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“news you don't find elsewhere”

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FAIL! New government trans guidance for schools still leaves gender theory in place

THE government's long, long awaited guidance on the teaching of transgender issues in schools, whilst providing small but welcome improvements for parental rights, has utterly failed to 'grasp the nettle'. What is the nettle? - it is the fact that *no child should be taught by his/her teachers that it is possible to 'change gender'*.



Kemi Badenoch Photo: Wikipedia

The guidance, issued by Education Secretary Gillian Keegan on 19 December, is 'non-statutory' - that is, it does not have the force of statute law. It acknowledges that trans theory is a 'contested' ideology - yet contains not a single measure to stop its ever-increasing spread into more and more schools.

ENCOURAGE

Guidance has been promised ever since the controversy surrounding Christian foster parents, Nigel and Sally Rowe, who in 2017 withdrew their two children from a school which was aggressively pursuing gender ideology. The Department for Education (DfE)'s policy at the time was to "encourage schools to embed transgender ideology

into the fabric of a schools' culture, suggest how to implement gender neutral toilets and encourage cross-dressing and gender transition without question", and advised schools to link up with controversial queer groups such as *Stonewall* and *Mermaids*.

Headed: 'Gender-questioning children', the new guidance document assumes that many children will continue to seek to change their birth sex, giving guidance on how schools should deal with requests by a child to change his/her name, pronouns and school attire. The guidance is as yet only in draft form; there will be a period of consultation which ends on 12 March. An-

none interested in making a response can do so via a 16-page online questionnaire or in writing to:

Consultation Response (Guidance for schools and colleges: gender questioning children), Dept for Education, Life Skills Division, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, LONDON SW1P 3BT.

The document suggests that 'gender-questioning' children "may be influenced by peers or social media" but fails to acknowledge that much responsibility for fomenting trans ideas in schools stems from the content of the Sex and Relationships curriculum promoted by the DfE itself or by outside agencies such as *Stonewall* and *Mermaids*.

The document spells out things that schools 'must' do - to comply with the law; and those it 'should' do - meaning things that the DfE "expects" schools to do, but doesn't have to, The documents are full of 'should's, rather than 'must's'.

The main changes:
see separate article, page 2

Civil Service blob tried to block new guidance

Schools: New trans guidance could lead to flood of legal 'test cases'

THE *Daily Mail's* Martin Beckford reported on 20 December that a Civil Service leak [to the journal *Schools Week*] had revealed that lawyers in the Department for Education (DfE) had been warning that if the draft trans guidance for schools were implemented, it could lead to a flood of test cases in the courts.

Civil Service officials, once called 'The Blob' by former Education Secretary Michael Gove - frustrated by their opposition to his reforms - said that the guidance was 'too vague' and that it did not respect the 'rights' of transgender children under equality laws.

The leaker said that DfE civil servants had

warned that stopping primary school children from adopting new pronouns "had a high risk of successful legal challenge". The current Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch, had previously told how officials tried to stop her banning gender-neutral toilets and advised her against meeting a young woman who regretted

transitioning.

A government source responded: "This guidance is legally robust. The fact that someone in the DfE felt the need to leak this legal advice shows the battle that Kemi Badenoch had to fight to shift the institutional assumptions and get this guidance where it is today."

382 children under 7 sent to NHS gender clinic in last 10 years



Kemi Badenoch Photo: Wikipedia

STATISTICS released by the controversial NHS Gender Clinic, run by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (TPFT), have revealed that 386 children aged under 7 were referred to it in the past 10 years. Of those, 169 were aged 6; a further 140 aged 5; **with 61 aged 4, and 12 aged just 3 years old.**

The number of 'young people' [aged under 18] seen by the clinic in 2010-2011 was 136; eleven years later (2021-22) the numbers had risen to 3,585 - **a 26-fold increase.**

A former health minister, Ms Jackie Doyle-Price, reacted angrily: "They should never have been seeing 3-year-olds. There needs to be a clear message that goes out to let kids be kids. Let them play and use their imaginations. We shouldn't be medicalising something which is just growing up."

The TPFT report disclosed that referrals to the clinic were sometimes made by "activist groups such as pro-trans groups like *Mermaids*." Ms Doyle-Price said, "There should only be a medical pathway for referral in future."

WORRIED

Stephanie Davies-Aral, from the anti-trans campaign group *Transgender Trend*, observed, "Children don't really need gender clinics. Unfortunately, some parents are now worried that their 'gender non-conforming' child may have been 'born in the wrong body' and need professional help. This has been pushed by transgender activists who have no under-

standing of perfectly normal childhood developmental stages."

The NHS says it is now considering a minimum age of 7 for referrals to a gender clinic. But Ms Davies-Aral said some parents 'socially transition' their children so that by the time they are 7 "the child arrives at the clinic fully convinced they really are the opposite sex." Conservative MP Nick Fletcher, a professing Christian, who says no child should be allowed or encouraged to transition, condemned the NHS: "We have not even begun to understand how gender ideology managed to get such a strong grip on the NHS".

The independent 'Cass Review' into the TPFT clinic, chaired by Consultant Paediatrician Dr Hilary Cass, issued a damning interim report on it in February 2022, recommending that the clinic be closed. Its final report, which will address issues of the treatment of so-called 'gender dysphoria' in children, is due to be released later this year. Meanwhile the NHS has begun a public consultation, in which it proposes that from the age of 7, a child [quote] "may have developed their cognitive, comprehension and communication skills to an extent that they will be able to engage with health professionals in the process of a holistic clinical assessment and formulation."

