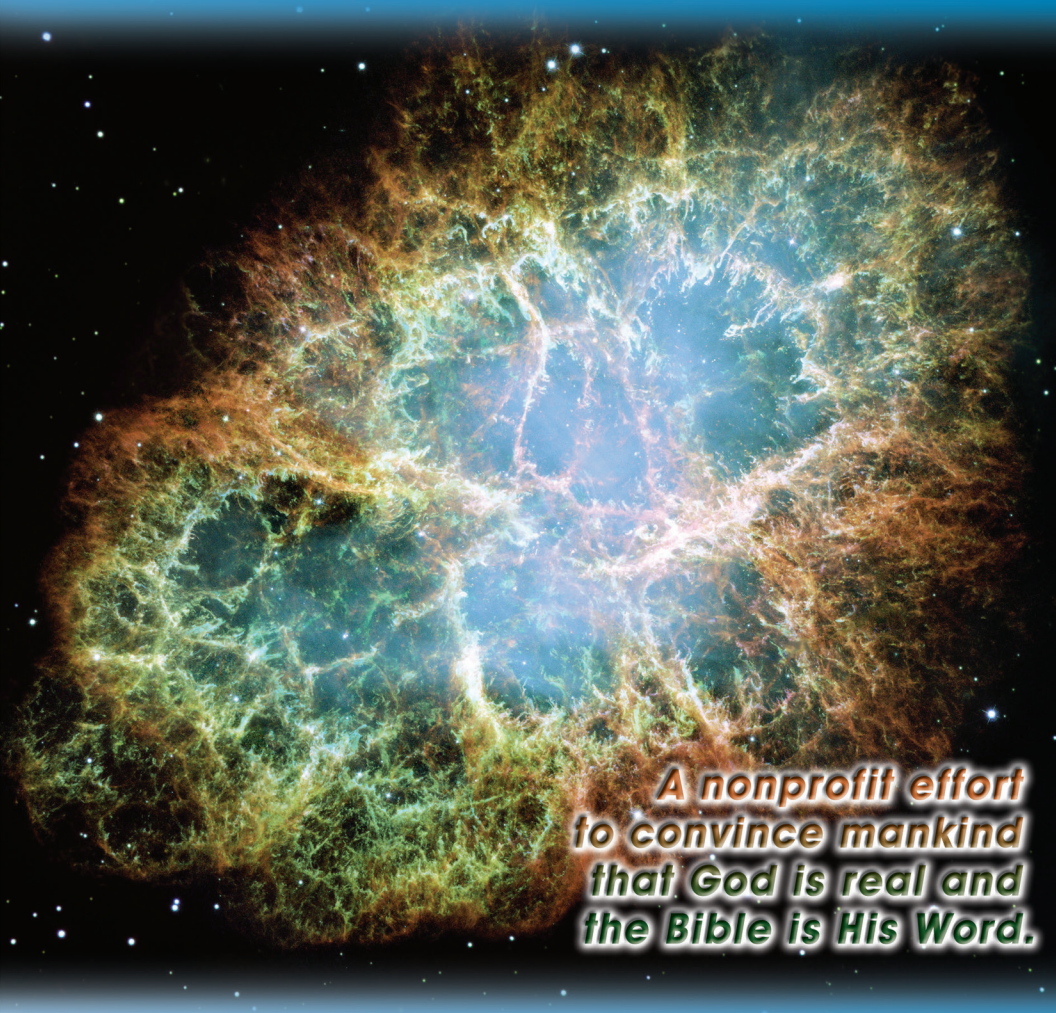


DOES GOD EXIST?

First Quarter 2017
Vol. 44 No. 1



*A nonprofit effort
to convince mankind
that God is real and
the Bible is His Word.*

PSALM 19 IN 2017

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For the Christian, all of these new discoveries are strong supports for belief in God and for the integrity of the biblical record.

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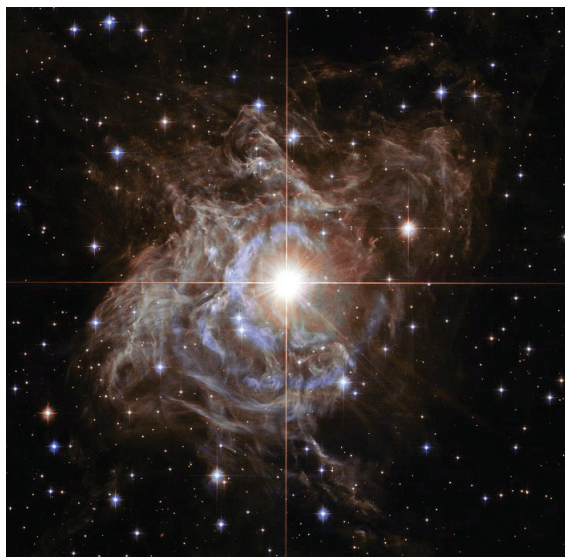


PSALM 19 IN 2017

**THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD;
THE SKIES PROCLAIM THE WORK OF HIS
HANDS. DAY AFTER DAY THEY POUR FORTH
SPEECH; NIGHT AFTER NIGHT THEY REVEAL
KNOWLEDGE.
Psalm 19:1, 2**

When I began my university training in earth science and astronomy in 1955, our view of the cosmos and what you could see in the night sky was very limited. As we looked through our telescopes, we could see eight other planets and a handful of moons that were orbiting those planets. We also knew that there were other fuzzy objects that were clearly more distant from Earth than our own solar system. Over the years there had been many observations made by astronomers that stretched our understanding of the size of the cosmos. We knew that in 1054 Chinese astronomers without telescopes had watched a star explode. Today, we can use the Hubble Space Telescope to see the Crab Nebula which is the residue from that explosion (cover picture and above). As our telescopes improved, we became aware that the fuzzy objects were actually other galaxies, massive universes of billions of stars spinning around a core.

With the constant growth of knowledge came mysteries. The galaxies were spinning so fast that no force known to science could keep them from flying apart. The measurements of the speed of the galaxies as they went through space showed that the galaxies in front of us are moving faster than we are, and the galaxies behind us are moving slower than we are. We now know that we are in an expanding universe. Our simple tools of physics like the Doppler effect helped us understand these motions, and simple mathematical tools like triangulation helped us understand the distances involved.



Hubble Image of RS Puppis, one of the brightest known Cepheid variable stars in our Milky Way galaxy.

As astronomers studied stars called Cepheid variable stars in our part of space, they realized that the changes in brightness of these stars were a function of how fast they flickered. That meant astronomers knew exactly how bright the star was, and since physics tells us that how bright a light source is divided by how far away it is (squared) will give you the brightness you will actually see. The physics equation is $E = I/x^2$ where E is

the brightness we measure, I is the known intensity of the light, and X is how far away the light is from us. We now have the ability to measure distance on a galactic scale. Recently astronomers discovered that type 1a supernovae always have the same brightness, so another tool has been discovered to make measurements in space.

