

REASON & REVELATION

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THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE

by

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. E.A. Maness once remarked, "If the word God were written upon every blowing leaf, embossed on every passing cloud, engraved on every granite rock, the inductive evidence of God in the world would be no stronger than it is." John C. Monsma, in the text which he edited entitled *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe* (which is a compilation of testimony from forty outstanding American scientists), affirmed "that science can establish, by the observed facts of Nature and intellectual argumentation, that a super-human Power exists" (G. P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., 1958, p. 12). Emerson, the famous poet, wrote, "Nature is too thin a screen; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere."

Indeed, the evidence of Jehovah's existence as revealed in nature is so obvious that truly only "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). The allusions to the manifestations of Deity in the created world are profuse. David exclaimed, "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, Who has set thy glory upon the heavens?" (Psalm 8:1). In the same psalm, the inspired writer was constrained to say that the heavens are "the work of thy fingers" and the moon and stars "thou hast ordained" (Psalm 8:3). Later David was to utter the beautiful words of Psalm 19:1—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Isaiah graphically portrayed the majesty and power of nature's God when he wrote that God "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (40:12). The apostle Paul reminded those of his day that the refreshing rains and recurring fruitful seasons offered eloquent testimony of God, and served as a reminder that "he left not himself without witness" (Acts 14:17). Paul even went further, however, and stated that man's very existence argues convincingly for a creating and sustaining Power superior to man, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Finally, the ancient pagan world was condemned as being "without excuse" for its unbelief because the "everlasting power and divinity" of God are evident in His creation.

PROMINENT TESTIMONY

The story of God's revelation of Himself in nature can hardly be adequately told without at least some mention of those brilliant and productive minds in the history of mankind who have observed with awe the grand spectacle of evidence in nature which heralds the existence of the Supreme Being. Dr. George Washington Carver, for example, when asked one day to describe what he was doing, remarked: "God and I are working on the peanut." Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), one of the pioneers of modern astronomy and the man who formulated our three basic laws of planetary motion, described his research as "thinking God's thoughts after Him" (*The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, F.S. Mead, Editor, Revell, Westwood, N.J., 1965, p. 176). Dr. A. Cressy Morrison, former President of the New York Academy of Sciences, affirmed that "So many essential conditions are necessary for life to exist on our earth that it is mathematically impossible that all of them could exist in proper relationship by chance on any one earth at one time" (*Man Does Not Stand Alone*, Revell, Westwood, N.J., 1944, p. 13). Dr. Arthur H. Compton, Professor of Physics at the University of Chicago and Nobel laureate, wrote: "It is not difficult for me to have this faith, for it is incontrovertible that where there is a plan there is intelligence—an orderly, unfolding universe testifies to the truth of the most majestic statement ever uttered—'In the beginning, God'" (*Chicago Daily News*, April 12, 1936).

Louis Agassiz, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Geology at Harvard University (and a life-long opponent of Darwinian evolution), made these remarks: "Though I know those who hold it to be very unscientific to believe that thinking is not something inherent in matter, and that there is an essential difference between inorganic and living and thinking beings, I shall not be prevented by any such pretensions of a false philosophy from expressing my conviction that as long as it cannot be shown that matter or physical forces do actually reason, I shall consider any manifestation of physical thought as an evidence of the existence of a thinking being as the author of such thought, and shall look upon intelligent and intelligible connection between the facts of nature as direct proof of a thinking God.... All these facts in their natural connection proclaim aloud the one God whom man may know, adore, and love, and natural history must in good time become the analysis of the

thoughts of the Creator of the universe as manifested in the animal and vegetable kingdoms” (*Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, Boston, 1857, Vol. I, p. 298, emp. added).

Lord Kelvin, the famed English thermodynamicist once said, "I cannot admit that, with regard to the origin of life, science neither affirms nor denies Creative Power. Science positively affirms Creative Power. It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directing Power which science compels us to accept as an article of belief.... There is nothing between absolute scientific belief in a Creative Power, and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concourse of atoms.... Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers that we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, 'No, no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces'.... Do not be afraid of being free thinkers! If you think strongly enough you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion. You will find science not antagonistic but helpful to religion" (*Nineteenth Century and After*, June, 1903, LIII, pp. 1068, 1069).