Mainstream media rejoice at CofE blessings for lesbian couple

THERE was a large number of media and photographers present to witness a blessing of the union of a lesbian couple at St. John the Baptist Church, Felixstowe, Suffolk, on the Lords Day, 17 December. It marked a unique 'first' in the Church of England (CofE)'s 489-year history. The normally conservative *Daily Telegraph* exulted over the event with the heading, "Today is the day the Church of England (CofE) comes out of the closet".

The House of Bishops had five days earlier (12 December), in an historic decision made in a Zoom meeting, agreed to approve prayers for the blessings of same-sex unions in regular public worship, such as Sunday Eucharist or Evensong, by 24 votes to 11, with three Bishops abstaining. The decision took effect at midnight on 16/17 December, just in time for this first-ever CofE blessing of a same-sex union. The large new LGBT flag, with its chevrons in the new transgender colours of white, pink and blue, fluttered boldly above the ceremony.



The union of two lesbian priests is blessed under the LGBT flag by Rev Andrew Dotchin Photo: Ipswich Star

ISAIAH

The union was between two associate CofE priests, Jane Pearse and Catherine Bond, both of whom have adult children from previous marriages to men. Ms Pearse's godson has not spoken to her since the couple began their relationship

six years ago, when both were working in the same CofE benefice.

The service was led by local priest-in-charge Rev Andrew Dotchin, a member of the CofE Synod. The newly-approved 'Prayers of Love and Faith' were read during the ceremony. Prior

to the blessing, a woman read a passage from Isaiah promising that "God will bring good news to the oppressed". Rev Dotchin said, "Today is an important step towards building a church for a radical new Christian inclusion, a journey which began with the church's apology to the LGBTQIA+ community last January. We think that it's an 'us and them', without realising that gay and lesbian people are in the church already."

WEIGHT OF HISTORY

He continued, "Today is wonderful for Jane and Catherine; wonderful for the CofE; we have come out of the closet and are saying, 'We are who we are, and we love everybody who's here'." He admitted, "Not all of us are on the same page yet." As the service ended, he called for a round of applause from the large crowd who attended.

Ms Bond said afterwards, "I feel the weight of history on our shoulders, because it's such a historic moment...I was excited – indeed surprised – to have received a glut of messages of support both locally, and as far afield as Italy and France. It

hadn't dawned on me, this level of interest".

She added: "As Christians, we're clear that the gospel is about love. There's more in the Bible about not being a gossip than there is about homosexuality – and Jesus himself never said anything about it." The couple intend to marry legally in the church, if and when rules allow.

Same-sex marriage remains forbidden in the Anglican church. This year, the CofE Synod will move the queer debate forward with discussions on allowing 'standalone' blessings for same-sex couples and civil marriages in church for homosexual priests.

Rev Canon John Dunnett, Director of CofE Evangelical Council, said, "We deeply regret the new rule change; a decision that confirms our belief that a line has been crossed, which we hoped and prayed would not happen. It has left a tectonic divide within the Anglican community which will continue to be destructively present until and unless it is addressed".

Clear majority of UK doctors oppose assisted suicide - *but public & MPs moving in favour*

A SURVEY last month by *Doctors.net.uk*, of 1,088 UK doctors, revealed that a significant number (59%) would never administer lethal drugs to a patient, while 53% would never help patients to do it themselves. But a majority (58%) agreed that they "would provide information or have a discussion with a patient about euthanasia or assisted suicide," with a significant 31% saying they would never do so.

Reasons doctors gave for not wanting to introduce euthanasia, or assisted suicide, included: "protecting vulnerable people from risk of coercion" and "because the focus should be on improving palliative care".

Fewer than half, however (48%), actively opposed the removal of end-of-life protections, though this figure rose to 80% in the case of doctors providing palliative care. Only 44% of all doctors were in favour of removing end-of-life protections.

SAD

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, and *Dignity in Dying* Chairman, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, are among prominent supporters of assisted suicide. But last year, Dr Claud Regnard of St Oswald's Hospice, a

former specialist palliative medicine consultant, writing in the *Church Times* in response to an article by the two men, wrote, "It is a myth that euthanasia can be safely legalised for only those deemed to be terminally ill", adding, "It is sad to find two prominent faith leaders ignoring the fact that all countries which have changed the law have gone on to 'relax' or 'remove' euthanasia safeguards."

Pro-assisted suicide campaigners seized on an announcement by Esther Rantzen, former presenter of the 'That's Life' consumer show and founder of *Childline*, that she had joined the *Dignitas* assisted dying clinic in Switzerland. She told the *Daily Mirror* she was considering assisted suicide if her 'Stage 4' cancer did not improve.

FREE VOTE

The *Daily Mirror* had already commissioned a poll by *Deltapoll* on the issue, which conveniently found 72% of the public wanting MPs to be given a 'free vote' on the issue, if and when Parliament debates the issue again. Esther Rantzen said, "All we're asking for is the choice. The law must catch up with what the country wants."

The last time Parliament

voted on the issue was nine years ago. In the 2015 vote, 118 MPs voted for assisted suicide but an overwhelming 330 voted against. Today, though, prominent Conservative MP Kit Malthouse, who co-chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on 'Choice at the end of life', has been canvassing opinion by "working the House of Commons tea rooms". He reported that "The sentiment in Parliament has moved significantly since 2015...we are getting towards a majority, yes."

NON-TERMINAL

Alistair Thompson, a spokesperson for *Care Not Killing*, however, warned that "Some assisted dying deaths are not quick and painless" and noted that limits on who qualified had shifted in some countries to include people with non-terminal conditions. The Commons Health and Social Care Committee will soon issue a report on assisted dying, after a year-long inquiry, and make recommendations. Meanwhile, the Scottish government is currently considering Liam McArthur MSP's proposed Assisted Dying (Scotland) Bill.

