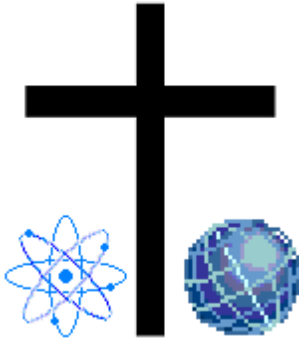


Science and Faith



"... through Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16)

No. 26

December 2010

Available online at www.mikelanderson.com

Contents

Consider the creatures

Water bears can go to the heavens

"Extreme sports are all the rage these days. You will notice that animals are not invited to compete with humans. This is because the beasts would win easily. They make skiing down Everest look like a doddle. Even the silly goose casually flies over it. Yes, it really does. But when it comes to the extreme there is one animal that is a consummate survivor. The animal? The water bear or moss piglet. A German pastor in the 18th century likened it a miniature teddy bear because of its stubby legs (although it has eight of them), bear-like gait and paunch. But don't let its charming and unassuming stature fool you. It is an extraordinary animal. It surely deserves to be dignified with its scientific name - Tardigrada."

News briefs (From the Internet)

- *Biodiversity is good for human health
- *Index finger length can reduce prostate cancer risk
- *da Vinci on a PC
- *Universe awash with stars
- *Not so fast with the sulphur dioxide
- *The early universe was a hot, dense liquid
- *Rat-eating plant discovered in the Phillipines
- *Virgin birth in Boa constrictors
- *AIDS dissenters caused the deaths of 330,000 South Africans

Humour from the Internet

At the Doctors

Wise as serpents and harmless as doves

Do not trust the prophesies of the octopus Mike L Anderson

Feature article

The Life of God in the Soul of Man Part 2..... (Henry Scougal)

“And now, my dear friend, having discovered the nature of true religion, before I proceed any further, it will not perhaps be unfit to fix our meditations a little on the excellency and advantages of it, that we may be excited to the more vigorous and diligent prosecution of those methods whereby we may attain so great a felicity. But, alas! what words shall we find to express that inward satisfaction, those hidden pleasures, which can never be rightly understood but by those holy souls that feel them? "A stranger intermeddleth not with their joys." Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the soul. Its faculties had formerly been enfeebled and disordered, so that they could not exercise their natural functions; it had wearied itself with endless tossings and rollings, and was never able to find any rest. Now that distemper being removed, it feels itself well; there is due harmony in its faculties, and a sprightly vigour possesseth every part. The understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave to it. The affections are not tied to the motions of sense and the influence of external objects, but they are stirred by more divine impressions, are touched by a sense of invisible things....

Henry Scougal (1650-1678) was a Scottish theologian, minister and author. This excerpt is taken from his widely acclaimed *“The Life Of God In The Soul Of Man*, Nichols and Noyes, Boston. It was published when he was just eighteen years old.

Consider the creatures

Water bears can go to the heavens

Mike L Anderson

Extreme sports are all the rage these days. You will notice that animals are not invited to compete with humans. This is because the beasts would win easily. They make skiing down Everest look like a doddle. Even the silly goose casually flies over it. Yes, it really does. But when it comes to the extreme there is one animal that is a consummate survivor. The animal? The water bear or moss piglet. A German pastor in the 18th

century likened it a miniature teddy bear because of its stubby legs (although it has eight of them), bear-like gait and paunch.¹ But don't let its charming and unassuming stature fool you. It is an extraordinary animal. It surely deserves to be dignified with its scientific name - Tardigrada.



Water bears are found everywhere, "from the highest elevations in the Himalays to the deepest trenches in the deep sea, and from hot, radioactive springs to the ice cathedrals inside the Greenland ice cap."² There are lots living in a moss patch near you! Never noticed them? That is because physically they are miniscule - never getting much more than 1 mm long. Physiologically they are giants.

Take temperature extremes for example. Emperor penguins are justly famous for being able to withstand the -70 C of the Antarctic winter. Water bears have also been found in Antarctica³, but top that by handling -272 degrees C!⁴ I kid you not. At the other end of the scale, camels only begin to sweat at 41 degrees C.⁵ Impressive. But the water bear can withstand 151 degrees C.⁶ No jokes. Or take fasting. Even the Son of God limited his fast to 40 days. There is a case of water bears going without food *and water* for over a century.⁷ Or take pressure. Water bears have survived both the vacuum inside an electron microscope and pressures of over 6000 atmospheres!⁸ They have even recovered from being dipped in brine, absolute alcohol, ether and liquid helium!⁹

The living dead.

How does it do it? Its secret is to reduce all life processes to below that which can be measured. In this state it is called a "tun." It shows no detectable signs of life. Is alive or dead? The highly respected Grizmek's Animal Life Encyclopedia calls it a state of "reversible death."¹⁰ If so then the animal experiences a natural resurrection! In the 19th century the water bear caused scientists to become sharply divided into the resurrectionists and anti-resurrectionists. We need not worry our heads. It is safe to say that the tun is only very slightly more alive than salt. We can avoid black-and-white thinking and unnecessary controversy by adding a third category to the alive and the dead - the

"living dead" or "unalive." And unalive they certainly are if this is taken to mean lacking a fulfilling life. Their legs are withdrawn so they look like a barrel and they fail to respond to any sensory stimulation whatsoever. The tun effectively take a breath perhaps once in a decade. Zombies have more vitality.

Why does it do it? Water bears need moisture to live but moss patches periodically dry out. Migration to a wet patch is out of the question for such a tiny, clumsy creature. It uses a different tactic. It makes itself, for a time, independent of moisture. The tun has been honed by natural selection over millions of years as an effective strategy against fickle environments.

Reaching for the heavens

It is just because of this capacity that the water bear has been nominated for outer space travel. Reinhardt Kristensen of the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen says "They can tolerate outer space, no doubt about it."¹¹ It has been voted the animal most likely survive a trip to Mars without much life support.¹² In 2007 these claims were definitively tested on a Russian satellite 270 km above the earth in a mission called TARDIS (Tardigrades in Space). Some specimens indeed survived the freezing, the dehydration, the vacuum and the deadly solar ultraviolet radiation of space!¹³ Water bears are truly marvels of God's creation!