Even the rationalist philosopher David Hume found it necessary to admit that "Were men led into the apprehension of invisible intelligent power by contemplation of the works of Nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single Being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine and adjusted all its parts to one regular system." William Cowper, the great British poet, said, "In all the vast and the minute, we see the unambiguous footsteps of...God." [NOTE: For an excellent and interesting summary of the great scientists of the past who were believers in God, see Dr. Henry M. Morris' new book, *Men of Science: Men of God*, Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, 1982.]

One cannot help but wonder what has caused many of the most prominent and brilliant minds of both days gone by and of our day to make such statements. No doubt at least a partial explanation lies in the fact that they saw a few, or many, of the thousands of "signposts" or "ensigns" scattered throughout the natural world

which point clearly to the unseen Designer of nature. These "signposts" are multitudinous in our world, and plainly obvious to those whose minds have not been blinded by the "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4), "refusing to have God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28). An examination of these "ensigns" makes for a profitable and edifying study. Several books are available which call attention to these matters. For example, Dr. Jean Sloat Morton's book, *Science in the Bible* (Moody, Chicago, 1978), contains a wealth of information on this subject. The book, *Wonders of Creation* (Gospel Light, Glendale, CA, 1975) is also good (with the exception of a few "weak" spots in the first few pages). The book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1980), by Paul Brand, M.D., is a masterpiece which describes the creative design in the human body. Let us now consider some of the evidence of God in nature.

NATURE'S HOME: THE UNIVERSE

God, speaking through Moses (Genesis 15:5) and Jeremiah (33:22), mentioned that "the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured...." Little did we know how true those statements were. Johann Bayer (1603) devised a system to indicate the brightness, or magnitude, of the stars, using the Greek and Roman alphabets to denote their brightness (remember Paul's statement to the Corinthians [I Corinthians 15:41]: "...for one star differeth from another star in glory"?). Men before and after Bayer tried to count the stars. Hipparchus, the astronomer, in 128 B.C. counted the stars and said there were 1,026. In 150 A.D., the famous astronomer Ptolemy counted the stars and arrived at the number of 1,056. Years later, in 1575 A.D., the renowned Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe, counted the stars and said there were 777. In 1600 A.D. the German astronomer Johannes Kepler counted the stars and gave the number as 1,005. At last counting (and we are nowhere near finished yet) the number of stars stood at 25 sextillion! That's a 25 with twenty-one zeroes after it! There are an estimated one billion galaxies.

And most of them contain billions of stars (the Milky Way galaxy in which we live, for example, contains over 100 billion stars! It is so large that travelling at the speed of light, 186,317.6 miles per second, it would take 100,000 years to go just across the diameter of the galaxy. Light travels in one year approximately 5.87×10^{12} miles. In 100,000 years that would be 5.87×10^{17} miles, or 587 quadrillion miles! Our nearest neighboring galaxy is the Andromeda galaxy, which is an estimated 2,000,000 light years away. That's so far that a radio wave which goes around the earth approximately 8.2 times in one second would require over 1 million years to get there, and a message back would take another 1+ million years. The observable universe has an estimated diameter of 20 billion light years.

But it isn't simply the size of the universe that is so marvelous. The size is important, of course, but so is the design. The earth, for example, in orbiting the sun, departs from a straight line by only one-ninth of an inch every 18 miles—a very straight line in human terms! If the orbit changed by one-tenth of an inch every 18 miles, our orbit would be vastly larger and we would all freeze to death. If it changed by one-eighth of an inch, we would come so close to the sun we would all be incinerated. The sun is burning at approximately 20 million degrees Celsius at its interior. If we were to move the earth away 10%, we would soon freeze to death. If we were to move the earth closer by 10%, we would once again be incinerated. The sun is poised at 93 million miles from earth, which happens to be just right—by accident?

