating only raisins. On board the *Beagle*, he would often quote the Bible as an authority on morality.

Observing the great variety of geological formations in different continents Darwin tried to reason how these came about by the effects of natural forces. He also observed many fossils and living creatures never seen before, sending many specimens back to England. At this time he read Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* which described gradual geological change over immense periods of time. These observations and ideas set him thinking about a



new theory to account for the origin of different species which heretofore he had believed were the result of divine creation.

The *Beagle* returned to England in October 1836. By then, Darwin was a celebrity thanks to the specimens and reports he had sent home. He travelled and lectured widely, interacting with many other scientists. He developed his theory about *Transmutation of Species* (he did not call it evolution) and started to write seriously. Work on his famous book had begun, but aware of its controversial nature he hesitated repeatedly over publication. That would not be until 1859, but other things intervened.

Marriage and Later Life

The strain of overwork affected his health. Stomach problems and heart disease, worsened by stress, plagued him for the rest of his life. His doctors recommended spells of living in the country. One such spell with his Wedgwood relatives found him with a charming and intelligent lady called Emma, his cousin nine months his senior. Romance blossomed, and in January 1839 Charles Darwin married Emma Wedgwood in an Anglican/Unitarian ceremony. Emma held staunch Christian beliefs which she never abandoned. He had told her all about his new ideas on origins, by that time clearer in his mind. They candidly shared their differences, but Emma expressed her deep concerns that they might be separated after death because of this.

They lived at Downe, Kent, where

Charles Darwin died on 19th April 1882. He was given a state funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey. Sadly, there seems to be no truth in a story published in 1915 that he returned to Christianity and trusted Christ at the end of his life

they had ten children. Two of them died in infancy, and he was particularly distressed by the death of his 10-year old daughter Annie in 1851. By then he had abandoned any profession of Christianity and had stopped going to church.

Later in life he professed to be 'an agnostic' rather than an atheist denying the existence of God. But his upbringing, his belief in the truth of the Bible while at Cambridge, his quotations from scripture on board the *Beagle*, his church attendance in the early years of his marriage were all now far away. He adopted the position of denying all miracles and denying the factual and historical basis of the Gospels.

Charles Darwin died on 19th April 1882. He was given a state funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey. Sadly, there seems to be no truth in a story published in 1915 that he returned to Christianity and trusted Christ at the end of his life [2]. It is sad also that this story is still used by some to discredit evolution without checking the facts. Many other better reasons exist, the greatest being the Bible, the word of God.

2009 – The Year of Darwin?

The Origin of Species, 1859

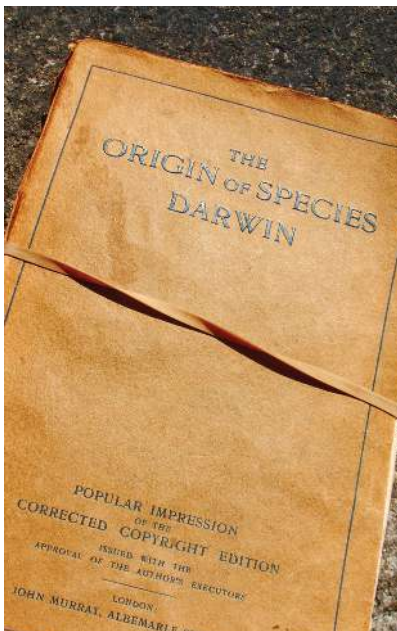
Darwin was forced to publish swiftly. In 1857 Alfred Wallace published a paper on the *Introduction of Species*. Seeing the similarities with Darwin's theory his friend Lyell urged him to establish precedence. On 18 June 1858, another paper by Wallace described natural selection. Shocked that he really had been forestalled, Darwin consulted Lyell. They quickly decided on a joint presentation of Darwin's work at the Linnean Society on 1 July. However, his youngest son of 18 months died of scarlet fever on 28 June and he was too distraught to attend.

On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life (its full title) was published on 22 November 1859. All 1,250 copies sold out at once. In the book, Darwin set out 'one long argument' with

observations, inferences and consideration of anticipated objections. He did not link man to animal ancestors in this book, afraid of its deeper implications, but in two more books published in 1871 and 1872 he clearly stated this link. His 1859 book has been called the most influential book ever published, although that accolade far more deservedly belongs to the Bible, and for far better reasons.