Heaven as an extreme environment

Tardigrades have taught us much about preserving organs for transplantation.¹⁴ They have even inspired the quest for human-engineered immortality. Philosopher Nikolai Fedorov went so far as to argue that unless the resurrection can be achieved naturally, God's creation is a mistake.¹⁵ Or it could just be limited. But achieving immortality is the very least of our concerns. Jesus is adamant that death of the body is inconsequential. He says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."¹⁶

It is curious that humans are so eager to go to heaven. Heaven is a far more extreme habitat than outer space. The reason? God is there. When Moses asked to see God's glory, God himself replied, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."¹⁷ If even a Moses cannot get close up to Sinless Perfection, what hope is there for the rest of us

sinner? We are just not adapted for heaven. God has no difficulty resurrecting our *bodies*. That is a piece of cake for him. Even water bears evolved a way of reversing virtual death. No, the real difficulty is in preventing us from being permanently vaporized by the radiation of his glory. The real difficulty is keeping us from *spiritual* death. Those who think otherwise just do not have an adequate sense of the extreme holiness of God. Heaven requires a very special space suit indeed.

A heavenly space suit

While explaining the kingdom of heaven in a parable, Jesus calls our attention to the man trying to enter the heavenly banquet without "wedding clothes."¹⁸ He is thrown out. What is this suit that we must wear to dare approach the presence of God? What material could possibly protect us against the awesome power of the Almighty? Can a wrath-proof fabric even exist? What could possibly prevent the penetrating stare of the Perfect Judge? Our only hope is that God might do the seemingly impossible. Perhaps the Omniscient One can find a way to hide our sin.

If we think about it, there is only one possibility. The suit itself must be divine to withstand the divine. Only Perfect Innocence can withstand Extreme Holiness. We need to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible never mentions space suits of course, but it is very clear that heaven requires special attire. It speaks of "white robes"¹⁹ and "rich garments."²⁰ The context of the passages is redemption. Jesus does not merely supply robes; he is the robe.

It is curious that humans are so sober about the exacting requirement for reaching into the heavens, while often being presumptuous about entry into heaven. It is true that God has a deeply forgiving character but only under his conditions. His conditions are clear. We can never try to enter heaven under our own devices, but must rely solely on God's grace. And how great is God's grace! He supplied the suit we need at tremendous cost to himself. When Jesus died on the cross he entered heaven naked and got thrown out. Remember his cry on the cross, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?"²¹ He got thrown out so that we don't have to.

What a relief for the believer! At the first reaches of God's radiant glory, we don't have to withdraw into a tun like a water bear. We used to be the living dead. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in

transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved."²² We can now
"approach the throne of grace with confidence."²³

¹ Hutchins, M, A.S.F. Craig and D. A. Thoney (eds.) (2003) *Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia*, Gale Group, Farmington Hills, MI, p. 117

² Hutchins *et al* (2003) pp. 116-117.

³ Miteva, V. (2008) Bacteria in Snow and Galicer Ice. In *Psychrophiles: from Biodiversity to Biotechnology* Margesin, R., F. Schinner, J Marx and C. Gerday (eds.) Springer-Verlag, Berlin, p. 43.

⁴ Piper, R. (2007) *Extraordinary Animals: An Encyclopedia of Curious and Unusual Animals* Greenwood Press, Westport, p.276.

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camel>. Retrieved 27 August 2010.

⁶ Wharton, D.A. (2002) *Life at the Limits: Organisms in Extreme Environments*. Cambridge University Press, p. 106.

⁷ Wharton, D.A. (2002) p. 105.

⁸ However, they succumbed after a few minutes of movement, Wharton, D.A. (2002) p. 106.

⁹ Brusca, R.C. and G.J. Brusca (2003) *Invertebrates* Sinauer Inc., Sunderland, p. 470

¹⁰ Hutchins *et al* (2003) , p. 118.

¹¹ Quoted in Wharton, D.A. (2002) p. 106.

¹² Plaxco, KW. and M. Gross (2006) *Astrobiology*. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 184.

¹³ Jönsson, K.I Rabbow, E. Schill, R.O. Ringdahl, M.H. and P. Rettberg Tardigrades survive exposure to space in low Earth orbit *Current Biology*,:18(17):R729-R731

¹⁴ Wharton, D.A. (2002) pp.127-128.

¹⁵ Perry, M. (2003) Historical Steps Toward the Scientific Conquest of Death *Physical Immortality* 1(1) 7-10.

¹⁶ Matthew 10:28.

¹⁷ Exodus 33:20.

¹⁸ Matthew 22:11-12.

¹⁹ Revelation 7:9.

²⁰ Zechariah 3:4.

²¹ Matthew 27:46.

²² Ephesians 2:4-5.

²³ Hebrews 4:16.

News briefs (From the Internet)

Biodiversity is good for human health

It may seem strange that opossums, for instance, benefit human health. But this is exactly what researchers have found. It turns out that opossums living in Virginia forests are able to kill ticks. When opossums decline, ticks switch to mice. The mice reproduce quickly and are less resistant to ticks. Ticks flourish spreading Lyme disease into human populations. Researchers have also correlated Avian flu epidemics to bird habitat loss. A tree planted a day keeps the doctor away.