Story of a faithful evangelist

I haven't lost sight of Christ!

Contributed by Donald J Morrison, Inverness-based Gospel Evangelist, with thanks*

"THE true story is told of a hard-hearted woman from rural America, called Sophie, who lived only for the sinful pleasures of this world. Just like the woman of Samaria, everyone in the community knew her – sadly, for the wrong reasons. She had earned a notorious reputation because of her immoral and depraved lifestyle.

One day, all this changed, when her heart was captured and conquered by the amazing grace of God. Singing His praises, her sins cleansed in the 'precious blood of Jesus', she became a bright and shining convert. With great zeal and enthusiasm, she began to witness to everyone she met, about the Lord Jesus Christ and how He had saved her soul from sin and hell. Her radiant Christian testimony was evident for everyone to see. Born-again Sophie couldn't be silenced – her constant testimony was, 'Come and hear...and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' [Psalm 66:16].

As the years passed by, So-



ophie began to lose her sight in both eyes, often bumping into things and people! This led to folk poking fun at her. One day, standing outside a food store, someone laughed at her when she was observed talking about Christ, with great excitement and earnestness, to an Indian carving made of wood. Persuaded this was a human person, she addressed the carving: "Look to Jesus, and be saved; repent and believe the Gospel – we both need this heart-change that only Jesus can give! Your soul is precious!" Sophie just couldn't be silenced.

When the incident reached people's ears, the scoffing and sniggering continued. Sophie was hav-

ing none of it! On hearing about the derision and ridicule, she replied: "Yes, maybe my eyesight is not as good as it once was, but I haven't lost sight of Christ! I would rather witness about Jesus Christ to an Indian carving made of wood, than be a wooden Christian and never witness to anyone!" Sophie never forgot what the Lord had called her to do: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." What a challenging lesson for us all if we are believers. God has not said, "Stay home, and be silent", rather he has told us, "Go ye out... and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

Sophie was a faithful Christian witness, and so should we be!

* Donald Morrison publishes a regular magazine, *Good News*, which can be obtained from him at: 85, Old Edinburgh Road, INVERNESS, Scotland, IV2 3HT, email: homemissionworker@fccontinuing.org

32: JOHN BUNYAN PART 1: 'Grace Abounding'

THE life of John Bunyan is a most apt summary of one of the most turbulent periods of British history. He was born in 1628, under the reign of Charles I, the year when the King was presented with the Petition of Right, indicating a growing concern with his demand for absolute power. He died in 1688, the year when King William III took the throne of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as Britain and Ireland said farewell to the tyranny of the Stuarts and looked forward to the emergence of a new nation - this United Kingdom.

SCHOOL

He was born in the village of Elstow, a mile and a half from Bedford, to Thomas and Margaret Bunyan. They were a poor family, Thomas being a brazier or a tinker, mending household items such as pots and pans. The most far-reaching decision that Thomas Bunyan made for his son was to send him to school, perhaps recognising some unusual ability which ought to be fostered. In later years John acknowledged this providence:

"It pleased God to put it into their hearts to put me to school to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor men's children"

From Bunyan's own account, he was a rough, stubborn boy, who was difficult to handle:

"I had few equals, especially considering my years, which were tender, being few, both for cursing, swearing, lying and blaspheming the holy name of God."

WORK

At nine years of age, he was taken away from school to work with his father and learn the family trade. As he developed into a young man, his ungodly traits were strengthened, calling himself a 'sinbreeder' who "infected all the youth of the town". In these teenage years, he would be confronted with trouble and tragedy. He almost drowned in the River Ouse when his small boat capsized. In 1644 a plague epidemic swept through the village, taking the lives of both his mother and his only sibling, Margaret.

Although not quite sixteen, John Bunyan lied about his age and marched to the Parliamentary Garrison at Newport Pagnell, where he enlisted. While in the army, he was not engaged in any of the decisive battles of the civil war, but he was exposed to the Word of God. His first book was "The Soldier's Pocket Bible", which was issued to the Parliamentary Army. In 1647 he returned home to Elstow to take up, once again, the trade of his father. Spiritually and morally, however, his life did not improve as he told of his years pre-conversion: *"Christ found me one of the black sinners of the world, he found me making sport of oaths and also of lies, and many a soul-poisoning meal did I make out of divers lusts as drinking, dancing, playing, pleasure with the wicked ones of the world."*

MARRIAGE

Like many other men, a change for the good occurred in John Bunyan's life

THE SWORD & THE CROWN: Exploring our British Christian Heritage

The thirty-second in a series of articles by Rev Peter McIntyre, Minister of Clogher Valley Free Presbyterian Church, taking us through the Christian history of Britain from the first missionaries to the Act of Union 1801



'Christian' in Pilgrim's Progress

Photo: Wikipedia



Portrait of John Bunyan by Thomas Sadler, 1684 Photo: Wikipedia

he learned of the new birth for the first time. A subject that he admitted, "did never enter my mind". He would return to these "poor people", and, as he did so, he began more and more to question his own heart.