The moon is poised some 240,000 miles from the earth. Move it in just one-fifth, and twice every day there would be 35 to 50 foot high tidal waves over most of the earth's surface. The distance of 240,000 miles happens to be just right—just by accident? And consider these facts: the earth is rotating at 1,000 miles per hour on its axis at the equator, and moving around the sun at 70,000 miles per hour (approximately 19 miles per second), while the sun and its solar system is moving through space at 600,000 miles per hour in an orbit so large it would take almost 220 million years to com-

plete just one orbit. What would happen if the rotation rate of the earth around the sun were halved? or doubled? If it were halved, the seasons would be doubled in length, which over most of the earth would cause such harsh summer heat and winter cold that not enough food could be grown to feed the world's population. If it were doubled, no single season would be long enough to grow the amount of food necessary to feed the world population.

Then there is this matter: from where does our day come? It comes from the earth's rotation once approximately every 24 hours on its axis. From where do we get our month? It comes from the moon circling the earth approximately every 28 days. From where does our year come? It takes the earth approximately 365.26 days to go around the sun. But where do we get our week? There is no purely natural explanation for the week! The explanation, instead, is found in Exodus 20:11 (corollary passage, Exodus 31:17): "for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day...." The week is an entirely universal phenomenon. Yet there is no purely natural explanation for it!

The fundamental law of science is the Law of Causality (cause and effect), which states that every effect must have an adequate cause. There is no known exception. The universe is admittedly a known effect. The question is: What is the adequate cause? The atheist/agnostic has no answer, as Dr. Robert Jastrow argued. The Christian, of course, does. God is the First Cause, and has left the evidences of His existence so evident that they are incontrovertible.

NATURE'S HUMAN INHABITANT: MAN

"Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering." So stated Augustine many years ago—and a point well made. So many people fail to see one of the most powerful arguments ever made for God's existence—their own selves!

Consider, for example, the “earthly tabernacle” (II Corinthians 5:1) that we call the human body. It is composed of 30+ different kinds of cells, totalling over 100 trillion cells when all added together to make up the human adult. These cells come in all different sizes and shapes, with different functions and life expectancies. For example, some cells (e.g.: male sperm cells) are so small that 20,000 would fit inside a capital “O” from a standard typewriter, each being only 1/20th mm long. Some cells, put end to end, would make only one inch if 6,000 were assembled together. Yet all the cells of the human body, if set end-to-end, would encircle the earth over 200 times! Even the largest cell of the human body, the female ovum, is unbelievably small, being only 1/100 of an inch in diameter.

Yet each cell is composed of a lipo-protein membrane lining (lipids/proteins/lipids) approximately 6/100–8/100 microns thick. Yet it allows selective transport outside the cell of those things that ought to go out, and selective transport into the cell of those things that ought to go in. Inside the cell’s three-dimensional cytoplasm there are over 20 different chemical reactions going on at any one time, with each cell containing five major systems for: (1) communication, (2) waste disposal, (3) nutrition, (4) repair, and (5) reproduction. The endoplasmic reticulum of the cell serves as a transport system. The ribosomes produce protein, which is then distributed around the body as needed by the Golgi bodies. The mitochondria (over 1,000 per cell) are the “powerhouses” of the cell, producing the energy needed by the body. The nucleus, of course, carries the genetic code in its DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid).

Red blood cells (there are approximately 30 trillion of them) live about 120 days; white blood cells (the blood’s defense system) live about 13 days; platelets (which help blood to clot) live about 4 days; nerve cells may live over 100 years! In any given 60-second period, ap-

proximately 3 billion cells have died and been replaced in the human body—replaced by the process we call mitosis, whereby the standard chromosome number (in the human, 46) is faithfully reproduced. A single cell contains a strip of DNA, placed in the nucleus in a spiral-staircase configuration, which is about one yard long, and which contains over 6 billion biochemical steps! Every cell of the body contains such DNA—over a billion miles total in one human. If that DNA were hooked together, it would reach to the sun and back over 400 times. Yet although each cell contains the whole structure of DNA, only a part of that message is “activated”—causing one cell to be a fingernail cell, another to be an eye cell, another to be a blood cell, etc.