<http://esciencenews.com/articles/2010/12/01/uf.expert.biodiversity.loss.correlates.with.increases.infectious.disease>

Index finger length can reduce prostate cancer risk

To avoid prostate cancer it is best to have a long index finger - longer than the ring finger. Finger size is thought to be affected by levels of sex hormones a baby is exposed to in the womb. Less testosterone correlates with a longer index finger and reduced risk for prostate cancer.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/12/101201172540.htm>

da Vinci on a PC

A new theory enables computers to mimic human creativity. The theory builds on what is known as Stage Decomposition. According to this theory people go through four stages in creative problem solving - preparation, incubation, insight and verification. During incubation the brain takes a break from conscious reasoning and lets subconscious, intuitive processes come to the fore. Now psychologists have a way to integrate the subconscious or implicit cognitive processes with the conscious or explicit ones. Computer models based on the integration compare very well with human creative problem solving.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/12/101201124345.htm>

Universe awash with stars

Researchers have found that red dwarf stars are far more common than previously thought. The small size of red dwarfs have made them difficult to detect. Now, a new generation of powerful telescopes are locating the elusives. Astronomers now think that there are three times more stars in the universe than previously thought. With that comes a three times greater probability of complex alien life. Someone needs to tell these astronomers that $3 \times 0 = 0$.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/12/101201134158.htm>

Not so fast with the sulphur dioxide

Two hundred and sixty million years ago a massive volcanic eruption in China led to the worst mass extinction in the earth's history. Ninety-five percent of marine species went extinct in the Permian extinction. Droplets of Sulphur dioxide from the volcano blanketed the earth triggered a severe ice age and the extinction. Paul Crutzen proposes that we release large quantities of the chemical at about 20km in the atmosphere to help mitigate the effects of global warming. A study of Venus has unexpectedly shown the presence of gaseous sulphur dioxide at around an altitude of 100km. It seems some droplets evaporate allowing sunlight through and making the chemical a less effective measure against global warming.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101130122035.htm>

The early universe was a hot, dense liquid

The hot (trillions of degrees) and dense part was known, but researchers thought that the quark-gluon plasma soup of the early universe would behave like a gas. Now that CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research's) Large Hadron Collider is fully operational and research is proceeding apace, new surprising discoveries are being made. Recreations of the first few microseconds after the Big Bang show that the universe behaved like a hot gas.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101123112835.htm>

Longevity breakthrough in worms

The roundworm *Caenorhabditis elegans* long a staple in longevity research has revealed clues to reducing aging. It turns on how energy is extracted from food. A longer-lived so-called Mit mutant had significant metabolic differences from the wild-type including use of new fuels and waste products. The life-span was extended by a matter of days which is significant in a creature that only lives several weeks.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/12/101201102603.htm>

Rat-eating plant discovered in the Philippines

A carnivorous pitcher plant over a metre long has been discovered by Christian missionaries. It is so large that it can even eat rats and frogs. Victims drown in the pitcher and slowly broken down by digestive juices. It has been named *Nepenthes attenboroughii* after Sir David Attenborough. The famed naturalist is reportedly delighted with the honour. Apparently New Yorkers want the plant to deal with their rat problem. Or they cannot stand another country having a carnivorous

plant bigger than theirs. Next thing they will discover why the missionaries keep disappearing ...

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101115153039.htm>

Virgin birth in Boa constrictors

It is a startling find. Female boa constrictors can have babies without mating. What is, more the all-female progeny do not have a shred of male influence. Asexual reproduction or parthenogenesis was clinched by all the progeny retaining the mother's rare recessive colour mutation. Parthenogenesis is rare animals and rarer still in vertebrates because sex is a defence against parasitism and parasites are so ubiquitous.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101103111210.htm>

AIDS dissenters caused the deaths of 330,000 South Africans.

This is the claim of Prof Myron Essex and Dr. Pride Chigwedere just for the years 2000 to 2005. Furthermore, 35,000 babies were born with HIV because of former president Mbeki's decision to withhold treatment for pregnant mothers. AIDS dissenters deny that HIV causes AIDS and that antiretroviral drugs are useful. Small wonder that AIDS denialism has been called "genocide by sloth."

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100118132134.htm>

Humour from the Internet

At the Doctor's

A woman steps in with a child that looks malnourished.

Doctor: "Tell me is the baby bottle-fed or breast-fed?"

Woman: "No, breast-fed."

Doctor: "Ok, then I must do an examination."

(He does a very professional examination of the woman's breasts.)

Doctor: "Ah, I think I've found the problem - you are not producing any milk."

Woman: "I know. I'm the grandmother."

A three-year-old walked up to a pregnant lady while waiting with his mother in the doctors office.

He inquisitively asked the lady, "Why is your stomach so big?"

She replied, "I'm having a baby."

With big eyes, he asked, "Is the baby in your stomach?"

She answered, "He sure is."

Then the little boy, with a puzzled look, asked, "Is it a good baby?"

She said, "Oh, yes. It's a real good baby."

With an even more surprised and shocked look, he asked, "Then why did you eat him?"

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office.

"Is it true," she wanted to know, "that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.

There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, "I'm wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked 'NO REFILLS'."

A man walked into the doctors, he said, 'I've hurt my arm in several places'. The doctor said, 'Well don't go there anymore'.

Wise as serpents and harmless as doves

Do not trust the prophesies of the octopus Mike L Anderson

What do Paris Hilton and Paul the Octopus have in common? Answer: they are both celebutantes. Celebutantes are famous for being famous rather than their skills. Strictly speaking one needs to be human, young, female, wealthy and preferably blonde to qualify, but I think this is arbitrarily restrictive. It is not that Paul is unskilled. In camouflage, jet propulsion and ink production, he beats any human hands down (or should I say tentacles down?). However, the reason for his fame is quite unrelated to any of these things. It has to do with football. If you google "Paul the Octopus" + football you will receive more than 7 million hits. It is alleged that Paul correctly predicted the winners of eight World Cup 2010 matches including the final between Spain and the Netherlands. (He did nothing of the sort. People merely imputed predictive power to one very lucky animal oracle among many aspirants).

For comparison, google the acclaimed evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr + evolution and you get one twentieth of that. There you have it; a two year old mollusc is twenty times more famous for prophesying about football than a one hundred year old evolutionary biologist is for studying evolution. Through no fault of his own, in football matters, Paul is a celebutante.¹ I love octopuses, but their being the most intelligent invertebrates does not count.

If you think Mayr should feel put out, consider this. The theologian "Jurgen Moltmann" + God receives only around 200 000 hits. And Moltmann is not just any old theologian. During the 2006 Soccer World Cup an online Theological World Cup was held for the greatest 20th century theologian. Moltmann won the final out of the top 32 contenders.