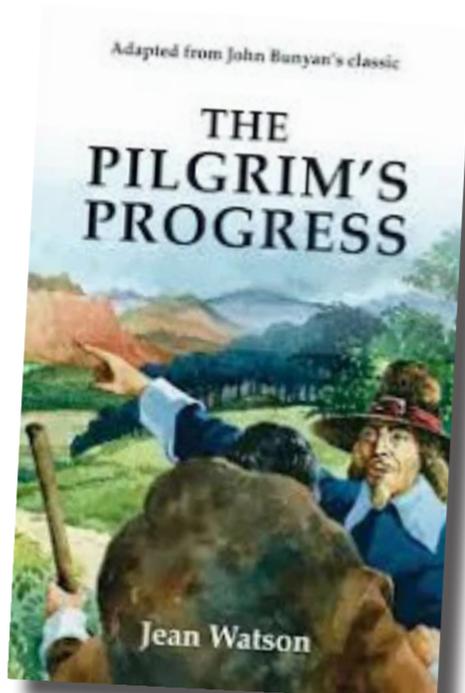
There is no doubting that Bunyan's heart was changed because of this encounter. He now read the Scriptures with greater insight, especially finding the Epistles of Paul to be "sweet and pleasant". These women belonged to a newly constituted Independent Church in Bedford, whose pastor was John Gifford. Gifford also fought in the Civil War – but on the side of the King!

Like Bunyan, his life too had been turned around dramatically by grace, and he would bring a profound influence to bear upon the life of the young 22-year-old. It was Gifford whom Bunyan had in mind when he would later depict "The Evangelist" in "Pilgrim's Progress".

THE STRUGGLE

The young convert was now engaged in a struggle to determine whether he was truly in the faith. As a result of the tolerance that Cromwell's government had for Independent Protestant groups, Gifford's fellowship worshipped in St. John's parish church in Bedford. It was in the rectory, therefore, that Bunyan and Gifford would sit opposite one another as the pastor counselled the young convert, endeavouring to draw him into the assurance of sins forgiven, on the grounds of Christ and His perfect righteousness. As he worshipped with the congregation, one particular sermon of Gifford's stood out in his memory, in Song of Solomon 4:1, "Behold thou art fair, my love, thou art fair".

In April 1654, John and Mary were blessed with a second daughter, Elizabeth, who was baptized at the parish church in Elstow, perhaps indicating that



Pilgrim's Progress - the book

his wife did not accompany him to the Bedford meeting.

In 1655, being devastated by the death of his pastor and mentor, John Gifford, God providentially brought another spiritual giant into his life from two hundred years earlier: Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer. How Bunyan, a poor man, managed to acquire a copy of Luther's Commentary on the Book of Galatians is a mystery, but there is no doubting the impact that it had upon Bunyan's spiritual life, at such a critical time:

"I do prefer this Book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience... As I was walking up and down in the house, as a man in a most woeful state, that word of God took hold of my heart, 'Ye are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:24)."

PREACHER

In 1656, he was set apart as a regular preacher of the Word. The calling of a tinker to the pulpit proved to be quite a novelty, drawing hundreds during the first two years of his ministry.

Further Reading
Fearless Pilgrim, The Life and Times of John Bunyan
Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, John Bunyan
Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan
The Holy War, John Bunyan

No. 33 in the series: 'John Bunyan Part 2', follows DV in the next issue (BCN 507: 5 February)

CREATION IN THE NEWS

China's 'Year of the Dragon' begins on 10 February

CHINA has long had a system of naming its years, in a 12-year cycle, after animals: 'Year of the Goat', 'Year of the Pig', and so on. Their next year begins on 10th February, and this year is 'The Year of the Dragon'. Our picture shows how the Chinese dragon is typically represented: as a fearsome, fire-breathing monster with scales.

Many have asked why eleven of the Chinese years are all named after *real* animals, but have one year named after a *mythical* creature, the dragon.

The simple answer is that the Chinese dragon *was* a *real* creature. In the famous 'Song of Moses', God speaks of His 'vengeance' on those who disobey Him, saying: "...their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah, their grapes are grapes of gall...their wine is the poison of *dragons*" (Deuteronomy 32:33). Job, who probably lived about 300-400 years after the Flood, says: "I stood up, and I cried in the congregation, I am a brother to *dragons*, and a companion to owls" (Job 30:28-29).*

In the Psalms, we read "...thou hast sore broken us in the place of *dragons*, and covered us with the shadow of death" (Psalm 44:19); also, "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou breakest the heads of the *dragons* in the streets" (Psalm 74:13) and "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye *dragons*, and all deeps" (Psalm 148:7).

Later in time, the prophet Isaiah refers five times to *dragons*: "And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and *dragons* in their pleasant places..." (Isaiah 13:22); "In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan* the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the *dragon* that is in the sea" (27:1); "...thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses... it shall be an habitation of *dragons*" (34:13); "Thus saith the LORD...The beast of the field shall honour me, the *dragons* and the owls" (43:14-20); and "Art thou not it which hath cut Rahab, and wounded the *dragon*?" (51:9).

There are three more references in Jeremiah: "I will make Jerusalem heaps, and



A representation of a Chinese dragon Photo: Adobe Stock Image

a den of *dragons*" (Jeremiah 11:9); "...the wild asses... snuffed up the wind like *dragons*" (14:6); and "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon...hath swallowed me up like a *dragon*" (51:34).

The Book of Micah opens with, "The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite" and in Micah 1:8 we read how God will "wail and howl...I will make a wailing like the *dragons*...", while in the Book of Malachi, God speaks again, "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the *dragons* of the wilderness..." (Malachi 1:3).

So it is plain that *dragons* were *real* animals to Job, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and Malachi. Ancient writings from all over the world are also replete with accounts of dragons, who were often a danger to their communities.

