

# WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

## The Aardvark

THE Aardvark is a strange mammal which lives in Africa. The name is a Dutch word, meaning "earth-pig." This describes them rather well, since Aardvarks sleep in underground burrows. They are not often seen, as they sleep by day and come out at night. Their burrows are sometimes 12 metres (40 feet) long, and may have a number of different entrances.



The Aardvark

Photo by Scott Bauer, US Dept. of Agriculture



Termites busily repairing a hole in their nest

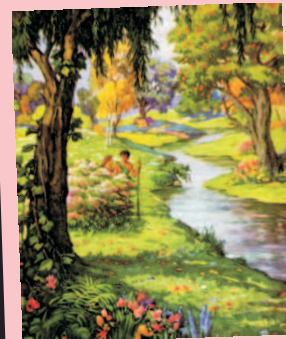
Aardvarks have spoon-like claws on their feet, which they use to dig their burrows. They live mainly on ants and termites, though they sometimes also eat wild fruit. Ants and termites live in nests made from earth, and aardvarks use their strong, sharp claws to dig their way through the tough, outer shell, and then lick the insects up with their long, sticky tongue. The

Aardvark's skin is so tough that insects can't sting them. In fact, they sometimes sleep in a nest when they have had their fill. Their nostrils have lots of hairs and fleshy tentacles to prevent insects crawling into them.

**Evolution can't explain where Aardvarks came from. The fossils show that they have always been much as they are today. These strange animals seem to have been specially designed for their way of life by God, their Creator.**

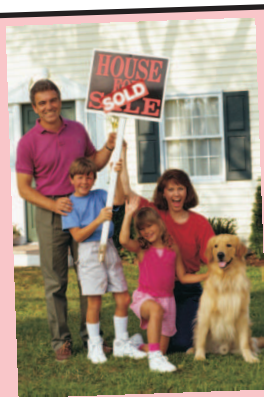
## Another Home

Some day you may be able to buy a home of your own, and you would want to look after it well. In the same way, we should look after this planet, where God is allowing us to spend our lives. God planned a perfect world, where everyone could have lived in peace, and where there would have been no evil, pain or death. And everything was wonderful before the first people disobeyed Him and spoilt everything. We can be sure that God is not pleased about the many things we have done to spoil His world, but He has promised that some day he will restore the whole of creation — "a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives."



The world was wonderful before it was spoiled by sin

(The Bible, 2 Peter 3: 13). That new world will be another home where there will be no evil, and where only people whose sins have been forgiven can live. We have all sinned, but the good news is that God's Son, Jesus, died on the cross so that we could be forgiven. Then He came back from death, and went to heaven to start preparing a place for those who love Him. He told His followers, "There are many rooms in my Father's house... I am going there to prepare a place for you." (John 14: 2). If we believe Jesus died for us, say we're sorry, and accept that forgiveness, we too can live with Him in heaven, and be part of that new creation which will last for ever and ever!



## PUZZLE CORNER ANSWERS

- SPOT THE DIFFERENCE:**  
 1. Cap colour. 2. Hair colour. 3. Shirt check colour. 4. Extra lines on basket. 5. Colour of vegetables in basket. 6. Basket handle colour. 7. Shoe sole colour. 8. Colour of trouser turn-ups. 9. Missing fruit. 10. Extra leaf on plant. 11. Flower colour. 12. Colour of planks.
- HIDDEN INSECTS:**  
 1. Earwig. 2. Mosquito. 3. Cockroach. 4. Weevil. 5. Wasp. 6. Midge. 7. Termite. 8. Greenfly.

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**IT'S JUST RIGHT FOR US!**

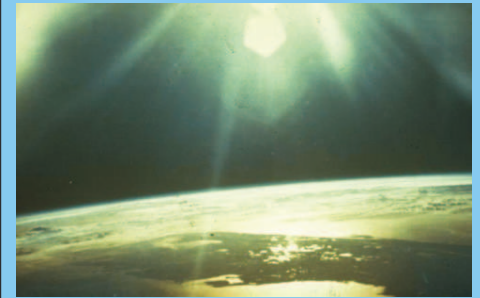
## Designed and planned with us in mind

Think about the house you live in. Whether your home is large or small, grand or simple, you can tell that it was designed and built for people to live in. Unless you live in a very hot country there will be some kind of heating system. There will be windows and doors, and maybe insulation to keep out the cold. There will be electricity or gas for lighting and cooking, and water for drinking and washing. There may be other things designed for your comfort, like carpets and curtains.



Before your house was built, someone planned it — usually a person called an architect. Then the builders prepared the ground, laid the foundations and began to build using materials like concrete, bricks, stones and wood. Long before you started living in your house, it was planned with people like you in mind. Surely it was the same with our world?

## LIGHT AND HEAT



The sun gives both light and heat to the earth. Without the sun our planet would be cold and dead, like the other planets in the solar system. We are just the right distance from the sun so that we are neither too hot nor too cold. This did not happen by accident, but was planned by God, the Creator.

## Just right for us!

Our planet is just the right size to enable life to exist. If it were 10% smaller, all the atmosphere would drift off into space, and the earth would be frozen. But if it were 10% larger the weight of the atmosphere would double, and the whole planet would probably be flooded. The earth takes 365¼ days to move around the sun, and its axis is tilted to give us our four seasons.