All of this has led to new understandings in the twenty-first century. Having telescopes in Earth orbit above the atmosphere's distortion, and huge telescopes that can gather very faint light intensities has radically changed our understandings. We now know that what holds galaxies together is a form of matter/energy called dark matter that we did not know existed. We have learned that the galaxies are speeding up in their expansion, not slowing down as one would expect. Dark energy is applying a previously unknown repulsive force to objects in the cosmos. We have learned that the solar system includes many planets beyond our traditional nine planets, and we have discovered that most stars have planetary systems orbiting them. As we gather light from



Our nearest neighbor galaxy Andromeda as seen by NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer

distant light sources, we have become aware that our galaxy is just one of millions or perhaps billions of galaxies.

In addition to the advances in astronomy, which deal with the very large, we have made incredible advances in understanding the very small. The science that allows us to do this is quantum mechanics. We are beginning to understand what it takes to make an electric charge and mass, meaning that electrons and protons are end products of a whole new science that has different rules and laws that govern how these things are produced.

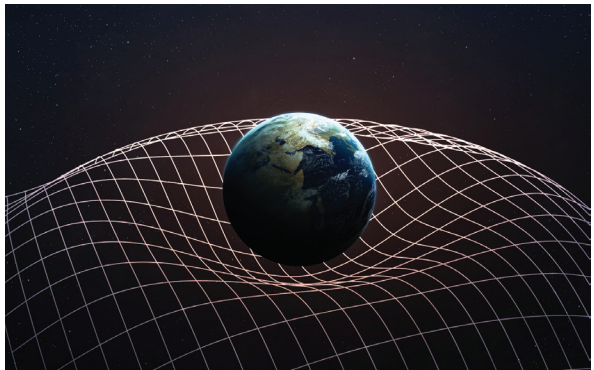
In spite of our growth in knowledge and our accumulation of amazing facts, our ignorance is profound. As Dr. Bob Berman recently wrote in *Astronomy* magazine (August 2016, page 6) “Our ignorance of the overall cosmos is profound—including basics like what it is, how it started, whether it is infinite, its destiny, what it’s composed of, and the relationship between the living and the nonliving.”

For the Christian, all of these new discoveries are strong supports for belief in God and for the integrity of the biblical record. Genesis 1:1 indicates that God created everything above us. The Hebrew word *bara* translated “created” in your Bible refers to a process only God can do. It is used with the Hebrew word *shamayim* which

All of these new discoveries are strong supports for belief in God and for the integrity of the biblical record.

is translated “heaven” in your Bible and refers to everything above us—the galaxies, nebulae, extra solar planets, asteroids, meteoroids, comets, as well as the Sun, Moon, and black holes. *Bara* is not used in verses 14–19 where the chronometers of time are established. There the word is *asah* which tells us natural processes shaped and molded the universe we live in to make it hospitable for humans.

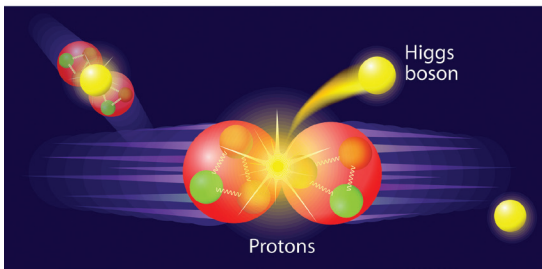
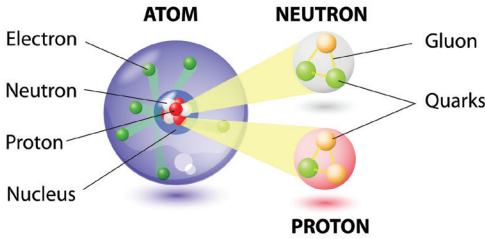
As we explore dark matter, we see how God used a strange form of matter as the glue to hold galaxies together. As we learn about gravity waves, we see a complex tool God used to shape all matter and mold the earth so that we



could live on it. New measurements of the size of the cosmos have told us there are 1.2 million galaxies in a volume of 650 cubic billion light years (*Astronomy*, November 2016, page 10) expanding our understanding of God’s power and magnitude.

No one should see all of these new discoveries as a threat to belief in God or to the credibility of the Bible as God’s Word. In reality, each new discovery helps us understand the complexity of

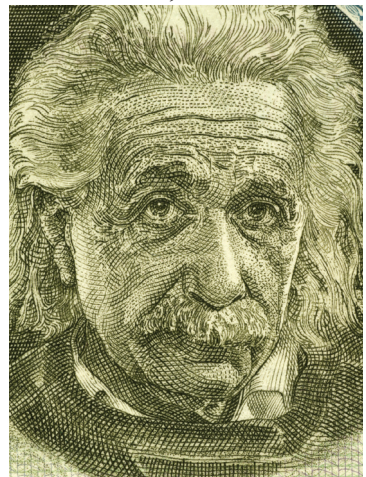
HIGGS BOSON



creation more fully. The Higgs Boson, gravity waves, and all of the laws of quantum mechanics speak to the difficulty of creating matter in a stable form, and of designing an atom with the creation of electric charge and the use of quarks and neutrinos to manufacture stable matter in all of its forms. We are just beginning to understand how simultaneity may have contributed to the formation of solar systems and molecular structures. Some of

these discoveries have tantalizing suggestions about how some of the miracles in the Bible took place, and even such simple things as how God can hear everyone’s prayer at once. This does not make the miracles non-miracles but shows God’s capacity to control things at a level beyond our ability to fully understand.

One of Einstein’s best quotes is “God is subtle, but He is not malicious.”¹ For many of us in science, discovering something new is simply a wonderment at what God has done. Einstein talks about the amazing complexity of God’s creation. “Religious feeling takes the form of rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the thinking and acting of human beings is insignificant.”² Dr. Henry Schaeffer gives a similar view when he speaks of his own scientific discoveries, “The significance and joy in my science comes in those occasional moments of discovering something new and saying



Albert Einstein

to myself, ‘So that’s how God did it.’ My goal is to understand a little corner of God’s plan.”³ Isaac Newton said, “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”⁴ Dr. Frank Baxter gave another view saying, “The more we know of the creation, the closer we get to the Creator.”⁵ We are so fortunate to live at a time when knowledge is exploding, and our understandings are so much better than in the past. Understanding what God has done and maybe even a little about how he did it, should not create anxiety within us. It should fill us with gratitude and wonderment at what we are and what we understand as we stare into the heavens and look into the basic materials of which we are made. This should also raise for us the question posed by the psalmist David, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, and human beings that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3–4).