The reason so many today think of the 'dragon' as mythical is simply because the influential 19th century reformer and philanthropist, Richard Owen, in 1841 coined the word 'dinosaur', from the Greek '*dino*' (terrible) and '*sauros*' (lizard) to replace the word 'dragon'. Somehow, the new name caught on. Owen, famous for his pioneering work, such as founding New Lanark Mills – now one of Scotland's most popular tourist attractions – is also regarded by many as the 'Father of Socialism'. In 1817, aged 46, Owen publicly claimed that all religions were false. In 1854, aged 83, Owen converted to spiritualism. Spiritualists claimed after Owen's death that his spirit had dictated to the medium Emma Hardinge Britten the 'Seven Principles of Spiritualism', still used today by the National Union of Spiritualists as the basis of its religious philosophy.

* Read God's description of the 'leviathan' in Job Chapter 41, then compare it with the images of fire-breathing Chinese dragons, with scales, "joined to one another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered" (vv 15-17).

Dinosaur fossil found with partly-digested meat in stomach

A REMARKABLE dinosaur fossil, a young tyrannosaurus (species: *Gorgosaurus libratus*), aged about six – discovered in 2009 in Dinosaur Provincial Park, Canada – has now been fully analysed. Researchers found, within the fossil, the remains of its wonderfully preserved stomach, which included the partly digested remains of two smaller creatures, which have been described as 'citipes': "possibly another species of dinosaur, turkey-sized creatures with parrot-like heads, which were speedy on their feet, rather like an emu."

There was evidence of bite marks on the bones of one of the creatures in the tyrannosaurus's stomach. The team says the young tyrannosaurus weighed nearly half a ton and determined its age by growth rings in its fossilised bones. Its conclusions



The fossilised remains of a young dinosaur, and its last two meals, discovered in Canada

Photo: Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology/Reuters

were published recently in *Science Advances* (www.science.org).

The discovery is said to be a 'first'. Dr Darla Zelenitsky, of Calgary University, co-author of the study, said, "This is really the first solid evidence that we have of the diet or feeding behaviour in a juvenile tyrannosaurus." Darren Tanke, a technician at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palae-

ontology, who discovered the juvenile's remains, explained, "During the preparation process I noticed small knuckle bones protruding from the ribcage of the tyrannosaurus." Examination of the extent of stomach acid damage suggested the citipes were consumed in two separate sittings. The remains were largely limited to the hind legs, suggesting the young

tyrannosaurus did not eat all its prey. Dr Zelenitsky commented, "This tyrannosaurus had an appetite for citipes drumsticks; the legs were the meatiest part of the prey, with the skull of the young *Gorgosaurus* displaying features enabling precision feeding. Professor Stephen Brusatte, a palaeontologist at Edinburgh University, said, "This is not guesswork, nor a series of assumptions based on interpretation of bite marks or coprolites [fossil faeces] – but actual, direct in-the-gut, scientific evidence. This was a tyrannosaurus's last meal, preserved in stone." The team concluded: "It was unclear how the tyrannosaurus died, but it appears to have perished within a week of its last meal," adding: "It died about 75 million years ago".

Colossal fossil skull of a Pliosaur unearthed on Dorset coast

THE extremely well-preserved fossil skull of a massive pliosaur – a sea monster – has been unearthed and examined by geologists, taken from the steep cliffs at Kimmeridge, Dorset, on the so-called 'Jurassic Coast'. The skull, one of the most complete specimens of its type ever discovered, is in the care of Steve Etches, who runs the Kimmeridge Museum. He is now pressing geologists to authorise a search, deeper into the cliffs, to find the rest of the fossils. Steve Etches' friend and fellow fossil enthusiast Phil Jacobs, walking along one of Kimmeridge's beaches, came across the tip of the pliosaur's snout lying in the shingle. Too heavy to carry, the pair rigged a makeshift stretcher to take the fossil fragment to safety. A drone survey of the cliff face pinpointed a likely location; the only way to excavate it was to abseil down from the top. Dangling from ropes 50 feet above the beach, the fossil skull was painstakingly extracted several days later. The skull alone is over six feet long; the creature's overall length may have been over 40 feet.



The 6-foot long skull of a pliosaur

Photo: BBC Studios (Fair Use)

It had 130 teeth.

Mr Etches said: "The lower jaw and upper skull are meshed together, as in life. Worldwide, there's hardly any specimens ever found to this level of detail. And if they are, a lot of the bits are missing; whereas this, although it's slightly distorted – *it's got every bone present*. The creature's long, razor-sharp teeth were enhanced with fine, grooved ridges, enabling the beast to pierce the flesh, then quickly extract its dagger-like fangs, ready for a rapid second attack."

Large circular openings at the rear of its head enabled

palaeobiologist, Professor Emily Rayfield, to deduce the size of the muscles operating the jaws of the pliosaur, and the forces generated, as its mouth crushed its prey. She estimated its likely jaw force at 33,000 newtons, over eight times more powerful than a lion's mouth. On its head was a hole that would have housed a parietal, or third, eye. She said: "It's light-sensitive and could help in locating other animals, especially when the pliosaur was surfacing from deep, murky waters. The BBC, in a documentary ('Attenborough and the Giant Sea Monster') trans-

mitted on 1 January, said the Kimmeridge Clay cliffs "were once bottom-muds in warm Jurassic seas...the creature lived about 150 million years ago." Steve Etches will display the skull in his Kimmeridge museum later this year, adding that an urgent search should be made for the remainder of the monster: "It's in a very rapidly eroding environment. The cliff-line is going back by a few feet each year. It won't be very long before the rest of the pliosaur drops out and gets lost. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

CREATION IN THE NEWS

18 December: Iceland's volcano erupts after weeks of tremors

ON 18 December, after weeks of violent earthquakes and tremors in south-west Iceland, from early October onwards, followed by a so-called 'seismic storm' of over 1,000 small earthquakes in a day, a lava flow burst into spectacular fashion, spewing glowing orange jets of lava over a wide area, throwing flames over 100 feet high, as the volcano finally erupted. Four weeks earlier, the 4,000 residents of Grindavik, a small fishing town 25 miles from the nation's capital,

Reykjavik, threatened by the lava flow, had been evacuated for their safety. There was also the threat of a noxious gas spreading towards Reykjavik. The Icelandic government issued warnings to everyone.