For comparison, evolutionary biologist "Richard Dawkins" + God receives over 1 million hits and Dawkins *is* just any old non-theologian. Or perhaps worse. "Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology."² This is the assessment of a literary critic for the *London Review of Books*. There you have it; the non-theologian is five times more famous for his views on God than the theologian. In theological matters, Dawkins is a celebute. Being a most intelligent evolutionary biologist does not count.

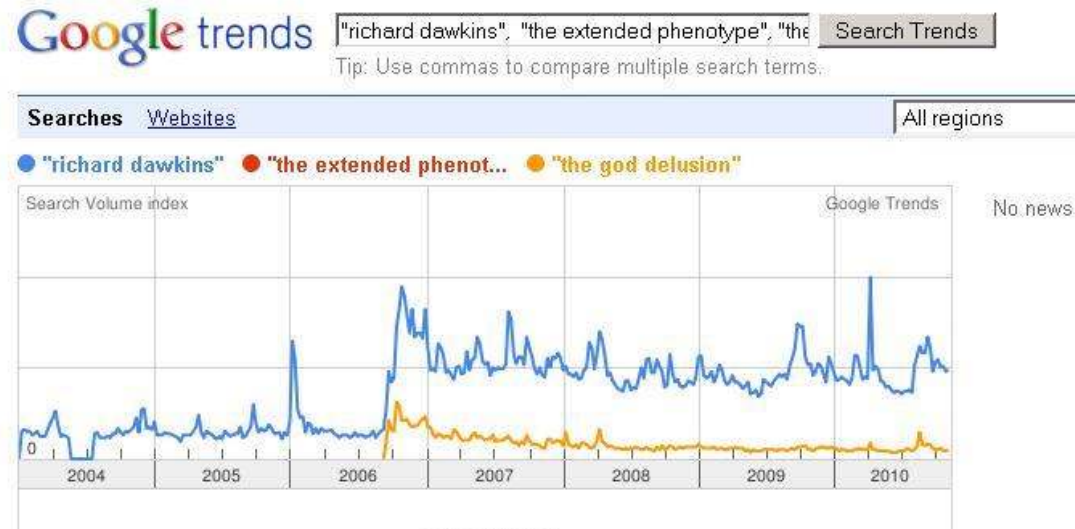
Deferring to octopuses on football or evolutionary biologists on theology is to commit *Argumentum ad Verecundiam* or appeal to false authority. Many just do not get the fallacy. On several occasions in religion and science seminars after favourably quoting Dawkins on evolution, people have expressed surprise that I do not continue on and quote him on God. They seem to think I am being inconsistent. I would only be inconsistent if Dawkins were God. They think that the fallacy applies to other people's heroes; their hero is immune

I want to be very clear here. Truth does not depend on what authorities claim, but on the evidence. However, accessing, evaluating and popularising evidence requires expertise and that is why as a practical matter non-gods have to rely on authorities when outside their field. This is why if one wants to know God it is far better to read theologian J.I. Packer's *Knowing God* than *The God Delusion*. If one needs a response to the latter there is theologian Alister McGrath's *The Dawkins Delusion?* And if one wants to know about evolution it is far better to read Richard Dawkins than philosopher-mathematician William Dembski of "Intelligent Design" fame however much the former's "theology" sticks in ones throat.

Are celebutes made by God?

So, it is not that Dawkins is unskilled. He is certainly extremely skilled in evolutionary biology.³ But it is not his knowledge of evolution that made him famous so much as his ramblings on God. Don't believe me?

Do a Google Trends search on "Richard Dawkins"+ "*The Extended Phenotype*" + "*The God Delusion*." Google Trends can compare how often search terms are entered. *The Extended Phenotype* is Dawkins' personal view of the evolution of life. God is mentioned only twice in this book and the title fails to feature on Google Trends. 'God' appears more often in *The God Delusion* - 715 times to be exact. At the time *this* book came out there is a noticeable leap in how often 'Richard Dawkins' is searched (see accompanying graph).



Celebutantes are made by God in more ways than one. If the "Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes"⁴, surely he sovereign over kings on the Internet? Elsewhere we are told, "They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."⁵ Is *The God Delusion* a delusion sent by God?

Are celebutantes made through evolution?

The evolutionary process may also be behind the rise of celebutantes. Anthropologists Henrich and Gil-White point out that humans, unlike other species, get most of their information about the world from other humans rather than directly from the environment. The latter is time-consuming and energetically expensive. The former is a handy shortcut. They argue that that natural selection has favoured social learners that copy certain individuals.⁶ But which individuals? One criterion that people seem to use is prestige. Prestigious individuals are identified by such cues as wealth, health and age.⁷

This approach worked well in the relatively simple world of our ancestors. The system breaks down in the current age because the world is just too complex for single individuals to get a handle on it. Success in one department of life is no guarantee that one is capable in another. The trouble is, as studies have shown, high prestige persons can have a measure of credibility beyond their expertise.⁸

Is Jesus a celebute?

It seems sometimes that there is a concerted effort to make Jesus Christ into a celebute. In his day one tried to make him into a civil judge.⁹ Others tried to make him into a political figure.¹⁰ He resisted the imposition. Nowadays George W. Bush calls him his favourite "political philosopher." Elton John says he was a "super-intelligent gay man". Others say he was a hippy; still others a capitalist, socialist, liberal or guru.

They are trying to make him famous for something other than he was and for reasons they think deserve fame. They are trying to make him into a celebute. What did Jesus want to be known for? Not for his birth, nor his transfiguration, nor his prophesies nor even his resurrection. In the remarkable condescension of God, the "skill" Jesus wants to be known for is his death. Hence he instituted communion. Jesus did not have the trappings that usually come with celebutes. He was not wealthy and certainly not blonde.

How does the World Wide Web reflect the priorities of Jesus? The following table shows the number of hits for Jesus Christ + each of some of the events in his life.

Event	Google hits
Birth	4 million
Transfiguration	<1 million
Death	9 million
Resurrection	2 million

It suggests that Christians are on the right track in their professions on the Web.