Isaac Newton

— John N. Clayton

1. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein
2. http://www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/einstein_religion.html
3. Henry F. Schaefer, *Science and Conflicts: Conflict or Coherence?* The Apollos Trust, © 2003, page 42.
4. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton
5. “The Strange Case of the Cosmic Rays,” Bell Laboratories, video number 3, 1957

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As we are well into the twenty-first century, science continues to bring us amazing things. We have all kinds of electronic devices including medical advances that allow hope and sometimes incredible recovery from diseases that used to be fatal. We now have phones that have changed the way we communicate and how we take and display pictures. We have wonderful new modes of transportation which not only move us great distances rapidly but bring us food and clothing in mint condition from far away places. Your author can remember seeing his first television set in the early 1950s. Because the cost of long distance calls was prohibitive in those days I can remember being able to talk to Grandma once a month. Our whole way of life has been radically changed by science.

We have also seen great advances in biological science. As we walk around town, we see people with small dogs that do not look anything like the old hounds we knew as kids. They just sat around barnyards chasing chickens and scratching fleas and ticks. People spend large amounts of money on the care of pets that would not last a day in the wild. We have meat that is low in fat, high in fiber, and “guaranteed” not to give us a disease. In the Midwest, we can get lobster and salmon from far way places or grown in salt-water fish farms in Indiana.

In spite of all this progress and affluence, we have young people living in physical poverty. Crime continues to be a blight on our culture, and violence continues to be a threat to us all. Our populations have several generations that depend on pharmaceuticals to maintain our emotional well-being. Mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction

and suicide have touched most of us in personal ways. The institution of marriage has become redefined to fit the desires of special interest groups. Children and the nuclear family are being structured in ways that are radically different than in the past. The list of issues demanding attention in the twenty-first century seems to be endless: polygamy, single parenthood, same-sex marriage, group marriage, abortion, euthanasia, pedophilia, homosexuality, transgenderism, animal rights, racism.



Because of all these issues, our society has polarized into two different camps.

One is the naturalist camp which claims that all of these issues can be solved by the proper application of science. Naturalists will point us to the things listed in the first two paragraphs of this article as proof that science can answer all of our needs and problems. The claim is that since all of these issues have scientific solutions, it is religion and religious people that are preventing the solutions from being applied.

The problem for the naturalist is that among their number are people who propose solutions that may have some scientific validity but are unacceptable to most people. An example of this is Peter Singer, the Ira W. DeCamp professor of bioethics at Princeton University. He has suggested that in the natural world, those individuals who are “unfit” are exterminated. He has proposed applying the principles of science to identify and exterminate people who put an economic load on society and do not contribute to the well-being of the human species. Euthanizing humans based upon intellectual ability, emotional stability, or their likelihood of being repeat offenders of the law would empty mental institutions, care facilities, and prisons, saving hundreds of billions of dollars. Singer’s proposals are repulsive to most scientists, but history is full of people who practiced these principles to one extent or another. (See *The New York Times*, June 6, 2010, for Singer’s editorial on this subject. Also in *Christianity Today*, August 2010, page 44.)

The other view of how to approach the issues of the twenty-first century is the religious approach. In the United States, Christianity has been a major player in addressing the needs of our culture, both physical needs and social problems. It is difficult to read Matthew 25:31–46 and not see that Jesus Christ expects his followers to address these problems. Alvin Schmidt, in his excellent book *Under the Influence* shows the wonderfully positive things that have come from people following what Jesus said and commanded. Skeptics



point out the bad things done by people who claimed to be Christians, but those things were done in opposition to what Jesus taught. The same cannot be said of naturalism which has been used to justify sterilizing people deemed to be unfit, and the horror of ethnic cleansing in war after war.

People advocating the Christian approach to solving our social problems have opened food banks and homeless shelters. They have provided clothing and education to children living in poverty, run medical missions, and operated institutions of higher learning. They have provided transportation, opened libraries and elementary schools, and run orphanages. They have operated

nursing homes, provided for the mentally challenged, brought relief in natural disasters, and built houses and shelters throughout the world.

Naturalism based on science principles alone will not do these things. Just as the scientific community has its extremists, so too does the religious community. In Topeka, Kansas, the Westboro Baptist Church has advocated a blind rejection of most mainline science and has opposed attempts to have a culture that functions in the world community. They have picketed funerals of soldiers killed in military service. Based on their interpretation of the Bible, they advocate a blind resistance to all secular solutions to world and national problems. Some creationist groups have taken their doctrinal views and attempted to force them into public schools. Not only is the science they advocate frequently very bad science, but also the consequences of their misguided statements frequently oppose valid scientific research. Several years ago a proponent of creationism claimed that Darwinism caused the Crusades, and tried to get public schools to exclude evolution from the curriculum on that basis. Groups like this do not represent what the broad spectrum of “Christians” believe and certainly do not represent what the Bible teaches.

What has happened is that a war has developed with both sides reacting to the extremists on the other side. A good example is the National Committee for Science Education (NCSE) which has organized teachers and college professors into a group which publishes a periodical, has many public speakers, and distributes a wealth of material for teachers that has increasingly become atheistic in content and attitude.

Avoiding the extremes of either side are groups like the Discovery Institute, Hugh Ross (Reasons to Believe), James Dobson (Focus on the Family), and Ravi Zacharias (RZIM) who take opposing views to naturalism from a biblical perspective. Their spokespersons are generally people who have the knowledge and credentials to present valid responses to atheist arguments.

We have titled this discussion “Evolution: The Needless War” because so much of the material being circulated and promoted is unnecessary. We now have both sides constructing museums, making Hollywood-type films, building edifices (such as a replica of Noah’s Ark), and jockeying for time on national television where high priced documentaries attempt to sell their position. There are five simple suggestions we would make for parents and Bible-school teachers which are not ambiguous or hard to understand. Raising kids is tough in today’s world. Having to choose between people who seem to have good academic credentials and yet contradict each other, makes it very hard for parents to know how to negotiate this war. They want their children to have a good education and good values that will help them make this world a better place to live.

SUGGESTION 1. Help your child understand that the word “evolution” means different things to different people and needs to be clearly defined. We all believe in “evolution.” No one doubts that there were no cockapoos on Noah’s Ark — whatever a person might believe about the ark. The word “evolution” means an unfolding type of change. When a preacher says “you can’t believe in evolution and believe the Bible” without explaining what he means by the word “evolution,” he does a terrible disservice to kids. The biology book the kids read from will define evolution in terms of change that can be seen. When people say, “Evolution is the basis of modern biology, and you can’t understand biology without understanding evolution,” it is important to understand what they mean. Are they talking about evolutionary theories such as punctuated equilibrium, cladistic drift, or other models; or are they making the basic point that biological organisms can change?



Kids need to understand that evolution is not a dirty word and that change in living things is not contested by anyone. What is contested

is how much the change can accomplish. In a biology class what they learn is how animals and plants have changed and will change, and how that can be used to develop medicines, foods, and other resources we all depend on. Jacob used evolution in his selection of

Kids need to understand that evolution is not a dirty word and that change in living things is not contested by anyone..

animals from Laban’s flocks in Genesis 30:26–43. Discussions of micro- and macro-evolution, and concerns over the extent to which evolution can change living things can remain open to discussion. There is no reason for a teacher to denigrate the Bible on the basis of evolution, and no need for a Bible class teacher to denigrate the word “evolution” and portray it as a detriment to faith.