Reaction to it was mixed. Some scientists supported it enthusiastically, most notably Thomas Huxley, whose vigorous support earned him the title 'Darwin's bulldog'. But others had grave doubts [3]. The same was true within the Church of England - his Cambridge tutors Sedgwick [4] and Henslow dismissed the ideas, but the growing band of liberals interpreted natural selection as 'an instrument of God's design'. The process continues. In 2008, the Church of England issued an article saying that the 200th anniversary of his birth was a fitting time to apologize to him.⁵

Darwin never observed the transmutation (change) of species - this has never been observed because it does not happen! Species are permanent with fixed boundaries. What he did observe was adaptation within species in response to environmental conditions, a well-recognized process throughout nature. His bold, hypothetical jump was from 'microevolution' (observed) to 'general evolution' (imagined). Once he publicized this idea, others gladly seized upon it, and have used it



ever since to bolster atheism and materialism because that is what they prefer.

So is 2009 the Year of Darwin? – the man who gave mankind its true place as descended from primates and then from vague ancestors all the way back to nothing?

No, it is 2009 AD – ***‘the year of our Lord’***. Year after year we remember the Son of God becoming man in order to redeem us, so that we might obtain the privileged place of the very sons of God, 1 John 3. 1. ‘His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him’, Ps. 72. 17.

References

1. Factual material from *Charles Darwin - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* en.wikipedia.org
2. *Darwin's Deathbed Conversion — a Legend?*
www.answersingenesis.org
3. ‘I have also seldom read a scientific book which makes such wide-ranging conclusions with so few facts supporting them ... I regard this as somewhat of a high-handed hypothesis, because he argues using unproven possibilities, without even naming a single example of the origin of a particular species’, J. H. BLASIUS, director of the Duke's Natural History Museum, Germany, in 1859.
4. Sedgwick wrote to Darwin, ‘I have read your book with more pain than pleasure. Parts of it I admired greatly, parts I laughed at till my sides were sore; other parts I read with absolute sorrow because I think them utterly false and grievously mischievous’. Cited by H.

Enoch, *Evolution or Creation?*, Evangelical Press, p.145.

5. M. Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs (2008) wrote, ‘Charles Darwin: 200 years from your birth, the Church of England owes you an apology for misunderstanding you and, by getting our first reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand you still’.

BERT CARGILL was a chemistry lecturer for over thirty years. He has contributed to the work of the St. Monans assembly ever since his conversion as a teenager and has written several books and articles on this and other subjects.



Singing with understanding

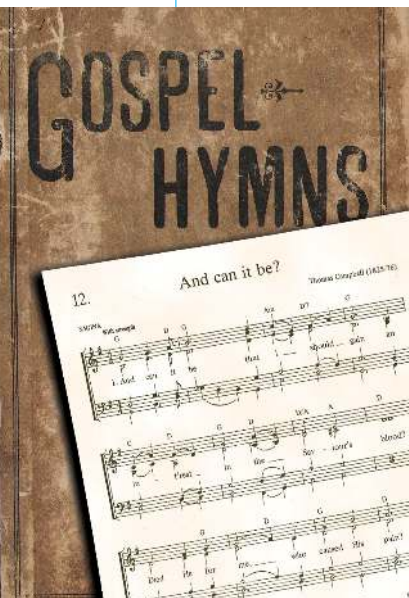
Singing plays a major part in Christian worship and experience. Right from the very beginning of the creation of this world there was singing: it is God Himself who tells us that, when He laid the foundations of the earth, 'The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy', Job 38. 4-7. Heaven is a place of joy and it will be a place of singing, Rev. 5. 7-11; Rev. 14. 2-3; Rev. 15. 3. Even God Himself sings, we are told, for 'the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing', Zeph. 3. 17.

The human heart and voice sing when they are happy and joyful. The very first mention of singing comes in Exodus chapter 15. God has just delivered His people in stunning and thoroughly unexpected circumstances. They have escaped what appeared to be certain annihilation and their enemies have been swept

away in the floods of the river. What is the result? For the first time in the Bible we read that men sang, 'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea', 15. 1. This

singing expressed praise to God for His power and thanksgiving for His deliverance. So believers, in both Old and New Testaments, are encouraged to sing God's praises, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things', Psa. 98. 1; 'Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Ps. 149.1; 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness', Ps. 30.4; 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord', Col. 3. 16.

Believers over the years have collected hymns and songs to enable them to sing together; that is one of the main purposes of the book of Psalms. It may very well be that the 'faithful sayings' of the Pastoral Epistles were snatches of hymns or songs that believers in New Testament days had learned to sing. But what songs or hymns should believers sing? Are only old hymns, that have stood the test of time, acceptable to sing? Is anything new worth singing? Is anything old still worth singing? On the one hand, mature believers enjoy singing old familiar hymns, and with very good reason, yet young believers, sadly, often find the words of such hymns old fashioned and don't appreciate them. Young believers, on the other hand, enjoy singing what's modern, what's fresh, what's new, yet older believers, sadly, often don't like modern hymns and songs and don't appreciate them. Yet surely we should be willing to accept both old and



new, provided the songs or hymns are well written, express soundly Christian faith and experience and are useful.