Consider the skin of the human. It is a nearly waterproof layer, enclosing the body’s contents, almost 60% of which is water. It prevents the exit or entrance of too much moisture, and acts as a protector for the rest of the body. At the same time it is both a radiator and retainer of heat, helping to regulate the body’s temperature in conjunction with the two hypothalamus glands in the brain. Skin may be as thick as 5/16th of an inch (e.g.: a callus) or as thin as 1/500th of an inch (e.g.: the eyelid). The skin contains over 2,000 sweat glands which form one of the most ingenious air conditioning systems ever known to man. Skin acts as a barrier to protect the sensitive internal organs, and even has the power to regenerate itself.

Consider the skeletal system of the body. It is composed of 206 bones, more durable and longer lasting than man’s best steel. Each joint produces its own lubrication and the system as a whole is able to provide not only structure, but great protection. The bones range in size from tiny hand bones to the great femur, while the system remains remarkably light relative to total body weight.

And consider, of course, the muscles. There are over 600 of them in the human, with the function of contraction and release. From the smile on the face of the newborn baby to the legs of the marathon runner, the muscles are in charge. They are placed, however, into two systems: the voluntary system you have control over, and the involuntary system you have little or no control over. Are we to believe that the skeletal and muscle systems, in all their complexity, “just happened”? No one could ever convince you that, for example, a Cadillac limousine “just happened.” Yet something infinitely greater in design and structure—the human body—you are asked to believe “just happened.”

Consider, for example, the human ear and the human eye. The average piano can distinguish the sounds of 88 keys; the human ear can distinguish over 2,500 different key tones. The ear is so sensitive that it could even hear, were the body placed in a completely soundproof room, the blood coursing through the veins. Over 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears are sending impulses to the brain to be decoded and answered.

The human eye is the most perfect camera ever known to man. So perfect is it that its very presence caused Charles Darwin to say, “That the eye with all its inimitable contrivances...could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.” Darwin also commented: “If it could be

demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.” The eye, as the article argues, is such an organ. Each human eye is composed of over 107 million cells with 7 million cones and 100 million rods. The eyes are connected to the brain by over 300,000 nerves, and can detect light as feeble as 1/100 trillionth of a watt.

There are so many systems in the human body that could be discussed, but since space precludes discussing them all, it is now to the brain that we turn our attention. The brain regulates the rest of the body. It contains over 10 billion nerve cells, and 100 billion glia cells. Over 120 trillion connections tie these cells all together. The brain sends out electrical impulses at a speed of 393 feet per second (270 mph), and receives nerve impulses at a rate of over 2,000 per second. It receives signals continuously from the eyes, ears, taste-buds, and skin, yet consumes 25% of the blood’s oxygen supply.

Sir Isaac Newton once said, “In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God’s existence.” How much more, then, should the cells, the brain, the lungs, the heart, the reproductive system, and the rest of the human body be shouting that there is a God, and He is not silent?

As the psalmist said, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). Dr. Lewis Thomas commented on the “miracle” of how one sperm cell and one egg cell form a single cell that will, nine months later, become a new human being. The article presents this as one more reason for awe at the design of life rather than belief in accident.

NATURE’S NON-HUMAN INHABITANTS: **ANIMALS AND INSECTS**

Among the thousands of “ensigns” or “signposts” God has set in the creation as evidence of His existence, some of the plainest come from the animal kingdom. It is not surprising, then, that the Bible writers often used the inhabitants of the animal kingdom to portray great truths. Other than the marvel of the human body, the design of the animal kingdom is perhaps one of the strongest arguments for God’s existence to be found in the living world.

Nature’s Engineers

One of nature’s ingenious creatures is the lowly spider, of which there are some thirty thousand species. Leicester Hemingway characterizes the spider as “nature’s engineer extraordinary.” He points out that spiders have highly developed nervous systems, brains ca-

pable of memory, and remarkable engineering abilities. The spider’s talent for spinning silk and making nets is one of the most common miracles of nature. The orb web, which adorns every backyard, is a symmetrical masterpiece.