SUGGESTION 2. Be sure your child understands that a huge number of scientists and many evolutionists are fundamental believers in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Bible as his Word.

One of the columns that has been a regular part of this journal is our “Scientists and God” column. This column contains quotes from famous scientists both in the past and in the world today. These quotes



are about faith and the Bible, not doctrinal views. Many of the people quoted are Nobel Prize winners or candidates for the prize. All of them are highly regarded scientists. In today’s world, there are people like Francis Collins, who was the director of the human genome project, who openly state their faith in Christ. I would urge parents to read this column to young people. It will help

to counteract the idea that the media seems to convey—that good scientists are atheists and that believers are nonproductive in their efforts in science.

SUGGESTION 3. Help your child realize that religious issues surrounding evolution are not generally salvation issues. I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Ralph Gilmore who is a professor at Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee. Both he and I have had a long history with the school. We disagree on questions about the age of the earth, and both of us are animated about this issue. At the same time, we agree that the age of the earth is not a salvation issue. We can support each other and work together without our opinions



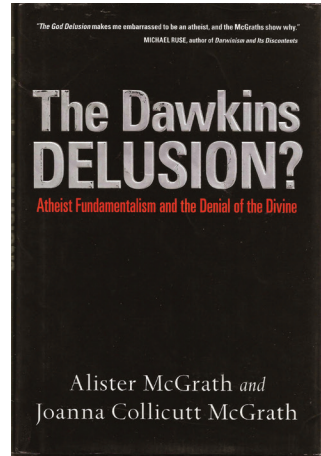
causing division or diluting our message. As both of us have dealt with serious illnesses in our wives, we have been drawn close to each other as brothers. That is what Christian love is about. We can be brothers in Christ without agreeing on an understanding of a scientific issue.

Biologists who are Christians can have different views about biological issues—stem cells, cloning, gene surgery, organ transplants, end of life decisions, etc. Science and Christianity overlap in many of these areas, and judgments and understandings are fluid and may change. There is too much polarizing in the church on issues that are not salvation issues. Young people need to understand that while we may disagree on a technical, scientific point, we are 100% united in our beliefs about Jesus, the church, and our relationship to God. Jesus prayed for unity among his followers, and we must not let our opinions about non-salvation issues destroy the unity Jesus prayed for (see John 17:20–26).

SUGGESTION 4. Be careful about what materials you bring into your home and/or Bible class. Material produced by various groups and denominations is likely to have religious and scientific error in it. Ronald Number's book *The Creationists* is a good resource to learn the denominational connections of the various creationist groups. It is vital that parents and teachers read through the material carefully. In many cases, you can still use the materials while avoiding sections that bring in denominational teachings, but do not blindly use any curriculum or materials. Also look at the credentials of the people who wrote the material. People with religious degrees are usually not good resources to use when explaining scientific materials, and material from science majors may not be a good way to study theology.



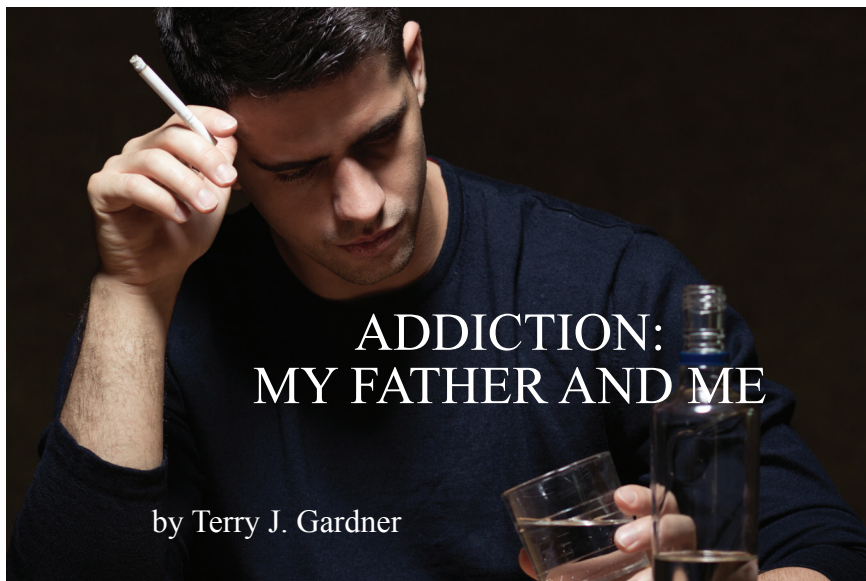
One good clue for the evaluation of literature is who and/or what is listed in the bibliographies and footnotes. One creationist tends to quote another creationist when science is being discussed. One evolutionist tends to quote another evolutionist when attacking the Bible. Michael Ruse said of Richard Dawkins, “He makes me embarrassed to be an atheist” (see Alister McGrath’s book *The Dawkins Delusion* in response to Dawkin’s book *The God Delusion*). When people are out of their field, they tend to quote someone who agrees with their view, and if that person is not educated on the issue at hand, the errors get multiplied.



SUGGESTION 5. The pulpit is not the place to attack scientific support for naturalism. When a preacher gives a Sunday morning sermon on evolution, some bad things automatically happen. People who believe in evolution become focused on finding a mistake in his message. Young people tend to postulate a debate between the preacher and their biology teacher at school. Sermons by their very nature are easy to misunderstand, especially when technical terms are used, and perhaps not always carefully defined. A better time for teaching about evolution is in class where visuals can be used, and discussion can take place. We have found that many congregations can use our free video series for the classes. A teacher’s guide is available, and the material is free. You can download the videos from our doesgodexist.tv website, and the discussion guides can also be downloaded. If you prefer, you can get the DVDs from us (see page 19). There are many other good resources on this subject available and we can provide a bibliography upon request. Avoid groups that have denominational connections and sponsorship.

We need to avoid making Sunday morning a war zone within our buildings. Worship is time to praise our God, to give thanks for the good things in life, and to motivate us to better service and a greater conformity to God’s will for our lives. It is not a time to disturb our young with religious controversies about scientific issues.

—JNC



ADDICTION: MY FATHER AND ME

by Terry J. Gardner

God gave my father many gifts. He was intelligent, handsome and physically strong. In his youth, he was “tough,” and yet he knew the words of the Bible as well as anyone I have ever met. He could speak fluently—without notes—intelligently and, often, wisely. But my father was addicted to nicotine, hard liquor, and gambling.

In my earliest memories, my father smoked—first unfiltered Camels, then filtered Camels and, later, Pall Malls. When he discovered that he could buy a non-smokers insurance policy if he smoked cigars, he switched to Rum Soaked Crooks and, later, Bering Imperial Cigars. Today, 25 Bering Imperials sell for \$96.25.