Iceland has over 130 volcanoes, as it straddles the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, a divergent [moving apart] tectonic plate boundary where the 'North American' and the 'Eurasian' tectonic plates pull away from each other. The result is molten rock

or magma welling up as the earth's crust breaks up, either creating new ocean crust, or sometimes forming brand new islands, as happened with the formation of Surtsey Island in 1963.

Iceland's biggest eruption in recent years was at Mount Eyjafjallajokull, in 2010, which spewed huge clouds of ash and gases into the atmosphere, causing widespread airspace closures for over a week in 20 countries in north-western Europe.

The biggest volcanic erup-

tion by far in recent centuries was on the island of Krakatoa in August 1883. The energy released from the explosion was around 200 megatons of TNT, with a force roughly four times as great as the most powerful thermonuclear weapon ever detonated. It spewed out so much dust into the atmosphere that the warmth of the sun was hindered - to the extent that world temperatures dropped by about 1°F (0.6°F) over the following months.



Iceland: Orange jets of lava flame high into the night sky
Photo: CNN (Fair Use)

CREATION IN THE BIBLE

By the Editor

The four recent news stories on these pages highlight the creative work of our God and also His judgment of the earth with the world-wide Flood of Noah.

SKILLS

Our two dinosaurs stories, one buried with its last meal preserved in stone, the other a pliosaur whose fossil skull emerged in the Dorset cliffs, tell us, first, what skills geologists and palaeontologists display in their brilliant analyses of these remains. We admire their work - at least insofar as they confirm God's work, which much of it does - if only they would acknowledge it!

AWESOME

Second, we cannot but wonder at the awesome magnificence of God's design and creative power as we read these accounts. The dinosaurs' size is stupendous. Accompanying that is the intricacy of the design of each unique 'kind', each perfectly suited to its niche in the environment. We marvel, for example, at the engineering of those huge, but finely grooved, 130 teeth of the pliosaur.

JESUS, OUR CREATOR

Though we often say, correctly, that 'God created the earth and the universe', we should also acknowledge that the Eternal and only Only-Begotten Son of God our Father, our Lord, Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, *is specifically named as our Creator*, our Maker.

The Bible says so. In John 1:2-4,10 we read of our Saviour: "The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* In him was life...He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." In Hebrews 1:1-2 we read of Christ, "God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the world...*"

And in Ephesians 3:9, Paul tells us: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ...*" In Psalm 33:6 we learn: "*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made...*"

It is commonly said that Judgment Day we shall "meet our Maker". It was Christ Himself who made us! "Know ye that the LORD he is God: *it is he that hath made us, and not we*



Parallel strata - unmistakable proof of Noah's Flood

Photo: Science Photo Library (Jon Wilson - Fair Use)

ourselves". How very sad to read in John 1:11: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

PARALLEL STRATA

In our photo of the 'rescue operation' to obtain the pliosaur's skull, the cliff face reveals dozens of lines of almost perfectly parallel strata. These continue, just as they are, for miles. Within them, the pliosaur got buried. How were these rocks formed?

The answer is that they were formed by successive 'pulses' of sediment-laden waters, probably travelling at speeds of over 200mph, laid down in rapid succession, perhaps with only a few minutes between each successive pulse.

Geologists tell us, accurately, that "the rocks at Kimmeridge, known as the Kimmeridge Clay Formation, are composed of highly organic, black mudstones with a slate-like bedding structure, allowing it to be broken easily into these lamination planes [the parallel strata]."

WATERS UNDER THE EARTH'S CRUST

Where did the sediment come from, that formed these rocks? In God's Word, we are told that along with 40 days and nights of rain, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up" (Genesis 7:11). This refers to waters under the earth's crust, containing different mineral sediments which were released, and covered the entire earth. These were of different colours; for example, where the mineral, calcium carbonate, was released, the result was the huge areas of white chalk found in south-east England, as in the White Cliffs of Dover.

At Kimmeridge, however, organic remains of plants and small creatures were mashed up amongst other minerals, hence the rocks are near-black - indeed, there have been oil wells at Kimmeridge. Wherever you see lines of parallel strata, whether in the Grand Canyon, Kim-

meridge or elsewhere, this is *always* the result of the rapid deposition of huge amounts of sediment in water.

And what could account for this? *Only the worldwide Flood of Noah.*

DATING THE FLOOD

In our two dinosaur articles, the tyrannosaurus is said to have died "around 75 million years ago" and "perished within a week of its last meal". The pliosaur "lived about 150 million years ago" and the rocks were "bottom-muds in warm Jurassic seas". Geologists say the Kimmeridge Rocks were "157.3 to 152.1 million years old."

No, no, no and *no*. In order to be fossilised and preserved in stone, each creature had to be rapidly buried. "Perished within a week of its last meal" is just a fanciful guess. 'Bottom-muds' on the ocean floor form an amorphous mass of sludge; they are not laid down in neat layers, as we see at Kimmeridge.

