

that the heavens, in their marvellous beauty, declare God's glory in His creative acts' (emphasis mine). One would of course not wish to read into Scripture more than is intended. However, the idea that the **beauty** of the stars is being referred to in the Psalm is itself an inference (albeit an obvious one to draw) — the passage nowhere mentions their beauty. In fact, verses 2-4a do seem to support (though not demand) the notion that the stars have an actual message which is more than a poetic description of their beauty. Strong proponents of the 'Gospel in the stars' concept might also want to ask the question; if Psalm 19 really does have nothing to do with the Zodiac/Mazzaroth (which is the list of constellations through which the Sun makes its annual circuit), why do verses 4b-6 refer to this very fact, that is, the Sun making a circuit through the 'tabernacle' of the stars? This would seem a remarkable coincidence, at least.

In the last few years, whenever asked about the 'Gospel in the stars' question, I have consistently maintained that there needed to be an independent check on the reliability

of the stars names cited by Bullinger and others. We have actually looked for someone willing to spend the time going back to the original secular sources in each case.

The Faulkner article does not claim to have checked out anywhere near all the relevant star names. Nevertheless, he has made a very important contribution, by showing some of the serious factual errors involved. While this should sound loud warning bells, until someone has carefully checked many more of the claims made by Bullinger *et al.*, it might be unwise to dismiss them all. It is possible that, having become excited by the many obvious links there were, they became over-enthusiastic in finding names and links which were simply not there.

If the concept is just plain wrong, we should discard it, no matter how it might have once seemed to us. However, it would be very unfortunate if the Christian creationist/apologetics community did this prematurely. I am hopeful that contributions by others will make it easier to decide one way or the other.

#### QUOTABLE QUOTE: Interpretation and Speculation in Science

*'Our interpretation of the evidence is coloured by our own experiences, and depends on inner vision, imagination and speculation, hardly a sound basis for a scientific theory. Once we have built a theory — and this is true of other sciences as of paleo-anthropology — we are reluctant to change it. The human response to new evidence, if it cannot be slotted into the framework of our favourite card house, is all too often to ignore it. . . . The true scientist, as portrayed in myth and legend, would always be ready, as T. H. Huxley used to say, to sit down before the facts as a little child, prepared to throw out even his best of hypotheses if the facts tell against it. In practice, most theorists cling too long and too tightly to their own brainchild and defend it against all criticism, so it is important to recognise that no theory of human origins is adequate. . . . Many ordinary people, reading the works of a single populariser, believe that the riddle of human origins has been solved. In no case is this true, and all the ideas in print today — including our own — are more or less naked speculation.'*

Gribbin, John and Cherfas, Jeremy, 1982. **The Monkey Puzzle**, Bodley Head, London, pp. 159-160.