The earth rotates once every 24 hours, giving us our day and night. If this period were longer we would get too hot during the day and too cold at night. And if our days were much shorter we wouldn't have enough time to do anything! When we compare the planet Uranus, which takes 84 years to orbit the sun, or Saturn, with a 10 hour day-night period, we realise how fortunate we are to live on planet earth!

## EARTH'S SPECIAL SHIELD



Earth has a special shield around it — the ozone layer. Without this we would all be killed instantly by radiation from the sun.

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:** Our good neighbour  
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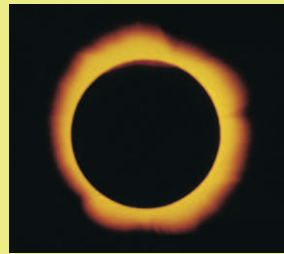
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# THE MOON: OUR GOOD NEIGHBOUR

When you see the moon in the sky, do you realise how very special it is? Other planets have moons – some have lots – but earth’s moon is different. Compared with other moons it is very large, and the tug of its gravity helps to keep the earth from wobbling. It also makes our daily tides (see below) In fact, life on earth would be impossible without our good neighbour in space.

Although the moon is 400 times smaller than the sun, both appear to be the same size in the sky. This is because the moon is 400 times closer to us. Sometimes the moon passes in front of the sun and hides it for a few minutes. We call this a total eclipse (right). Because the moon fits over the sun so perfectly, scientists have been able to examine the sun’s atmosphere and learn a lot of things about it. Many of them believe this perfect fit is by design not chance.



## THE MOON AND THE TIDES

As the moon travels around the earth each day, the pull of the moon’s gravity on the earth lifts the surface of the sea, making our twice-daily tides. The tides keep our river mouths and harbours clean and fresh. They also allow oxygen to get into the water, without which the oceans would become stagnant and fish would die. Lots of creatures which live on the seashore between the low and high tide mark also depend on the tides.



The moon makes the tides rise and fall

Without the regular rise and fall of the sea to bring them food they wouldn’t be able to exist. If the moon were much larger than it is, or closer to the earth, huge tidal waves would sweep over the earth twice a day. We should be thankful that God gave us the moon — and that He made it the right size for us!

Creatures which live on the seashore depend on the daily tides.

## Nature Notes by the Editor



Although they have no eyes, arms or legs, earthworms are one of the most useful creatures in nature. Although we may not often see them, there can be as many as a million of them in one acre of soil! There are about 2,700 different kinds of earthworm, and some live as long as 15 years. They spend most of their lives below the ground, sometimes burrowing to a depth of 2 metres (6 feet), especially when the weather is very hot or very cold. They actually “eat”

their way through the ground, feeding on a mixture of soil, rotting leaves and microbes. They also eat rotten wood, plants and even dead animals. This all passes through their bodies, and leaves a rich, fertile soil behind. Worms move lots of soil — as much as 40 times their own weight — as

they burrow. Their tunnelling also allows air to get into the soil, and helps water drain away in wet weather.

Worms are so good at recycling waste that many gardeners use worms to turn their garden waste into rich compost. It is possible to buy “wormeries” specially designed to hold both worms and compost. We couldn’t really do without earthworms, so we should be grateful to God for creating these tiny, legless helpers.

—Geoff Chapman



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## Are you helping to care for our home?

**W**E live on the earth for quite a short time, so we should treat it like we would a holiday home. It doesn’t belong to us, so we need to look after it so that future generations can enjoy it too. The Bible tells us, “The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.” (Psalm 24: 1). When God created people in the beginning he told them to rule over the earth and take care of it. Instead, down through the centuries, humans have done much to spoil the earth. Some rivers and lakes have been poisoned by chemicals, killing many animals and plants. Lots of rain forests have been cut down, turning many areas into desert. We are dumping far too much rubbish, which all has to be buried. We have also polluted the atmosphere with harmful gases, which many people believe will make the world much too warm, melt the ice at the poles and make the sea level rise. Our world — God’s world — deserves better than this.



The things we throw away have to be buried in landfill sites, taking up valuable space. We can all play our part by putting less rubbish in our dustbins and recycling as much as we can.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

**Recycle** newspapers and magazines, steel and aluminium cans, plastic bottles, and glass jars and bottles. Don’t throw them into the dustbin — the materials can be used again. These items are often collected free, but if not, you can take them to one of the nearest recycling points, which are often found in supermarket car parks.

**Do** try to use less plastic packaging. Take re-usable bags to the shops. Buy unwrapped items whenever you can.

**Save** energy. Don’t leave lights on when you leave a room, or TV sets on standby. Ask Mum or Dad if the heating could be turned down a little — it could save them some money, too.

## PUZZLE CORNER

**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE:** There are 12 differences between these two pictures. Can you spot them?



### SCRAMBLED INSECTS QUIZ

1. GWEARI
2. QUOSTIOM
3. CHOCKCOAR
4. LIVWEE
5. SWAP
6. GEDIM
7. METTIRE
8. FRENYLEG



ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE