

Did he realize the philosophical consequences of his ideas? Definitely—his clandestine notebooks, which he dared not show even close friends, reveal that he struggled with the fact that evolution could undermine people's belief in God. But he seemed more bothered by what undermining others' faith might mean to him and his social standing than what it would do to other people.

Although Darwin sought to understand the origin of life-forms in purely scientific terms, he could never disentangle it from religious questions. Was God involved or even there? Was Jesus's sacrificial death pointless?

Though God had pursued him enough for him to know where to find the answers, Darwin never took the questions back to the Bible to find God's answers. He chose not to look. ■

NOTES

- ¹ One of the most readable of these and source of much of this article is *Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist* by A. Desmond and J. Moore (New York: Norton & Co., 1994).
- ² The medical nature of Darwin's illness continues to generate debate. See: R. Colp, Jr., *To Be an Invalid: The Illness of Charles Darwin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), which argues for stress as the main cause; A. K. Campbell and S. B. Matthews, "Darwin's Illness Revealed," *Postgrad. Med. J.* 81 (2005): 248–251, which argues for lactose intolerance accentuated by depression.
- ³ In a letter to J. D. Hooker; see Ref. 1, pp. 314–315.
- ⁴ N. Barlow, ed., *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809–1882*, with original omissions restored (New York: Norton & Co., 1958), p. 57.
- ⁵ It is not clear what the Wedgwoods believed as Unitarians. They may have been merely antitrinitarian and held that God was present only in Christ when He was on earth, still allowing Him to be the only means of salvation. At least, they did not appear to actively adhere to Universalist teachings.
- ⁶ Ref. 1, pp. 270–271.
- ⁷ Ref. 4, p. 237.
- ⁸ This was intended as a prerequisite to studying the revelation in Scripture (See W. Paley, *Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity*, 12th ed., J. Faulder, London, 1809). However, the contorted naturalistic explanations for such things as death and disease led to irresolvable inconsistencies with the Holy Scriptures.
- ⁹ A minority of geologists continued to accept Noah's Flood as the source of major geologic formations. See T. Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology—Before Darwin* (Green Forest, Arizona: Master Books, 2004).
- ¹⁰ Darwin had learned old-earth geology from Sedgwick, who believed the earth was molded by periodic regional cataclysms. However, Darwin took Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (vol. 1, Murray, 1830) on the *Beagle* and was converted to gradualism and uniformitarian geology a few weeks into the voyage (Ref. 1, pp. 116–118).
- ¹¹ For further information see J. Moore, *The Darwin Legend* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994).



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DARWIN'S PERSONAL STRUGGLE WITH EVIL

by Roger W. Sanders

The doctor tries to look away as he says, "I'm sorry. I've done all I can. Your daughter is dying."

How would you respond? "God, this is hard to bear. Please give me eyes to see from Your perspective. Take my despair and turn it into joy." Or would you say, "God, why are you doing this to my family; what has this little girl done to deserve this?" Even born-again Christians struggle with pain and suffering.

But what if you had never placed your personal faith in Jesus Christ? Would you be more inclined to cry out, "What kind of God are You? This is all Your fault. I'm not sure I can still believe You exist."

That was Darwin's situation. He was 42 years old and his 10-year-old daughter, Anne, who had developed such a strong emotional connection with him, the joy of his life, lay dying. Her physical trauma hadn't appeared suddenly. Less than a year earlier, she developed a stomach illness like the one that had plagued him for 12 years. But hers was more severe, more feverish, came more often, and lasted longer. Likewise, doctors were puzzled by its cause. He took her



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to the health retreat where he had received the most help, but she found no relief.

At the end he stayed close at her side, at times relapsing into his own illness. After days of writhing with agony, she wasted away and passed into a coma before slipping irretrievably from her sobbing father.

Darwin's faith was not in Jesus Christ, only in what he could see, touch, and understand. Perhaps more than any other scientist of his time, this hurting father came to understand the evil that really exists in the natural world—"red in tooth and claw" as the poet Lord Tennyson described it. The death of Anne just made the evil touch him personally. As far as we know, it also made him turn away from God once and for all.

Just how profoundly he came to reject God is evident from this private message to his family, penned late in life and intended to be read after his death: "I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my father, brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine." Apparently, he understood the New Testament doctrine of salvation through the substitutionary death of Christ but did not believe it.

The blame for his turning away must fall partly on the church and the theologians and scientists who, decades before Anne's death, had already given up a biblical view of history. Adam's Fall and the Flood no longer had meaning as real events that shaped our world. The church foolishly explained that God created parasites to prod men to cleanliness, and mice to feed cats. The cat's capture of a mouse makes both the cat and the mouse "happy."

Without the Bible's explanation that Adam's sin brought death and a curse on the world, there is no satisfying answer to why evil exists. We also have no logical foundation to explain why Jesus needed to come to earth as a divine "second Adam" to defeat death (Romans 5:12–14; 1 Cor-



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Darwin did not accept that Adam's sin was responsible for the death he observed in nature (above).

inthians 15:44–49). The church failed to give Darwin a satisfying answer for the sight of a snake devouring a fallen baby bird or the pain of losing his daughter. Those in the church who claimed that God brought Adam's "very good" world into existence through millions of years of death and suffering made God out to be an ogre and a liar.

Darwin simply was unable to resolve suffering and death with a God who is good, just, and merciful. For him, the "Creator" was distant, caring little whether the world was very good or very bad. Rejecting the biblical view, he reasoned that death and suffering were integral to operation of the present world and had always existed.

Darwin proposed a new natural law—natural selection—which assumed that death has operated from the beginning. With this naturalistic, impersonal force of natural selection, he found a substitute for the God of the Bible, who is the Creator of all life-forms, the eternal Judge of sin, and the only possible Redeemer of fallen mankind and of our corrupted world. ■