Dad had a champagne taste, but he had no budget. He smoked from the moment he woke up in the morning until he went to bed at night. He showered with a lit cigar. If he swam in a pool,

he swam with a lit cigar. When my father’s first grandson was born, someone told my sister that the child favored my father. “Does he have a cigar in his mouth?” she asked.

My father’s trouble with alcohol began when he was sixteen and left home for a year. Later, he decided he wanted to preach, and he overcame his thirst for alcohol for some time. By the time I was in high school, he had begun to drink more and more. He favored Scotch—the Johnny Walker Red Label. He would only have “one” drink at night, but



that “one” was refreshed over and over. When he drank, he would call me lazy and worthless, suggesting that I would never amount to anything. I knew the alcohol was talking, but it was still painful to hear.

As for gambling, my father preferred the horses frequenting Bay Mead-

ows, a track near our home in San Mateo. He enjoyed Las Vegas from time to time, and who knows what else. If you gamble long enough, the house always wins. My father gambled long enough.

I detested smoke from cigarettes and cigars and suffered from asthma as a small child. As I grew older, I pleaded with my father to quit smoking, but he could not do it.

Meanwhile, my father’s alcohol problem became unbearable. In the late 1980s, we intervened, persuading him to enter an alcohol treatment program in Minneapolis. He quit drinking for a while, but soon he was again a slave to alcohol. I don’t know



that my father ever tried to quit gambling. As in the song — “Papa was a rolling stone” when my father died, “all he left me was alone.”

In his life, my father suffered pain and grief. His mother and father had died of tuberculosis by the time he was seven years old. Two of his older sisters died from tuberculosis by 1949. Many people loved

my father and would have done anything for him. His choices made no sense to me. Whenever I asked his advice, his counsel was wise — but he did not follow his own advice.

Jesus teaches that “everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). In my father’s early life, drinking was



his choice, but once he passed a certain point, he became a slave to alcohol — and he could not stop drinking or smoking or gambling. The answer was clear — turn to God in faith. But faith requires humility, and my father was a proud man.

The Bible warns us, “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5) and “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). My father was determined to live life his way—as he had chosen—without counting the cost to his health, his family, or his God.

I am my father’s son, yet God expects something more of me. I cannot blame my father for who I am. God expects me to learn from my father’s mistakes and be a better man than he was.

God showed mercy to King Nebuchadnezzar, who did many things in his ignorance. But God showed no mercy to his son, King Belshazzar. Indeed, the prophet Daniel delivered the message of God

The Bible tells us to take every thought captive, to eat and drink in moderation, and to control every physical passion.

to Belshazzar, reminding him of all that happened to his father, and then added, “Yet you, his son Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven ... You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, hear or understand, but the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified” (Daniel 5:22, 23).

I have avoided some of the sins of my father, but other sins have been more challenging.

The Bible tells us to take every thought captive, to eat and drink in moderation, and to control every physical passion. I love to eat and recently found myself becoming addicted to diet Coke.

Humility, trust in God, accountability, and prayer, are necessary for self-control (or temperance). They are—inevitably—a daily battle. “I discipline my body and enslave it,” Paul wrote, “so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be lost” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

That call to self-control terrified Felix. You know what? It scares me, too.



SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: Atheists attempt to suggest that scientists are intelligent people who have rejected faith and do not believe in God. The fact is that some of the most productive scientists who have ever lived were believers in God. We share some of their thoughts with you in this column.

John Polkinghorne
(1930-)

Particle physicist
Professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge
President of Queen's College, Cambridge

Dr. Polkinghorne is the author of five books on physics, a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and a fellow of the Royal Society. He played a role in the discovery of the quark. In 1979 he resigned his chair to study to become a priest, and in 1982 he was ordained as an Anglican priest. Nancy Frankenberry of Dartmouth describes Polkinghorne as the finest British theologian/scientist of our time. Here are some of Polkinghorne's statements:



“Science and religion address aspects of the same reality.” “There are five points of comparison between the ways in which science and theology pursue truth: moments of enforced radical revision, a period of unresolved confusion, new synthesis and understanding, continued wrestling with unresolved problems, deeper implications.”

““The question of the existence of God is the single most important question we face about the nature of reality” “God is the ultimate answer to Leibniz’s great question ‘why is there something instead of nothing?’ The atheist’s plain ‘assertion of the world’s existence’ is a ‘grossly impoverished view of reality . . . theism explains more than a reductionist atheism can ever address.’” “God ‘is ontologically necessary, but not logically necessary.’” “Theism makes more sense of the world, and of human experience than does atheism.”

Wikipedia contributors, "John Polkinghorne," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=John_Polkinghorne&oldid=754905279 (accessed December 15, 2016).

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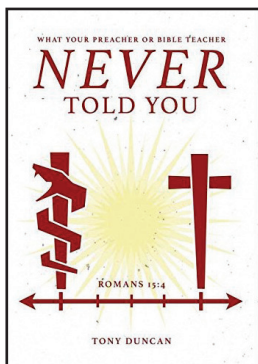


The books that are reviewed in the Book Reviews section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

What Your Preacher or Bible Teacher NEVER Told You

by Tony Duncan, Self Published, © 2015,

230 pages, \$25.00 (hardcover), \$14.99 (Kindle), ISBN-13: 978-0-692-41190-2



This is a very unusual book of Bible trivia. The author has drawn on his over 30 years of teaching the Bible to bring out 200 facts or references that are not commonly known. The book is divided into five sections with references to what is in the Pentateuch, in the books of history, in the books of poetry, in prophecy books, and in books of the New Testament. The book does not have an index so personal reading and note taking are the main methods by which a person would use it in any classroom sense.

Examples of each of the sections would be the following:

(1) How much interest was a Jew to charge another Jew?
Answer: none in Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19.

(2) Where do we read of mice made out of gold? Answer:
1 Samuel 6:11.

(3) Who besides Jesus was quoted as saying, “Eli Eli lama sabachthani”? Answer: David in Psalm 22:1.

(4) Where in the Bible does it say that God does not willingly afflict man? Answer: Lamentations 3:31–33.

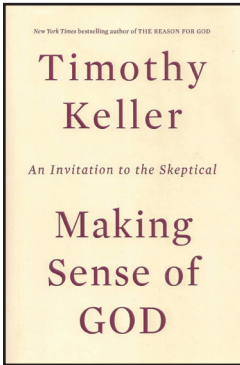
(5) Where in the Bible do we read that stars differ in their brightness? Answer: 1 Corinthians 15:41.

As these references show, there are facts that will be useful to Bible teachers and to people writing articles or answering questions. It is also a great book to use as a gift or for the coffee table.

Order from whatyourpreachertd@gmail.com, 931-729-3837, or Amazon.com

Making Sense of God

by Timothy Keller, Viking-Penguin Random House. ©2016
327 pages, \$27.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-525-95415-6



Timothy Keller has been a leader in providing apologetic material to young people and to skeptics in the twenty-first century. This book is subtitled “An Invitation to the Skeptical.” In the preface, we are told that Keller invited students of secular philosophy and those skeptical of faith and religion in general to consider a Christian God that makes sense. This is not a book of evidences but tries to get people to look at why we all need to be believers from a practical and personal standpoint.