Many old hymns, it has to be said, were badly written, are dated in their expressions and dodgy in their theology; many new ones are also badly written, sloppy in their expressions and dodgy in theology. We need to use discernment in our choice of songs. The Bible does, after all, encourage us to think about what we are singing, and to use our brains as well as our tongues.

What is the point, for instance, in singing three verses of a song that says, 'The greatest thing in all my life is knowing You' if verse two says, 'The greatest thing in all my life is loving You' and verse three says, 'The greatest thing in all my life is serving You'? How can there be three 'greatest things'? It doesn't even make sense. What is the point of singing, often to those who are not saved, and don't know Bible stories anymore as people used to, 'Escape thou for thy life, tarry not in all the plain, nor behind thee look, no never, lest thou be consumed in pain'? What are they going to make of that? Many older Christians will not like an expression in a modern song that says the Lord 'took the fall and thought of me above all'. This is because, theologically speaking, the 'fall' is something that happened to Adam and Eve when sin came into the world, whereas the expression in the hymn is an American way of saying the Lord 'took the blame, the responsibility, for our sin'. There we are, you see. Modern songwriters are



By IAN REES

sloppy and dodgy. Yet I can remember growing up and hearing a brother regularly give out that lovely hymn 'And can it be that I should gain' by Charles Wesley. Yet without fail, the brother would read out disapprovingly the expression 'emptied Himself of all but love' and say this was error, for the Lord never emptied Himself of His divine nature. The phrase needs to be understood in the context of Philippians chapter 2 verse 7, where 'made himself of no reputation' can be translated 'emptied himself'. Did Wesley believe the Lord emptied Himself of His divine nature? Not at all, Wesley's other hymns are full of sublime expressions of the divinity of the Lord. Yet the hymn is still worth singing and no one would refuse to select it. The same can be said of a modern song that says the Lord Jesus, on the cross, 'became nothing'. Did He really become nothing? Was He not always the only begotten of the Father? Of course. Yet in the context of reputation, Phil. 2. 7 again, and in the context of suffering for sin, it can be said that He 'became nothing' as to reputation. The theology is no more dodgy than Wesley's.

Many Christian songs, both old and new, were written for individual

singing and are not suitable for congregations to sing together. The old song 'I come to the garden alone' is never selected for congregational use. It is a song, not a hymn. So, also, many new songs cannot be selected for Christian worship because they are not suitable. Styles of poetry and worship change. Christian hymns and songs these days seldom rhyme and they don't scan well either. Styles of music and tunes change too. Yet surely we should be willing to make careful selection of hymns and songs to sing publicly. Don't dismiss everything that's old merely because it is old, or everything new simply because it is new. Don't, on the other hand, sing everything old because it is old and everything new because it is new. Older believers enjoy singing the grand old hymns of the Christian faith and younger believers should learn to do the same. Young believers enjoy singing 'a new song' and older believers should learn to do the same. Whether we sing old or new, let us remember to lift our voices to God in heartfelt expressions of praise and thanksgiving, singing with the heart, but with the understanding also. As Paul says, 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also,' 1 Cor. 14. 15.

'So, it's Goodbye from him ...'

This issue of *Young Precious Seed* brings us to the end of its sixth year. It was first introduced in 2003 and its aim was to deal with issues that young believers face, subjects upon which we all should have an opinion, and a biblical one at that, or subjects which are not normally preached on from the pulpit. On the ethical front, we have looked at what the Bible teaches about abortion, euthanasia, whether the death penalty for murderers is biblical or not, gambling, animal rights and homosexuality. We have looked at what a biblically-based local church looks like, how it should function, how we can join it and what should our responsibilities be in it. We have studied baptism and fellowship, the breaking of bread and we also looked at prayer by studying the Lord's Prayer. We have looked at what the Bible teaches about courtship and marriage, and whether it is all right to marry a non-Christian. We have also taken a good look at what the Bible teaches about God – what He looks like, where He lives, who made Him, what He knows and what He can do, whether He is ever unkind or unfair. We ran a series on how to study the Bible, and also a series on the wise sayings from the book of Proverbs and we looked into the mirror and saw some of the foolish attitudes we should not show in our lives. We also found some comfort from the word of God on how we can have assurance of salvation and *know* that we are soundly saved.

I have thoroughly enjoyed setting up and editing YPS over these six years, and also setting up youngpreciousseed.org with its special web-only content. However, it is time to move on and this issue, with an article on Charles Darwin, will be my last as editor. Stephen Baker is going to take over YPS and will bring a fresh look, a new vision and a different approach to it. I know you will continue to enjoy reading it, and recommending it to others. My responsibilities for a while will be on the editing of books for Precious Seed Publications. It is my hope that you will buy some of these books and find them useful to you. Happy reading!



Ian Rees