However, if you google "Jesus Christ" + Christmas you get a whopping 26 million hits. Of course, it suits the world's commercial interests if Jesus largely remains a baby. The world has made him into something of a celebute by taking the substance out of Jesus. Many celebrate

Christmas happy in all the hype but without even a vague idea of the true basis for focusing on him. In light of this perhaps it would be good to remember that the Child cannot be separated from the crucifixion and repeat a poem I wrote some time ago.

It's Christmas time

There is a box beneath the tree.
It has no ribbon, the tree no leaves.
The box is empty, but for hay.
The tree is bare, but for blood.
The Babe has grown and died and risen.
It's Christmas time.

There is a Maori proverb that goes, "do not die like the octopus." They were scornful of the animal that gives up without a fight. But in this respect Jesus is just like the real mollusc. As Isaiah prophesied,

"He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth."¹¹

Notes

¹ Of course, football is far more popular (871 million hits) than natural selection (3 million hits).

² Terry Eagleton, "Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching: A Review of Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*," *London Review of Books*, October 19, 2006

³ Perhaps it is better to say extremely skilled in popularising Darwinism. Ernst Mayr has said, "Yet the funny thing is if in England, you ask a man in the street who the greatest living Darwinian is, he will say Richard Dawkins. And indeed, Dawkins has done a marvelous job of popularizing Darwinism. But Dawkins' basic theory of the gene being the object of evolution is totally non-Darwinian. I would not call him the greatest Darwinian." Mayr, E. (2001) What evolution is. http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/mayr/mayr_print.html
Dawkins may be a minnow next to Mayr, but the average anti-evolutionist is a minnow next to Dawkins.

⁴ Daniel 4:32

⁵ 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

⁶ Henrich, J, and Gil-White, F.J. (2001) The evolution of prestige – Freely conferred deference as a mechanism for enhancing the benefits of cultural transmission. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 22:165-196.

⁷ Health is normally associated with youth and wealth with age. Some have it all by inheriting a fortune. Hence the Paris Hilton phenomenon.

⁸ Ryckman, R.M. Sherman, M.F. and W.C. Rodda (1972) Locus of Control and Expertise Relevance As Determinants of Changes in Opinion About Student Activism. *Journal of Social Psychology* 88: 107-14.

⁹ Luke 12:14.

¹⁰ John 6:15.

¹¹ Isaiah 53:7.

Feature article

The Life of God in the Soul of Man Part 2Henry Scougal

On the Excellency of Religion and Divine Love.

And now, my dear friend, having discovered the nature of true religion, before I proceed any further, it will not perhaps be unfit to fix our meditations a little on the excellency and advantages of it, that we may be excited to the more vigorous and diligent prosecution of those methods whereby we may attain so great a felicity. But, alas! what words shall we find to express that inward satisfaction, those hidden pleasures, which can never be rightly understood but by those holy souls that feel them? "A stranger intermeddleth not with their joys."

Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the soul. Its faculties had formerly been enfeebled and disordered, so that they could not exercise their natural functions; it had wearied itself with endless tossings and rollings, and was never able to find any rest. Now that distemper being removed, it feels itself well; there is due harmony in its faculties, and a sprightly vigour possesseth every part. The understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave to it. The affections are not tied to the motions of sense and the influence of external objects, but they are stirred by more divine impressions, are touched by a sense of invisible things.

Let us descend, if you please, into a nearer and more particular view of religion, in those several branches of it which were named before. Let us consider that love and affection wherewith holy souls are united to God, that we may see what excellency and felicity is involved in it. Love is that powerful and prevalent passion, by which all the faculties and inclinations of the soul are determined, and on which both its perfection

and happiness depend. The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love. He who loveth mean and sordid things doth thereby become base and vile, but a noble and well-placed affection doth advance and improve the spirit into a conformity with the perfections which it loves. The images of these do frequently present themselves unto the mind, and, by a secret force and energy, insinuate into the very constitution of the soul, and mould and fashion it unto their own likeness. Hence we may see how easily lovers or friends do slide into the imitation of the persons whom they affect; and how, even before they are aware, they begin to resemble them, not only in the more considerable instances of their deportment, but also in their voice and gesture, and that which we call their mien or air; and certainly we should as well transcribe the virtues and inward beauties of the soul, if they were the object and motive of our love. But now, as all the creatures we converse with have their mixture and alloy, we are always in hazard to be sullied and corrupted by placing our affections on them. Passion doth easily blind our eyes, so that we first approve, and then imitate the things that are blameable in them. The true way to improve and ennoble our souls is, by fixing our love on the divine perfections, that we may have them always before us, and derive an impression of them on ourselves; and, "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory." He who, with a generous and holy ambition, hath raised his eyes towards that uncreated beauty and goodness, and fixed his affection there, is quite of another spirit, of a more excellent and heroic temper, than the rest of the world, and cannot but infinitely disdain all mean and unworthy things; will not entertain any low or base thoughts which might disparage his high and noble pretensions. Love is the greatest and most excellent thing we are masters of and therefore it is folly and baseness to bestow it unworthily. It is indeed the only thing we can call our own: other things may be taken from us by violence, but none can ravish our love. If any thing else be counted ours by giving our love, we give all, so far as we make over our hearts and wills, by which we possess our other enjoyments. It is not possible to refuse him any thing, to whom by love we have given ourselves; nay, since it is the privilege of gifts to receive their value from the mind of the giver, and not to be measured by the event, but by the desire, he who loveth may, in some sense, be said not only to bestow all that he hath, but all things else which may make the beloved person happy; since he doth heartily wish them, and would really give them if they were in his power: in which sense it is that one makes to say, "That divine love doth, in a manner, give God unto himself, by the complacency it takes in the happiness and perfection of his nature." But though this may seem too strained an

expression, certainly love is the worthiest present we can offer unto God, and it is extremely debased when we bestow it another way.