As for the guesses of '75 million' or '150 million' years ago, these are also inventions, based on no science whatsoever. All radiometric dating methods are deeply flawed, except for radiocarbon dating, which is reasonably accurate only up to around 6,000 years ago.

These rocks were laid down in Noah's Flood, which the Scriptures date at around 2350 BC. *There was no 'Jurassic period.'*

DIVIDING THE CONTINENTS

The 130 Icelandic volcanoes lie across the 'Mid-Atlantic-Ridge'. Scripture tells us (Genesis 1:1) that on the Third Day of Creation, "God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so." Some believe this means there was originally only one landmass on the earth - which, as it happens agrees with the geologists, who call this single, large mass



Suspended by ropes 50 feet above a rocky beach, a team of palaeontologists work to remove the skull of a pliosaur, buried during Noah's Flood

Photo: BBC

'Pangea' - a 'supercontinent'.

In fact, we can agree with the geologists that the continents have moved apart from each other over time. For example, if we look at an atlas and 'move' South America into Africa, there is nearly an exact 'fit' - and when you do this, the different rock types on each side of the Atlantic fit together like a glove. The same holds good for all the continents.

Earthquakes that occur along Mid-Atlantic-Ridge result from the continuing separation of the continents on either side of the Atlantic, with tectonic plates continuing to move the Americas a few inches away from Europe and Africa every year.

THE BIRTH OF PELEG

There are two theories about when these tectonic plates began to shift the continents. Many say these were triggered by the impact of Noah's Flood. Others look to Genesis 10:25 and 1 Chronicles 1:19, where we read: "...unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, *for in his day was the earth divided*". The Hebrew word '*peleg*' means 'divided', or 'separated'.

But this could also refer to the separation of the nations at Babel, when God "scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:8). Although the Bible does not say that Nimrod - Noah's great-grandson - began to build the Tower of Babel, the strong tradition is that he did so. The Biblical date for the birth of Peleg, a great-great-great-grandson of Noah, is about 2150BC. This would certainly 'fit' with the likely time when Nimrod was at his peak. Peleg could I have been born around the time the people were scattered. Whether this was the moment when God divided the continents, we really don't know.

Freed hostage: “Everyone in Gaza is a terrorist”



Mia Schem

Photo: Screenshot

MIA Schem, an Israeli-French citizen abducted by Hamas from the Supernova festival on 7th October, was released on 30th November as part of the temporary hostages-for-ceasefire deal. Afterwards, she spoke to Israel's *Channel 13* News about the abuse she suffered. She had been shot in the hand.

She said: “The floor was splattered with blood and I yelled in pain, ‘I lost my arm!’ A Hamas terrorist touched the upper part of my body. Suddenly, someone grabbed my hair, pulled me into a car and drove to Gaza. I felt like an animal

in a zoo. It's important to me to reveal the truth about the people who live in Gaza, who they really are. I went through a *shoah* [holocaust]. Everyone in Gaza is a terrorist. Entire families are under Hamas. I was staying with a family. I asked myself, why am I in a family home? Why are there children here? - and a wife?

During Mia's 54 days in captivity, a veterinarian operated on the bullet wound. “There was an operation room,” she told her interviewer, “No anaesthesia, nothing. I was choking on my own tears. Then he

looked at me and said, ‘Enough, or I'll send you down to the tunnel’.”

In her interview, aired on 29th December, Mia Schem emphasized that a video she had made from Gaza, in which she had stated she was being treated well, had been forced. She received no painkillers for her arm injury and had to change bandages by herself. Yet the *Guardian*, which initially echoed her Hamas-controlled narrative, chose to ignore the story she told after being freed. Mia Schem's full interview is on *YouTube*.

Iranian opposition leader tells Knesset: “Attack Iranian leadership in Iran”

VAHID Beheshti, an Iranian opposition figure, based in London, rose to prominence after completing a 72-day hunger strike last year, followed by a sit-in. He asked the British government to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps as a ‘terror organisation’. On 2nd January, Beheshti became the first ever Iranian opposition leader to address Israel's Knesset.

He told Knesset members, “Soon you will have to deal

with the ‘elephant in the room’, which is Iran. You should not be afraid of attacking Iranian bases in Iran. This is the only language they understand. You have an army of 80 million Iranians who are thirsty for freedom and democracy, who since 2009 have been trying to overthrow the government.” If you support the Iranian people, we will all experience peace.

He explained, “The Iranian government is at its greatest weakness in 44 years. They



Iranian Opposition Leader, Vahid Beheshti: (green top, left) shakes hands with Knesset member Evgeny Sova (right)

Photo: Jewish News Syndicate

knew about the proposed October in advance, thinking there would be a total ceasefire within two months. Help us overthrow

the government, try to imagine what the Middle East would look like without the Iranian government. *Just imagine!*”

The implausibility of Hamas' death statistics

Israel's military action in Gaza has certainly resulted in civilian deaths, including those of women and children, but why do we hear little about the deaths of men and Hamas combatants?

Mousa Abu Marzouk, a senior member of the Hamas politburo, was asked, “Since you have built 500 kilometres of tunnels, why haven't you built bomb shelters where civilians can hide during bombardments?” He replied that bomb shelters in Gaza would undercut Hamas's ability to use the population as human shields.

When statistics presented by the Hamas-run Ministry of Health and Media Office are examined, it becomes clear that the death toll among women and children, as opposed to men and Hamas and Islamic Jihad combatants, is being falsified. On 5th December, Hamas reported a total number of 16,248 Gazan fatalities, 1,041 more than it reported on 2nd December. However, over

the same period, Hamas reported 1,353 new fatalities among women and children, 312 more than the number of new deaths for those days. So the number of men killed fell from 4,563 to 4,251!