To obtain food, some spiders spin a web in which insects will be caught. After spinning her trap the tiny spider spins a nest nearby to await her victim. Then, remarkably, she strings a “telegraph” line from the center of the web to the nest. The trap-door spider builds an underground house complete with hinged trap door. A small European spider, dependent entirely upon air but spending most of its life under water, actually constructs an underwater diving bell furnished with air bubbles brought from the surface. Other spiders employ the “block and tackle” method of hoisting dinner captured from the ground. The article argues that such abilities were placed in those minute brains by the Intelligent God who created them.

It may be unequivocally declared, the article says, that the myriads of creatures inhabiting this earth testify triumphantly to the existence of a wonderful, creating God. Job’s words are then cited: “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee...” (Job 12:7-9).

Nature's Craftsmen

One of nature's marvelous craftsmen is the honey-bee. Its home is an ingeniously designed masterpiece. The bee-hive is adorned with hundreds of tiny six-sided rooms. The "cells" are shaped precisely alike in all countries. The reason for this has only been known for approximately two centuries. The bee, in constructing cells, chooses exact angles that make the design especially well adapted to save room, work, and materials. In describing the building process, Dr. Arthur Brown says, "In manipulating the wax, in order to form the marvelous six-sided cells, real engineering is apparent."

Or, consider the skilled builder, the beaver. Being only about two and one half feet long and weighing about fifty pounds, the beaver can fell a tree 18 inches thick, cut it into pieces, dig a channel and float it to his stream for use in the construction of a fortress so impregnable that it defies even the mighty grizzly bear. One writer describes him as an amazing "canny little engineer." It

is certain, the article argues, that only God could have endowed this energetic carpenter with such skill.

Nature's Masters of Disguise

One of the most impressive evidences of a designing Providence behind nature is the fashion in which numerous creatures are so cunningly camouflaged as to be protected from their natural enemies. Consider, for example, the snowshoe rabbit of the north, white in winter to blend with the snow and brown in the summer to match the earth. The article also points to the sea horse, the crab spider, the octopus, the young prawn, certain caterpillars, and the two-headed skink.

These examples are presented as evidence that camouflage devices in nature are not casual happenstance, but part of nature's grand strategy. The article concludes this section by asserting that Jehovah God is the unseen force behind these arresting phenomena of nature, and that the Creator is glorified by everything that came from His hand.

Nature's Navigators

"Go to the ant, thou infidel; Consider her ways, and believe;" is presented as a fitting adaptation of biblical language. The Almighty has so marvelously endowed this tiny insect that scientists who study ants are profoundly amazed. Dr. Felix Santschi, a noted zoologist, discovered that ants have a built-in navigational device by which they can compute their way home by either sun or moon.

How do birds find their way over the vast thousands of miles involved in migration patterns each year? The article cites examples such as barn swallows travelling from Brazil and Argentina to Labrador or Alaska, and the arctic tern travelling an estimated 22,000 miles a year from arctic to antarctic and home again. Dr. Jean Dorst of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris said that birds use navigational aids including the sun and stars. Nature writer Peter Farb pointed out that a migrating bird must be able to perform hair-precision reckoning and continually revise its calculations as it flies.

At the age of about two years, the salmon spawned in the streams of North America begin a downstream journey to the sea. They may travel hundreds of miles. After an interval of from one to five years, the grown salmon

begins the homeward trip to the very stream of origin. The article asks how the salmon finds its way back through the trackless ocean to the same river and gravel bed where it was hatched, and offers intelligent creation as the satisfying answer.

CONCLUSION

Alan Devoe significantly writes, "Some naturalists have become convinced that there is an unknown force at work—a force that guides creatures by influences outside the entire sphere with which science ordinarily works." The article urges those who speak of this unknown force to turn to the "God that made the world and all things therein" (Acts 17:24) and ascribe honor and glory to Him. The revelation He has left of Himself in nature simply could speak no louder of His existence than it already does.

"Special Issue" of Reason & Revelation

Readers are told that this particular issue of *Reason & Revelation* is different from past issues in that it is double the usual number of pages, 8 instead of 4. The editors explain that, in light of the concerted effort being made to "prove" that evolution is a fact and that there is no God, the information in this issue warranted special consideration and broader distribution.

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