When this affection is misplaced, it doth often vent itself in such expressions as point at its genuie and proper object, and insinuate where it ought to be placed. The flattering and blasphemous terms of adoration, wherein men do sometimes express their passion, are the language of that affection which was made and designed for God; as he who is accustomed to speak to some great person, doth perhaps, unawares, accost another with those titles he was wont to give him; but certainly that passion which accounteth its object a deity, ought to be bestowed on him who really is so. Those unlimited submissions, which would debase the soul if directed to any other, will exalt and ennoble it when placed here. Those chains and cords of love are infinitely more glorious than liberty itself; this slavery is more noble than all the empires in the world.

Again, As divine love doth advance and elevate the soul, so it is that alone which can make it happy. The highest and most ravishing pleasures, the most solid and substantial delights that human nature is capable of, are those which arise from the endearments of a well-placed and successful affection. That which imbitters love, and makes it ordinarily a very troublesome and hurtful passion, is the placing it on those who have not worth enough to deserve it, or affection and gratitude to requite it, or whose absence may deprive us of the pleasure of their converse, or their miseries occasion our trouble. To all these evils are they exposed, whose chief and supreme affection is placed on creatures like themselves; but the love of God delivers us from them all. First, I say, love must needs be miserable, and full of trouble and disquietude, when there is not worth and excellency enough in the object to answer the vastness of its capacity. So eager and violent a passion cannot but fret and torment the spirit, when it finds not wherewith to satisfy its cravings; and, indeed, so large and unbounded in its nature, that it must be extremely pinched and straitened, when confined to any creature: nothing below an infinite good can afford it room to stretch itself, and exert its vigour and activity. What! is a little skin-deep beauty, or some small degrees of goodness, to match or satisfy a passion which was made for God: designed to embrace an infinite good? No wonder lovers do so hardly suffer any rival, and do not desire that others should approve their passions by imitating it; they know the scantiness and narrowness of the good which they love, that it cannot suffice two, being in effect too little for one. Hence love, "which is as strong as death;" occasioneth "jealousy which is as cruel as the grave," the coals whereof are coals of fire, which hath a most violent flame.

But divine love hath no mixture of this gall. When once the soul is fixed on that supreme and all-sufficient good, it finds so much perfection and goodness, as doth not only answer and satisfy its affection, but master and overpower it too. It finds all its love to be too faint and languid for such a noble object, and is only sorry that it can command no more. It wisheth for the flames of a seraph, and longs for the time when it shall be wholly melted and dissolved into love; and because it can do so little itself, it desires the assistance of the whole creation, that angels and men would conquer with it the admiration and love of those infinite perfections.

Again, Love is accompanied with trouble, when it misseth a suitable return of affection. Love is the most valuable thing we can bestow, and by giving it, we do, in effect, give all that we have; and therefore it must needs be afflicting to find so great a gift despised, that the present which one hath made of his whole heart, cannot prevail to obtain any return. Perfect love is a kind of self-derelection, a wandering out of ourselves; it is a kind of voluntary death, wherein the lover dies to himself, and all his own interests, nor thinking of them, nor caring for them any more, and minding nothing but how he may please and gratify the party whom he loves. Thus he is quite undone, unless he meets with reciprocal affection; he neglects himself, and the other hath no regard to him: but if he be beloved, he is revived, as it were, and liveth in the soul and care of the person whom he loves; and now he begins to mind his own concernments, not so much because they are his, as because the beloved is pleased to own an interest in them: he becomes dear unto himself, because he is so unto the other.

But why should I enlarge in so known a matter? Nothing can be more clear than that the happiness of love depends on the return it meets with: and herein the divine lover hath unspeakably the advantage, having placed his affection on him whose nature is love, whose goodness is as infinite as his being, whose mercy prevented us when we were his enemies, therefore cannot choose but embrace us when we are become his friends. It is utterly impossible that God should deny his love to a soul wholly devoted to him, and which desires nothing so much as to serve and please him; he cannot disdain his own image, nor the heart in which it is engraven. Love is all the tribute which we can pay him, and it is the sacrifice which he will not despise.

Another thing which disturbs the pleasure of love, and renders it a miserable and unquiet passion, is absence and separation from those we love. It is not without a sensible affliction that friends do part, though for some little time: it is sad to be deprived of that society which is so delightful; our life becomes tedious, being spent in an impatient expectation of the happy hour wherein we may meet again: but if death

has made the separation, as some time or other it must, this occasions a grief scarce to be paralleled by all the misfortunes of human life, and wherein we may pay dear enough for the comforts of our friendship. But O how happy are those who have placed their love on him who can never be absent from them! They need but open their eyes, and they shall every where behold the traces of his presence and glory, and converse with him whom their soul loveth; and this makes the darkest prison, or wildest desert, not only supportable, but delightful to them. In fine, A lover is miserable, if the person whom he loveth be so. They who have made an exchange of hearts by love, get thereby an interest in one another's happiness and misery; and this makes love a troublesome passion, when placed on earth. The most fortunate person hath grief enough to mar the tranquillity of his friend; and it is hard to hold out, when we are attacked on all hands, and suffer not only in our own person, but in another's. But if God were the object of our love, we should share in an infinite happiness, without any mixture or possibility of diminution; we should rejoice to behold the glory of God, and receive comfort and pleasure from all the praises wherewith men and angels do extol him. It should delight us, beyond all expression, to consider, that the beloved of our souls is infinitely happy in himself, and that all his enemies cannot shake or unsettle his throne: "that our God is in the heavens, and doth whatever he pleaseth."

