

## Chapter 1

### Good God - Good Book

It took a good God to produce the Good Book! One of the first prayers many children learn is the “grace” whose first lines read:

“God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for this food....”

Often it seems easier for us to understand how great God is than how good He is. We think of Him in the highest heaven as being omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient and sing “How great Thou art!” But it also is essential for us as growing Christians to contemplate how GOOD God is. Particularly today when Satan has launched an all-out attack to convince the world that God is anything but good. At times of stress even some Christians doubt God’s goodness. One of Satan’s most subtle attacks in this scientific age is through the so-called theory of evolution that contradicts God’s loving involvement in the development of our world and in providing sustaining care for His creation.

Science is at its best when it deals with events that are happening right now, or at least can be made to happen now. But when we get into the area of the origin of matter and life, we go beyond the limits of the scientific method. Some scientists act as though the discussion that has raged for more than one hundred years between those who accept the hypothesis of evolution and those who accept the Bible record of special creation was settled long ago in favor of evolution. But that is not so. There is not adequate evidence on either side to prove one position or the other scientifically and conclusively. The Bible teaching of specific creation is outside the province and scope of science, but it is not internally unscientific. The evolutionary hypothesis, on the other hand, contradicts such scientific laws as the second law of thermodynamics (the general natural tendency to go from order to disorder) and the law of probability (the chance of life evolving on earth in five billion years is one out of one followed by 40,000 zeroes).

In the long run, the choice between which theory of origins we accept boils down to the question of basic assumptions. Here creationists have the advantage. The Bible record of the creation of life comes from the Creator Himself. He was there. He made it happen.

For those biased by the assumptions they have been taught, it is difficult to listen to what God has to say about how He made the

worlds. We need to have our ears so attuned to the voice of God that we are willing to listen when He tells us through such representatives as the prophet Isaiah, “the Lord thy maker, ... hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth” (Isa. 51:13, KJV); and the prophet Jeremiah who adds: “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion” (Jer. 10:12).

When we accept the Bible as our guide to understanding the natural world, we find nature pointing to a good Creator. Ellen White tells us that “In His teaching from nature, Christ was speaking of the things which His own hands had made, and which had qualities and powers that He Himself had imparted. In their original perfection all created things were an expression of the thought of God.... The earth is now marred and denied by sin. Yet even in its blighted state much that is beautiful remains. God’s object lessons are not obliterated; rightly understood, nature speaks of her Creator” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 18).

### Scripture and Science

After stating that the Creator can be “clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Rom. 1:20), the apostle Paul suggests that “professing themselves to be wise” so many have become “fools” instead, because they “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (verses 22, 23).

The apostle’s words can be applied not only to the custom of idolatry current in his day but also to a philosophy that even then was being given credence in some circles - the concept that life evolved from simple forms into the many complex forms that now exist. Paul suggests that it is absurd to degrade God to the image of created beings. Why? A partial answer lies in the fact that humans are not always dependable. We are changeable and often capricious, just as were the ancient gods symbolized by the idols about which Paul was concerned. When we make our Father in heaven that kind of god we are forced, in turn, to adopt the concept that there can be no absolute law, order, or harmony in the universe. However, science itself is based on the one essential presupposition that there are dependable laws that govern life as we know it.

As seen in the book of Job, the Bible develops the concept of a great, intelligent Designer who alone can put together the complicated

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factors that must be present for a particular organism to function. Evolutionists who assume that improbable events can happen given eons of time, recently have had the tables turned on them by biochemist Michael Behe, who demonstrates that supposed evolutionary events that have practically zero probability of occurring become even less likely given more time.

Behe's Darwin's Black Box<sup>1</sup> challenges Darwin's statement in *The Origin of Species* that if any complex organ existed that could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive slight modifications, his theory would absolutely break down. Behe's challenge to Darwin revolves around the fact that to Darwin the cell was a "black box" whose inner workings were a complete mystery. But now we have a much better idea of how cells work and can show that a multitude of discoveries in the ultracomplex world of molecular machinery and cellular systems over the past forty years indicate that Darwin's theories have broken down absolutely. It is a fact that such complex systems as human vision, blood coagulation, and immunity could not have developed by chance.