There were several other examples. On 19th October, the UN reported the total number of fatalities in Gaza increasing by 307 while, on the same day, the number of children reported dead increased by 671. On 26th October, Hamas reported a total increase of 481 fatalities, but the number of women and children went up by 626 the same day. Three days later, Hamas reported 302 total fatalities, while the number of women and children killed rose by 328.

On 5th December, the IDF reported that the total death count in Gaza was approximately 15,000, including over 5,000 Hamas members. On 9th December, Israeli National Security Adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, said that at least 7,000 terrorists had been killed.

Gaza hospital director: Hamas used medical complex as operational hub

AHMED Kahlot, Director of Gaza's Kamal Arwan Hospital in Jabaliya, also Lieutenant-Colonel in Hamas since 2010, has revealed that his hospital was turned into a military facility under Hamas's control – and that at one point, it had housed a kidnapped soldier.

He added that 16 members of the hospital's staff – including doctors, nurses and paramedics – were Hamas operatives, serving in the al-Qassam Brigades; several members of the Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades were also employed in the hospital. Kahlot admitted that one Hamas leader and two senior officials had offices inside the hospital: “They hide in hospitals because they believe that hospitals are safe.” He continued: “Once I begged them to take a wounded

man to the Indonesian Hospital or Shifa Hospital for treatment. They refused”. They needed the only available ambulance for their mission.”

Kahlot said of Hamas, “The leaders are cowards. They left us in the field while they were hiding in concealed places. They destroyed us.”

On 12th December, the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry said Israeli forces had entered the Kamal Adwan hospital. Over several days, troops detained 90 Hamas operatives inside the hospital and seized numerous weapons. According to a joint statement by Israel's security service, Shin Bet, and the IDF, *some of those captured at the hospital had taken part in the 7th October massacres in southern Israel.*

From which river to which sea?

RON Hassner, Professor of Politics and Chair of Israel Studies at California University, Berkeley, hired pollsters to survey 250 US students “from a variety of backgrounds”, to see if they understood what is meant by the chant, “From the river to the sea.”

Hassner found that 33% “supported the chant enthusiastically, while 53% did so “to a lesser degree”.

Less than half (47%) of those who supported the slogan knew which river or which sea the slogan referenced. Some thought the river was the Nile or Euphrates, while others thought the sea was the Dead Sea, the Atlantic Ocean or even the Caribbean! About 10% thought that

Yasser Arafat was the first Prime Minister of Israel (!) while fewer than a quarter knew who he was. A quarter thought the Oslo Peace Accords were never signed.

After the students were confronted with their misunderstandings, 68% of them changed their minds and rejected using the slogan “From the river to the sea”. Professor Hassner noted, “These students had never seen a map of the Middle East and knew little about the region's geography, history or demography. Those who hope to encourage extremism *depend on the political ignorance of their audiences. It is time for good teachers to join the fray and combat bias with education.*”

Sympathy for the naked terrorists

ISRAEL was widely condemned for videos showing scores of men stripped to their underpants, all of military age, who had either given themselves up or been captured. Some of the captives were not Hamas members. Despite online claims that they were killed or tortured, they were subsequently released.

The terrorists butchered helpless men, women and children, while affirming that their god is “great” who – should they die – will grant them entry into a priapic paradise, to be rewarded with seventy-two pliant virgins. According to Islamic theology, an Israeli victory is impossible, while a Jewish victory is proof that Allah is not great.

The photos of Hamas prisoners, by the standards of war photography, are nothing unusual, nor outrageous, and certainly not evidence of abuse. Similar pictures were shown of Japanese soldiers who surrendered during World War II, as well as other combatants in various wars, especially against terrorist groups. When facing those who are indoctrinated in a cult of fanatical hatred – and may continue to kill even after surrender – stripping prisoners down to ensure they are not armed or wearing booby-trap explosives is simple common sense.

IDF decimates Hamas's “Elite Quarter”

IN late December, using remarkable military prowess, the IDF's Yahalom Unit Combat Engineering Forces uncovered and destroyed Hamas's ‘Elite Quarter’, an area harbouring a vast underground tunnel network, integral to the operations of Hamas's top terrorists.

Footage released by Israel's Air Force (IAF) revealed the co-ordinated efforts of the IAF and Israel's army in executing the operation. Their meticulous planning and execution around Gaza's ‘Palestine Square’ resulted in the elimination of approximately 600 terrorists and the uncovering of the extensive tunnel network, depriving Hamas of its strategic capabilities.

Since ground operations resumed, over 2,000 terrorists have been ‘neutralised’. Such decisive actions against terrorist organizations like Hamas are essential in the global fight against extremism and violence.

Human Rights Group's silence over Hamas' sexual violence

A DOCTOR treating the released 110 Israeli hostages says at least ten women and men suffered sexual abuse in captivity. Meanwhile, emerging first-hand accounts of the 7th October massacre show that the Hamas barbarians committed acts of extreme sexual violence against women and girls. The silence from women's rights groups and others who are usually so vocal about these heinous crimes has been deafening. It took eight weeks for the UN to formally condemn these vile sexual assaults.

After meeting with released hostages and relatives of those still held by Hamas, Benjamin Netanyahu said, “I heard heartbreaking stories of abuse...unprecedented cases of cruel rape. Are women's rights groups silent because they are Jewish? You've heard of horrible atrocities, sexual mutilation – where the hell are you?”

US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller claimed that Hamas is holding the hostages because it does not want them to testify about their experiences in captivity.