Behold, on what sure foundation his happiness is built, whose soul is possessed with divine love, whose will is transformed into the will of God, and whose great desire is, that his Maker should be pleased! O the peace, the rest, the satisfaction that attendeth such a temper of mind! What an infinite pleasure must it needs be, thus, as it were, to lose ourselves in him, and, being swallowed up in the overcoming sense of his goodness, to offer ourselves a living sacrifice, always ascending unto him in flames of love! Never doth a soul know what solid joy and substantial pleasure is, till once, being weary of itself, it renounce all propriety, give itself up unto the Author of its being, and feel itself become a hallowed and devoted thing, and can say, from an inward sense and feeling, "My beloved is mine," (I account all his interest mine own,) "and I am his:" I am content to be any thing for him, and care not for myself, but that I may serve him. A person, moulded into this temper, would find pleasure in all the dispensations of Providence: temporal enjoyments would have another relish, when he should taste the divine goodness in them, and consider them as tokens of love, sent by his dearest Lord and Maker: and chastisements, though they be not joyous, but grievous, would hereby lose their sting, the rod as well as the staff would comfort him: he would snatch a kiss from the hand that was smiting him, and gather sweetness from that severity; nay, he would

rejoice, that though God did not the will of such a worthless and foolish creature as himself, yet he did his own will, and accomplished his own designs, which are infinitely more holy and wise.

The exercises of religion, which to others are insipid and tedious, do yield the highest pleasures and delight to souls possessed with divine love. They rejoice when they are called "to go up to the house of the Lord," that they may "see his power and his glory, as they have formerly seen it in the sanctuary." They never think themselves so happy, as when, having retired from the world, and gotten free from the noise and hurry of affairs, and silenced all their clamorous passions (those troublesome guests within,) they have placed themselves in the presence of God, and entertain fellowship and communion with him: they delight to adore his perfections, and recount his favours,--and to protest their affection to him, and tell him a thousand times that they love him; to lay their troubles or wants before him, and disburden their hearts in his bosom. Repentance itself is a delightful exercise, when it floweth from the principle of love. There is a secret sweetness which accompanieth those tears of remorse, those meltings and relentings of a soul returning unto God, and lamenting its former unkindness.

The severities of a holy life, and that constant watch which we are obliged to keep over our hearts and ways, are very troublesome to those who are only ruled and acted by an external law, and have no law in their minds inclining them to the performance of their duty: but where divine love possesseth the soul, it stands as sentinel to keep out every thing that may offend the beloved, and doth disdainfully repulse those temptations which assault it: it complieth cheerfully, not only with explicit commands, but with the most secret notices of the beloved's pleasure, and is ingenious in discovering what will be most grateful and acceptable unto him: it makes mortification and self-denial change their harsh and dreadful names, and become easy, sweet, and delightful things.

But I find this part of my letter swell bigger than I designed, (indeed who would not be tempted to dwell on so pleasant a theme!) I shall endeavour to compensate it by brevity in the other points.

The next branch of the Divine Life, is a universal charity and love. The excellency of this grace will be easily acknowledged; for what can be more noble and generous than a heart enlarged to embrace the whole world, whose wishes and designs are levelled at the good and welfare of the universe, which considereth every man's interest as its own? He who loveth his neighbour as himself, can never entertain any base or injurious thought, or be wanting in expressions of bounty. He had rather suffer a thousand wrongs, than be guilty of one; and never accounts himself happy, but when some one or other hath been benefited by him:

the malice or ingratitude of men is not able to resist his love: he overlooks their injuries, and pities their folly, and overcomes their evil with good: and never designs any other revenge against his most bitter and malicious enemies, than to put all objections he can upon them, whether they will or not. Is it any wonder that such a person be revered and admired, and accounted the darling of mankind? This inward goodness and benignity of spirit reflects a certain sweetness and serenity upon the very countenance, and makes it amiable and lovely: it inspireth the soul with a holy resolution and courage, and makes it capable of enterprising and effecting the highest things. Those heroic actions which we are wont to read with admiration, have, for the most part, been the effects of the love of one's country, or of particular friendships: and, certainly, a more extensive and universal affection must be much more powerful and efficacious.

Again, As charity flows from a noble and excellent temper, so it is accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and pleasure: it delights the soul to feel itself thus enlarged, and to be delivered from those disquieting, as well as deformed passions, malice, hatred, and envy; and become gentle, sweet, benign. Had I my choice of all things that might tend to my present felicity, I would pitch upon this, to have my heart possessed with the greatest kindness and affection towards all men in the world. I am sure this would make me partake in all the happiness of others: their inward endowments and outward prosperity; every thing that did benefit and advantage them would afford me comfort and pleasure: and though I should frequently meet with occasions of grief and compassion, yet there is a sweetness in commiseration, which makes it infinitely more desirable than a stupid insensibility: and the consideration of that infinite goodness and wisdom which governs the world, might repress any excessive trouble for particular calamities that happen in it: and the hopes or possibility of men's after happiness, might moderate their sorrow for their present misfortunes. Certainly, next to the love and enjoyment of God, that ardent charity and affection wherewith blessed souls do embrace one another, is justly to be reckoned as the greatest felicity of those regions above; and did it universally prevail in the world, it would anticipate that blessedness, and make us taste of the joys of heaven upon earth.

That which I named as a third branch of religion, was purity; and you may remember I described it to consist in a contempt of sensual pleasures, and resoluteness to undergo those troubles and pains we may meet with in the performance of our duty. Now, the naming of this may suffice to recommend it as a most noble and excellent quality. There is no slavery so base, as that whereby a man becomes a drudge to his own lusts: nor any victory so glorious, as that which is obtained over them.

Never can that person be capable of any thing that is noble or worthy, who is sunk in the gross and seculent pleasures of sense, or bewitched with the light and airy gratifications of fancy: but the religious soul is of a more sublime and divine temper; it knows it was made for higher things, and scorns to step aside one foot out of the ways of holiness, for the obtaining any of these.

And this purity is accompanied with a great deal of pleasure.