The book is divided into three parts which are titled “Why Does Anyone Need Religion?” “Religion is More than You Think It Is,” and “Christianity Makes Sense.”

Within each part, there are sections that revolve around the challenges issued by skeptics in recent years. Part one deals with the failures of secularism. Part two discusses in practical terms how choices in religious belief aid us in dealing with suffering, satisfaction in life, self and self-image, hope and morals. These discussions quote experts in each of these areas and show the validity of Christ’s teachings in each area. In part three the reasonableness of faith in God and in Christ are discussed. Keller shows how that belief has aided people under incredible persecution in the past.

Keller is very well read, and the book is a gold mine of quotes from contemporary writers on both sides of the faith issue. For example:

Philosopher C. Stephen Evans, “Science by its very nature is not fit to investigate whether there is more to reality than the natural world.”

Humanities scholar Mark Lilla, “To most humans, curiosity about higher things comes naturally, it’s indifference to them that must be learned.”

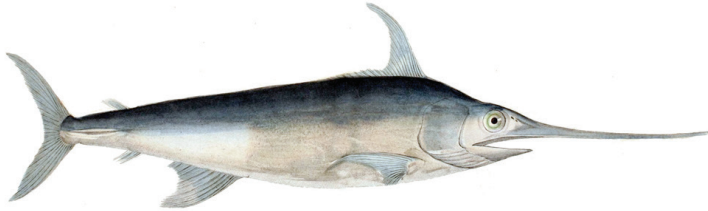
Atheist philosopher James Wood quoting a friend, “How can it be that this world is the result of an accidental big bang? How can there be no design, no metaphysical purpose?”

Apple founder Steve Jobs contemplating his own death, “It’s strange to think that you accumulate all this experience ... and it just goes away. So I really want to believe that something survives, that maybe your consciousness endures.”

Keller writes well, and the examples make the book very readable and interesting. We recommend this book.

DANDY DESIGNS

THE SWORDFISH: OILED TO ROCKET THROUGH THE SEA



University of Groningen researchers in the Netherlands have discovered that swordfish have a special design that allows them to reach speeds as high as 60 miles per hour in the open ocean.

While doing MRI scans of the swordfish, the researchers discovered a large gland at the base of the fish's long, pointed upper bill. Coming from the gland was a network of capillaries that connect it to the animal's skin. The gland sends an oily substance to the skin through tiny pores, so the skin is coated with the oil. A close study of the skin of the swordfish revealed microscopic projections. When the oil coats these projections, it produces a water-repellent surface that reduces drag to nearly zero. The swordfish essentially lubricates itself as it rockets through the sea.

When you see a design feature that is this specialized, you are faced with a question of how such a feature developed. Trying to explain all of this by chance requires assumptions that are not consistent with life in the sea or with common sense. It would be a major challenge to conceive a way the gland would develop. It does not appear to come from some universal component all fish have. The specialized skin structure is also an issue. Something built for speed is not useful in other settings, and may even be a liability. God designs living things so they can survive in the specialized environmental niche they will occupy. The swordfish is one more example of how we can know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:18–22). Source: *National Wildlife*, December/January 2017, page 8.



THE DESIGN OF PLANTS WITH NO SOIL



There are some environments where there is no soil. In other words, the ground is sterile in the sense that there are no nutrients plants need to grow. Severe forest fires can destroy the nutrients plants use. Plants are essential to the ecology of an area. How do you grow a plant without nutrients in the soil? Some of the most highly designed plants get their nutrients from eating insects. There are over 500 species that get their nutrients in this way. The Venus flytrap is the classic example.

The flytrap has sensitive hairs which are interconnected. When something touches a hair, a signal is sent through the cells. If nothing hits another hair, the plant remains inactive. That is because things like dust and air-blown debris are usually not food sources. If a second hair is struck, the two sides of the flytrap snap closed in less than one-tenth of a second trapping the insect. The bigger the insect is, the more chemical is required to digest it. The plant counts how many hairs are struck. When the fifth hair is struck, 37,000 glands that line the two sides begin to activate. The number of glands that secrete chemicals is determined by how many hairs were struck which is determined by the size of the insect.

Amazing as the design to catch and digest the insect is, the chemistry used is even more complex. Normal plants get nitrogen and phosphorus from the soil. Nitrogen is needed to make proteins for cell structures as well as to make enzymes. Phosphorus is needed to make ATP and DNA. Carnivorous plants get these nutrients by ingesting the biologically active molecules from their prey. Protein segments containing nitrogen and DNA backbone materials containing phosphorus are gained from the insects eaten.

Scientists have copied the flytrap's system to devise methods of controlled injection of medicines inside the human body. They do this using silicone polymers with small pockets containing medication. Many other uses of the flytrap's design are coming to light. Hongrui Jiang of the University of Wisconsin-Madison says "Learning from nature can actually teach us how to come up with something more functional." God has much to teach us if we will just listen and learn through the things he has made. Source: *Chem Matters*, December 1993, page 4; *Discover*, July/August 2016, page 11; and *Science News*, November 24, 2007, page 324.

News and Notes

DOES GOD EXIST? BECOMES A QUARTERLY. In our last issue, we mentioned that cost factors were causing us to have to re-evaluate our spending. We appreciate many of you who made suggestions as to what we might do to reduce expenses or raise our income. The vast majority of letters we got suggested that our readers would be happy with this journal coming out every three months instead of every other month. We will not change our policy of making materials available free because it opens so many doors for us in the non-religious and skeptic community. We are putting more and more material on our websites, and that is certainly what the future will hold for all of us. This issue is our first quarterly issue covering January, February, and March. Our next printed issue will be for April, May, and June and will be mailed in May. Between printed publications we will be filling in with an online blog (see page 19 for more information on that). Thank you for your input and encouragement.

TEXAS CURRICULUM DROPS STANDARDS THAT CHALLENGE EVOLUTION. Texas has such a huge market for teaching materials that great emphasis is placed on the curriculum contained in what is called “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills” (TEKS). This summer the state committee drafting the biology curriculum standards dropped four standards, all of which were originally suggested in 2009. The standards dropped are:

“3. (A) in all fields of science, analyze, evaluate and critique scientific explanations by using empirical evidence, logical reasoning, and experimental and observational testing, including examining all sides of scientific evidence of those scientific explanations, so as to encourage critical thinking by the student.”

“7. (B) analyze and evaluate scientific explanations concerning any data of sudden appearance, stasis, and sequential nature of groups in the fossil record.”

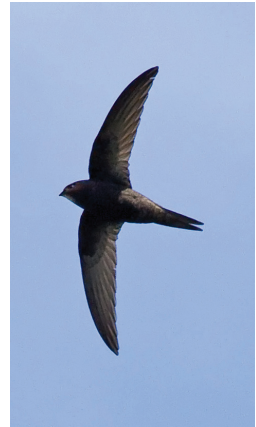
“7. (G) analyze and evaluate scientific explanations concerning the complexity of the cell.”

“9. (D) analyze and evaluate the evidence regarding formation of simple organic molecules and their organization into long,

complex molecules having information such as the DNA molecule for self-replicating life.”

Opponents of cutting the standards point out that all of these standards have negative implications for evolutionary theories and thus suggest bias against alternative explanations. Source: *Austin American-Statesman*, September 26, 2016, page A1.

SWIFTS FLY 24/7. The common swift is a bird that flies a 6,000-mile migration from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa. A Swedish study was recently released in which they put transmitters on the birds to track their migrations. The study shows that the birds stop flying only when they land to nest. During the migration the birds fly continuously, feeding on insects, mating, sleeping, and gathering nesting materials while flying. Migration is an amazing ability built into many forms of life in ways that defy chance explanations. This bird spends less than one percent of their migration on the ground. Source: Susanne Akesson on NationalGeographic.com as mentioned in *The Week*, November 18, 2016, page 21.



DINOSAUR BRAIN FRAGMENT FOUND. A section of a dinosaur’s brain containing blood vessel and tissue from the cortex has been found in England. It is believed to be from an *Iguanodon*. It was in a very acidic, low oxygen environment that allowed a unique preservation. Source: *The Week*, November 18, 2016, page 21.

ONE TRILLION SPECIES ON EARTH. Indiana University scientists studying data from a wide range of sources report that there are one-trillion species of life on earth. Most of us do not realize that the food chains and requirements for the survival of all of life depend on enormous biodiversity. In the past, the scale of this diversity has been beyond anyone’s understanding. Let us point out that the biblical word “kind” is not the same as the scientific word “species.” The biblical kinds are much broader as seen in such passages as 1 Corinthians 15:39. There we are told that “there are four kinds of flesh, the flesh of birds, fish, beasts and of man.” Source: *Discover*, December 2016, page 15. While we are talking about trillions, a study released by the University of Nottingham in England has reported that their data now suggests there are two-trillion galaxies in space. Our view of the creation and of God just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Source: *The Week*, November 4, 2016, page 19.

STRANGENESS IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM. As we learn more and more about our solar system, the mysteries just keep piling up. The newest data on Pluto shows that it is incredibly dense. The volume of Pluto is very small. Ganymede, Titan, Triton (moons of Jupiter and Saturn), and our moon are all larger than Pluto. In spite of that, Pluto has more mass than Ganymede and Titan combined. The apparent reason is that Pluto is rock and the moons around our Jovian planets have large amounts of water within them. The design of the solar system and how that design enhances our existence is going to take a long time to understand fully. Source: *Astronomy*, December 2016, page 8.

EMBRYO ADOPTION. An organization called The National Embryo Donation Center (NEDC) and a group called The Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) are giving some answers to couples who want children but are infertile. What they are doing also has implications for the abortion issue. These organizations are taking discarded, frozen embryos and implanting them in women who want a baby but have been unable to conceive. At present in the United States, there are over 600,000 living human embryos in cryogenic limbo. For more information about NEDC go to www.embryodonation.org, and for the SART group go to sartcorsonline.com. Source: *Citizen* magazine, November 2016, page 10.

HEALTH ISSUES OF SPACE TRAVEL. A great amount of media coverage is being given to private companies offering trips to the Moon or orbiting Earth. We are also seeing an emphasis on going to Mars. Earth's atmosphere is designed to protect us from serious



damage from cosmic rays. Scientific studies following up on the astronauts after being in space show serious damage from cosmic rays. Vision loss, an increase in heart disease, an increase in cancer in children, and an increase in cancer in the astronauts have all been reported. When we leave the protection

God designed for us, there will be consequences. Source: *Astronomy*, November 2016, page 25.

JOHNS HOPKINS SCIENTISTS CONTRADICT MEDIA GAY INFORMATION.

Dr. Paul McHugh is University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins and is Harvard educated. Dr. Lawrence Mayer is a Scholar in Residence in the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. In September 2016 they released a study titled “Sex and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological and Social Sciences” published in the *The New Atlantis* journal (number 50, Fall 2016). The major media will not publicize this study, but here are some of their conclusions:

- 1) You are not born gay. Nor is your sexual orientation unchangeable over a lifetime.
- 2) Most young people (70–80%) who have feelings and sensibilities that do not align with their biological sex will eventually grow out of them.
- 3) LGBTs have a higher risk of poor physical and mental health than heterosexuals.
- 4) Non-heterosexuals are at a double risk of depression. Transgender people are ten times more likely to commit suicide. Stigma and prejudice do not completely account for these differences.

We have pointed out many times in this journal that there are multiple factors contributing to a person’s sexual orientation, some of which may not be in their control. The media sell of the LBGQTQ agenda is obviously distorted.

ANOTHER OLD TORAH FOUND.

In 1970 an ancient copy of the Torah was found in the Jewish village known as En-Gedi. It has recently been restored. Having a copy of these five books of Moses from near the time of Jesus is extraordinarily rare. This find is from the third century, and only the Dead



A section of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Sea Scrolls are older, dating from around 200 BC. Pnina Shor of the Israel Antiquities Authority says that the ancient copy is exactly the same in both letters and format, as text in modern Torah scrolls read by most Jews today. Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was the co-author of the report on this new find, and Dr. Tov says “It is quite amazing for us that in 2,000 years, this text has not changed.” Skeptics of the Bible who attempt to claim it was written in modern times and was reporting history that was handed down from one Rabbi to another will have to rethink their claims. We can trust the Bible text to be as it was given to men by God. All evidence supports that. Source: *USA Today*, November 1, 2016.

PORNOGRAPHY—A SERIOUS PUBLIC HAZARD. *The Wall Street Journal* and the American Psychological Association have released data and made public statements of how bad the problem is. More than half of all American men are involved in pornography. The constant online sexual behavior and growing up in “wall to wall digitized sexual imagery” has led to “the crack babies of porn, incapable of real intimacy.” The church continues to be in denial on this issue. We have the DVD titled *Spiritual Warfare: Safeguarding Churches from Child Predators* by Jimmy Hinton that gets into this problem in depth. It can be purchased or borrowed for free (see page 19.) We urge church leaderships to take a look at it even if they have not experienced a problem with pornography or sexual child abuse. There is an old saying that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Source: *The Week*, September 16, 2016, page 17.

GOVERNMENT ADMITS OPPOSITION TO RELIGION.

Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Missouri, had a community service program that involved a playground with a wood chip base. Children were getting hurt on the chips. The latest thing in playground



bases is ground rubber made out of discarded tires. The state of Missouri offered a state grant to allow playgrounds to be made safer. Trinity applied for the grant, arguing that the playground was not part of the church and that 95% of the children who attended the preschool

were not members of the Trinity Church. Because the playground was on church property, the state declined. In the writings of the state’s lawyers, there is a disturbing statement which will apply to everything from food-banks to day-cares: “The state’s argument is that their constitution actually requires them to be hostile to people of faith and religious organizations.” Lawyers for Trinity claim that “any constitution, state or federal, actually requires neutrality. Every citizen, regardless of their beliefs, should be treated the same.” It will be interesting to see where this ends up, but it is very likely to go to the Supreme Court. Source: *Faith and Justice*, Volume IX Issue 3 from the Alliance Defending Freedom also at ADFlegal.org.

FRACKING QUAKES CONTINUE TO GROW. On September 3, 2016, a 5.8 earthquake shook Oklahoma with the epicenter being near the town of Pawnee some 55 miles northwest of Tulsa. The state shut down over 40 oil and gas disposal wells to attempt to stop the growing number of quakes and the increase in their severity. In 2008, there were just two quakes over 3.0 on the Richter scale, and this year there have been over 900. Those of us with geologic training can tell you that it is likely that hydraulic fracturing in deep disposal wells is a main cause of the increased earthquake activity. Already some religious fanatics are claiming that God is punishing Oklahoma for recent political choices. It would seem that other states would carry more guilt than Oklahoma if that were the case. Maybe that just depends on your political views. Source: *Scientific American*, July 2016, page 47, and *The Week*, September 16, 2016, page 7.

CROCODILE DESIGN. In our “Dandy Designs” column we have frequently discussed how God has built incredible design features into all living things. Some new data on crocodiles add to that. When scientists played a recording of a baby crocodile’s distress sounds, a huge female croc lunged at the recorder. When the recorder was shut off, the female crocodile stopped mid charge. When scientists played recordings of the sounds of baby crocodiles just getting ready to hatch, the mother croc raced back to the nest and started digging out the eggs. Apparently, crocodiles have a well developed social life between the mothers and the babies, and it is highly likely that the dinosaurs did as well. Source: *National Geographic*, September 2016, page 22.



NEW DATING METHODS. Most people know about carbon-14 dating, but many do not know that carbon-14 can only be used for young things because of the size of the sample. Any date older than 10,000 years would be difficult to date with carbon-14 because it decays so rapidly there would not be enough to measure. In recent years, single crystal fusion, uranium series dating, thermoluminescence dating, optically stimulated luminescence dating, and electronic spin resonance dating have been added to some 600 different methods that science uses. In most cases, more than one method can be used, and when this is done, the differences are usually very

small. The Bible simply does not give dates for the prehistory of Earth. When people attempt to support their denominational beliefs by attacking dating techniques, they are in the almost impossible position of having to disprove every new method that comes along. A better position to take on dating is to be silent where the Bible is silent. A good update on this topic is available in *Discover* magazine, July/August 2016, page 35.

NEW STUDIES OF THE SUN AND MOON GIVE AMAZING DATA.

The Sun's light comes from its surface called the photosphere, which is a few hundred miles thick. The energy comes from the core of the Sun which is 1/200th of the Sun's globe. The light at the photosphere is 400 trillion-trillion watts. By the time



it gets to Earth, there are only about 1,000 watts on each square yard of Earth's surface when the Sun is overhead. The Sun is gradually getting brighter, but the rate is very slow — about 7% every billion years. The

Sun is small compared to other stars like Deneb and Aludra which are as bright as 200,000 Suns.

Full moonlight is 400,000 times dimmer than sunlight, and yet shiny white printer paper illuminated by a full moon is 2,000 times blacker than a black cat in the sunlight. Think of the design features necessary on Earth to accommodate this Sun of ours. Truly the Sun and the stars “declare the glory of God.” (Psalm 19:1). Source: *Astronomy* magazine, June 2016 page 8.

SEALED POISON CAVE IN ROMANIA HAS LESSONS FOR US ALL.

In southeast Romania near the Black Sea, scientists have discovered a cave that has been cut off from the outside world throughout history. They estimate that the cave was sealed off 5.5 million years ago. Its air is low in oxygen (10%) and high in carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. The cave is named Movile Cave, and it is full of life. Forty-eight different species have been found so far. All of the life is based on chemosynthesis (sulfur based) instead of

photosynthesis. The interesting thing is that the life forms do seem to be related to species that are on the surface of the earth that rely on photosynthesis as the basis of the food chain. Contrary to what the media have reported, life did not start in the cave, but it has adapted to the cave environment. Hot water vents in the deep ocean have similar life forms. The ability of life to adapt to even hostile environments is an amazing demonstration of its design. The life in this cave may not be, as some suggest, an argument for the possibility of life under the crust of Europa and Ganymede (two moons of Jupiter). Source: www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150904-the-bizarre-beasts-living-in-romanias-poison-cave.

LARGE HADRON COLLIDER CLOUDS COSMOLOGY.

Since June 2015, the massive accelerator near Geneva, Switzerland, has been smashing protons together. Scientists hope that new particles will be discovered that might answer some of the questions that the standard model for cosmology cannot answer. The origins of dark matter, dark energy, and the balance between matter and antimatter cannot be explained by the standard model. A different model called supersymmetry was proposed to replace the standard model. On August 22, 2016, scientists admitted that no data had been discovered to confirm supersymmetry. In fact, the data seems to confirm the standard model. We have often said that “the more you know of the creation, the closer you get to the Creator.” Certainly, the complexity of the creation of the material of which we are made is a classic example of that. Source: *Science News*, October 1, 2016, page 12.

RESEARCH ON CHRISTIAN PRACTICES. The Pew Research Center looked at how Christian groups express their faith. There were four groups surveyed: Highly Religious Evangelicals, Highly Religious Mainline Protestants, Highly Religious Catholics, and Nominal Evangelicals (defined as “not attending church weekly”). The Catholic believers ranked themselves highest in praying regularly, being grateful, forgiving others, and attending church services, in that order. However, on reading the Bible, they were very low. Mainline Protestants were highest in forgiving others, being grateful, praying regularly, and being honest, in that order. Attending church services ranked very low for them. Highly religious evangelicals were highest in praying regularly, forgiving others, being grateful, being honest, and reading the Bible, in that order. Understanding why we differ in our relationship to God is more understandable when you look at those rankings. Where would you rank yourself, and your church in this list of priorities? Source: *Christianity Today*, June 2016, page 20.

This journal is a part of a program of service titled Does God Exist? The purpose of the program is to provide thinking, seeking people with scientific evidence that God does exist and that the Bible is His Word. It is our conviction that all men can logically and rationally believe in God. In addition to this bimonthly journal, the Does God Exist? program offers DVDs and video tapes, CDs and audio tapes, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. We also are more than willing to correspond with you and answer any specific question(s) you might have. If you would like further information on borrowing or purchasing these materials, we would be glad to send it to you. Check the boxes below to describe what you would like and mail it to us. We will get it right out to you.

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