

Explore the Theme — “To Be Fully Alive ...”

Read what scientist Charles Darwin wrote of the insights he received into the mystery of the unity of all creation during an ordinary, local walk for other “Explore the Theme” postings visit: <https://www.shcj.org/explore-the-theme>



On the Origin of Species was first published in 1859 [when Cornelia was forming new members and honing her educational vision at St. Leonards-on-Sea]. Written by naturalist Charles Darwin, it is called a work of “scientific literature” and regarded as the foundation of his theory of evolutionary biology. In the final paragraphs of the book Darwin offers his poetic world-view of life evolving through the ages, using the metaphor of an “entangled bank,” like those in the surrounding hillsides where he often walked near his home.

**“It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank,
clothed with many plants of various kinds,
with birds singing on the bushes,
with various insects flitting about, and
with worms crawling through the damp earth ...
these elaborately constructed forms,
so different from each other
and dependent on each other in so complex a way.
There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers,
having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one;
and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on
according to the fixed law of gravity,
from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful
and most wonderful have been and are being, evolved.”**

In *Alive in God*¹, Timothy Radcliffe, OP includes a chapter called “The Ecology of Faith” in which he talks about the essential unity of all creation and the Christian’s call to be one in heart and mind. “To be fully alive ... is to live for and with each other.” (223) He goes on to say that “the unity of the Church is a sacrament of the mutuality of life that Charles Darwin famously witnessed [on his walks] ...” (229) Timothy Radcliffe, *Alive in God*, Bloombury Continuum, 2019



Do you have an “entangled bank” where you feel the oneness of all of creation? Try to go there in mind or body for a few quiet minutes.



LISTEN: to 2 minutes of birdsong. What do you hear? What does it say to you about the grain of wheat?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-dllbNrki5o>