Whatsoever defiles the soul disturbs it too; all impure delights have a sting in them, and leave smart and trouble behind them. Excess and intemperance, and all inordinate lusts, are so much enemies to the health of the body, and the interest of this present life, that a little consideration might oblige any rational man to forbear them on that very score; and if the religious person go higher, and do not only abstain from noxious pleasures, but neglect those that are innocent, this is not to be looked upon as any violent and uneasy restraint, but as the effect of better choice, that their minds are taken up in the pursuit of more sublime and refined delights, so that they cannot be concerned in these. Any person that is engaged in a violent and passionate affection, will easily forget his ordinary gratifications, will be little curious about his diet, or his bodily ease, or the divertisements he was wonted to delight in. No wonder then, if souls overpowered with divine love despise inferior pleasures, and be almost ready to grudge the body its necessary attendance for the common accommodations of life, judging all these impertinent to their main happiness, those higher enjoyments they are pursuing. As for the hardships they may meet with, they rejoice in them, as opportunities to exercise and testify their affection; and since they are able to do so little for God, they are glad of the honour to suffer for him. The last branch of religion is humility; and however to vulgar and carnal eyes this may appear an abject, base, and despicable quality, yet really the soul of man is not capable of a higher and more noble endowment. It is a silly ignorance that begets pride. But humility arises from a nearer acquaintance with excellent things, which keeps men from doting on trifles, or admiring themselves because of some petty attainments. Noble and well-educated souls have no such high opinion of riches, beauty, strength, and other such like advantages, as to value themselves for them, or despise those that want them. And as for inward worth and real goodness, the sense they have of the divine perfections, makes them think very meanly of any thing they have hitherto attained, and be still endeavouring to surmount themselves, and make nearer approaches to those infinite excellencies which they admire.

I know not what thoughts people may have of humility, but I see almost every person pretending to it, and shunning such expressions and actions as may make them be accounted arrogant and presumptuous, so

that those who are most desirous of praise will be loathe to commend themselves. What are those compliments and modes of civility, so frequent in our ordinary converse, but so many protestations of the esteem of others, and the low thoughts we have of ourselves? And must not that humility be a noble and excellent endowment, when the very shadows of it are accounted so necessary a part of good breeding? Again, This grace is accompanied with a great deal of happiness and tranquility. The proud and arrogant person is a trouble to all that converse with him, but most of all unto himself: every thing is enough to vex him; but scarce any thing sufficient to content and please him. He is ready to quarrel with any thing that falls out; as if he himself were such a considerable person, that God Almighty should do every thing to gratify him, and all the creatures of heaven and earth should wait upon him, and obey his will. The leaves of high trees do shake with every blast of wind; and every breath, every evil word will disquiet and torment an arrogant man. But the humble person hath the advantage when he is despised, that none can think more meanly of him than he doth of himself; and therefore he is not troubled at the matter, but can easily bear those reproaches which wound the other to the soul. And withal, as he is less affected with injuries, so indeed he is less obnoxious unto them. "Contention which cometh from pride," betrays a man into a thousand inconveniences, which those of a meek and lowly temper seldom meet with. True and genuine humility begetteth both a veneration and love among all wise and discerning persons, while pride defeateth its own design, and deprives a man of that honour it makes him pretend to.

But as the chief exercises of humility are those which relate unto Almighty God, so these are accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and sweetness. It is impossible to express the great pleasure and delight which religious persons feel in the lowest prostration of their souls before God, when, having a deep sense of the divine majesty and glory, they sink (if I may so speak) to the bottom of their beings, and vanish and disappear in the presence of God, by a serious and affectionate acknowledgment of their own nothingness, and the shortness and imperfections of their attainments; when they understand the full sense and emphasis of the Psalmist's exclamation, "Lord! what is man?" and can utter it with the same affection. Never did any haughty and ambitious person receive the praises and applauses of men with so much pleasure, as the humble and religious do renounce them: "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

Thus I have spoken something of the excellencies and advantages of religion in its several branches; but should be very injurious to the

subject, did I pretend to have given any perfect account of it. Let us acquaint ourselves with it, and experience will teach us more than all that ever hath been spoken or written concerning it. But, if we may suppose the soul to be already awakened unto some longing desires after so great a blessedness, it will be good to give them vent, and suffer them to issue forth in some such aspirations as these:----

A PRAYER.

Good God! what a mighty felicity is this to which we are called! How graciously hast thou joined our duty and happiness together, and prescribed that for our work, the performance whereof is a great reward! And shall such silly worms be advanced to so great a height? Wilt thou allow us to raise our eyes to thee? Wilt thou admit and accept our affection? Shall we receive the impression of thy divine excellencies, by beholding and admiring them,--and partake of thy infinite blessedness and glory, by loving thee, and rejoicing in thee? O the happiness of those souls that have broken the fetters of self-love, and disentangled their affection from every narrow and particular good! whose understandings are enlightened by thy Holy Spirit, and their wills enlarged to the extent of thine! who love thee above all things, and all mankind for thy sake! I am persuaded, O God, I am persuaded, that I can never be happy, till my carnal and corrupt affections be mortified, and the pride and vanity of my spirit be subdued, and till I come seriously to despise the world, and think nothing of myself. But O when shall it once be? O when wilt thou come unto me, and satisfy my soul with thy likeness, making me holy as thou art holy, even in all manner of conversation? Hast thou given me a prospect of so great a felicity, and wilt thou not bring me unto it? Hast thou excited these desires in my soul, and wilt thou not also satisfy them? O teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me unto the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, and perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, forsake not the works of thine own hands."

Henry Scougal (1650-1678) was a Scottish theologian, minister and author. This excerpt is taken from his widely acclaimed *"The Life Of God In The Soul Of Man"*, Nichols and Noyes, Boston. It was published when he was just eighteen years old.

If you found this e-zine helpful please give it to someone else.

Science and Faith is a free Christian e-zine published by the Montane Publishers, P O Box 218, Betty's Bay, 7141, South Africa. Co-editors: Andy D Potts, Mike L Anderson

Copyright (2010) held by the individual authors of the articles. This e-zine may be freely copied on condition it is done so in its entirety without alteration and free of charge.

To subscribe to Science & Faith put subscribe in the subject line of an e-mail message to sciencefaith@mikelanderson.com

To unsubscribe to Science & Faith put unsubscribe in the subject line of an e-mail message to sciencefaith@mikelanderson.com

Board: Dr A Potts, Revd R Anderson, M Koegelenberg, S Peacock (CA)SA
Bank Details: Mike Anderson Donation Account, Standard Bank,
Rondebosch, Account No: 075594404, Branch Code: 25009,
Savings Account, PlusPlan SME