Behe refers to systems that have "irreducible complexity" as being unable to evolve. In his lectures, he flashes on the screen a diagram of a simple mousetrap. Pointing out the five components necessary for a mousetrap to function, he states that you need all five parts functioning at one time in order to catch a mouse. You can't catch a few mice with a plain wooden platform and then add a spring and catch a few more. All parts must be present and in working order if the trap is to function. The mousetrap is irreducibly complex. As scientists explore the interior of a cell, evidence faces them that the systems were directly designed by an intelligent agent.

Over the last fifteen or twenty years several other major scientific discoveries have challenged Darwinism. Take, for instance, the geneticists' current understanding of the double-helixed DNA molecule. It is now thought that the messages sent by the genetic code are dependent upon the specific sequences of nucleotides in the DNA molecule rather than upon the properties of the nucleotide constituents themselves. Chemist Charles Thaxton states that this "so-called 'information problem' of genetics ... poses the most serious threat to naturalistic explanations about the origin of life" (Charles Thaxton, "Theoretical Clay Feet," *Eternity*, Sept. 1985, 16). To think that amino acids could arrange themselves into such a complex information system

by themselves is beyond belief. Such a clever and complicated design must have a Designer.

The highly plausible alternative to the evolutionary hypothesis is the Bible record of special creation. But that, too, takes faith to accept. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). In the creation of the world, God was not dependent upon preexisting matter. By divine fiat the world was created out of nothing.

The advent of nuclear science has made it possible to understand to a limited degree how the power of God could be transformed into the matter needed to bring our world into existence. The energy released in a nuclear explosion testifies to the tremendous amount of power and energy it took to put the atoms together in the beginning.

The first human beings, Adam and Eve, were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation (Gen. 1:26). God gave them dominion over the earth and charged them with the responsibility to care for it (Gen. 1:27-30). When the work of Creation was finished, God declared that it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). God brought order to the earth's surface and created all plant and animal life in six literal twenty-four-hour days. All of this is in direct conflict with the hypothesis of evolution.

### The Greatest Evidence

Julian Huxley, in his book *Man Stands Alone*, pictures the human race as a curious byproduct of a universe utterly indifferent to life. This bleak thought - the natural outgrowth of the evolutionistic-humanistic teaching - has led to the fear, hopelessness, and despair that characterize many today.

Ever since the nuclear age began at Hiroshima, we have lived in a perpetual crisis atmosphere so terrifying, so universal, and so altogether unprecedented that it has numbed hopes for the future. The twentieth century, which was touted back in the thirties as the "Century of Progress," more than met its promise technologically. What, then, has taken the golden sheen from our age of promise, progress, and plenty? Human beings, children of the eternal God, have proclaimed themselves as the sons and daughters of Mother Mud. Evolution and humanism can lead only to fear, frustration, and despair, because humanity cannot lift itself out of the mire of sin by its own bootstraps.

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The greatest evidence of what is wrong with the theory of evolution is seen in the results of its circulation for more than one hundred fifty years. Mother Mud is linked inevitably with Father Fear. But it does not end there. Many years ago some perceptive college youth recognized the implications of the theory of evolution and organized an atheists' club on their campus that took as its slogan: "Sons of apes don't need a Savior!"

A tremendous truth is involved in that slogan. Not only did God create this world, but His goodness, love, and benevolence also have been demonstrated ever since in the fact that He sustains all creation on a moment-by-moment basis. (See Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3.) Even beyond that is His desire to carry on His relationship with the human beings He had created after their rebellion broke the harmony and destroyed the perfection that existed before the advent of sin. In spite of the disaster sin brought on the physical world and the changes for the worse in the nature of human beings, there still is enough design, order, and beauty in nature to help us understand the love of God for fallen beings.

However, the greatest evidence of God's goodness can be found in Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. The New Testament makes a point of the fact that Christ was our Creator. (See John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:13-17.) Therefore, it was our Maker Himself who gave His life on the cross that we might have eternal life. Our Creator became our Redeemer. He is able to create new hearts within us and to restore us to the privilege of being sons and daughters of God. (See Heb. 10:16,17; 1 John 3:1, 2.) Life takes on meaning, and human existence takes on purpose only in the fact that our Creator became our Savior. But if we were sons and daughters of apes or of primordial ooze, there would be no permanent values, and we would not need a Savior. There is no way of reconciling these two opposite approaches to, or philosophies of, life.

Those who believe the Bible record of special creation see every display of creative and re-creative power on the part of God as evidence of His personal interest, love, and goodness. Not only is this reassuring, but it bodes well for the future. Where is the era of evolutionary science leading? Many believe it will end in nuclear destruction of the earth or in ecological disaster. Where does belief in a loving God who created us and has our best interest in view lead? To "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13). People who accept God as Creator and His plan for their lives find a more abundant life now as they cooperate with His plan for the

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present (see John 10:10) as well as an even more abundant eternity. When it comes to deciding on concepts of origins, we need to keep the future in mind. When you compare the prospects, there is no contest.

One of the reasons why human beings are prone to seek naturalistic explanations for their origin is that they are afraid of the implications involved in having to maintain a relationship with a Creator God. Therefore they tend to concentrate on what they point to as injustice and cruelty on God's part. They earnestly search the Bible looking for anything they can interpret this way. They look upon God's "demands" as being stifling to their development and feel that what He expresses as being best for them is contrary to all that interests them. They feel that God is trying to cheat them out of that which they consider desirable.

But if they would just give the God of Creation and the God of the Bible a chance to speak to them, they would soon learn that a truly good and loving God has only their best interests in mind and bends over backward to try to make life, even in a sinful world, as pleasant and hopeful as it can be. Because our good God loves us and is interested in every aspect of our lives, He has given the Bible to help us get the most out of life. It is a good God who created, redeemed, and sanctified those He has created. (Incidentally, all three of those aspects of His goodness just listed are memorialized in the institution of the Sabbath.) It is a good God whose heart is touched by the loss of even one sparrow, let alone by the tragic loss of one of His earthly children. It is a good God who generously provides our daily bread and everything else we need to sustain life. And this good and loving God wants us to know as much about Him as our human minds can possibly grasp. Therefore, He has gone to great lengths to reveal Himself, His love, and His goodness to us.

Our acceptance of what He reveals leads to a trust in Him that reaches out the hand of faith, takes Him at His Word, and accepts all the precious blessings He longs to share with us. Such faith can be defined in the way Ellen White explains it as "the assent of man's understanding to God's words, that binds the heart to God's service" (Ye Shall Receive Power, 195).

There are those who choose to question and quibble over the revelations that a good and loving heavenly Father has provided. I choose not to. I am thrilled with whatever form or method the gracious God chooses to reveal Himself to us and to preserve His revelation over the centuries. I consider it a privilege to take His Word as He has

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given it to me and search out as best I can His wishes and His will in order to put them to work in my life.

Because He is a good God, I know that what He wants for me is far more beneficent and pleasurable than anything I can ever choose or find for myself. Let the critics quibble. I intend to spend my time and effort discovering the precious jewels of truth hidden in the Bible treasure chest, and I hope you will too. All the treasure of heaven is available to us in God's Word if we just reach out the hand of faith and accept it for ourselves.

### How Jesus Revealed the Goodness of God

Nicodemus had a lot to think about after his nighttime interview with Jesus. As a strict Pharisee he shared the sect's misunderstanding of God and the plan of salvation. But as he watched Christ's actions and listened to His teachings, the Pharisee began to glimpse something wonderful existing beyond His limited vision of God's revelation. He pondered and studied. In a particular way, his attention was drawn by Christ to the symbol of the serpent in the wilderness. It helped him realize that God's love included Jesus' dying as One who bore our sins to provide our only means of salvation. Then the leading Pharisee stood beneath the cross, witnessing the scene Ellen White describes so movingly. "The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured - the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father's face - speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life, - offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself {The Desire of Ages, 755, 756}.

Probably at that moment Nicodemus understood what was taking place more clearly than any other human in his time. He yielded His life

to the God of love and from that point on took an uncompromising stand for Christ and His church.

But the extent of God's love goes far beyond what Nicodemus understood at the time. Jesus did much more than restore humanity to what we were at Creation. "By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Savior has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.' John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature

God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the 'Son of man' who shares the throne of the universe.... In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love" (The Desire of Ages, 25,26).

Actually, even now, none of us can appreciate how GOOD and loving our God is. But someday we will see and know.

1. Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1996).