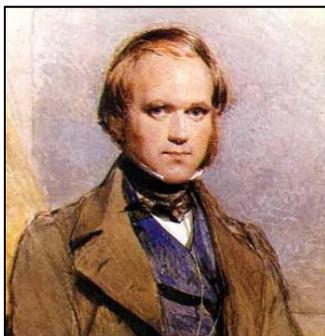


The Descent of a Man



This is the story of a how a bright young theological graduate came to turn his back on God, deny that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and by the end of his life was advising people on how best to undermine Christianity.

His name? Charles Darwin

What happened?

A disciple of Lyell

Darwin completed his studies in Theology at Cambridge University in 1831. During his time at Cambridge he was also pursued his interests in natural history, and was mentored by John Stevens Henslow, the university's professor of botany and director of the Botanical Garden. Henslow recommended Darwin for the post of "gentleman naturalist" on the HMS Beagle. During his time on the Beagle (1831-1836) Darwin read *Principles of Geology* by Charles Lyell. He was so taken by Lyell's uniformitarian theory of geology that he later admitted that his own ideas were firmly based on Lyell's. In 1844 He wrote to a friend:

I always feel as if my books came half out of Lyell's brains & that I never acknowledge this sufficiently, nor do I know how I can, without saying so in so many words — for I have always thought that the great merit of the Principles [Principles of Geology] was that it altered the whole tone of one's mind & therefore that when seeing a thing never seen by Lyell, one yet saw it partially through his eyes.

Charles Darwin, Letter to Leonard Horner, 29 Aug 1844

Freeing Science from Moses

Lyell's *Principles of Geology* presented the theory that the landforms and rock layers of the earth we observe now are the product of vast ages of slow gradual processes. This is a flat contradiction of the Bible's description of the world being formed rapidly and having suffered from a world-wide catastrophe at the time of Noah.

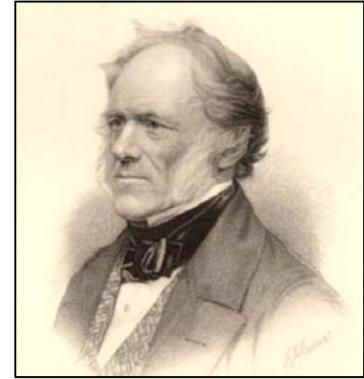
Whilst it was many years before Darwin outwardly denied the authority of the Bible, Lyell had made clear that he had an anti-Bible agenda as early as 1830, when Darwin was still studying theology. Lyell wrote to George Scrope, a Member of Parliament and fellow uniformitarian geologist, outlining the ultimate purpose of his geological writings:

I am sure you may get into Q.R. [Quarterly Review] what will free the science [of geology] from Moses, for if treated seriously, the [church] party are quite prepared for it. A bishop, Buckland ascertained (we suppose [Bishop] Sumner), gave Ure a dressing in the British Critic and Theological Review. They see at last the mischief and scandal brought on them by Mosaic systems. ... I conceived the idea five or six years ago, that if ever the Mosaic geology could be set down [put aside] without giving offence, it would be in an historical sketch, and you must abstract mine, in order to have as little to say as possible yourself.

Charles Lyell: Letter to George Scrope, 14 June 1830
In Lyell, K. [Lyell's sister-in-law]. *Life, Letters and Journals of Sir Charles Lyell, Bart.* I:268-271. John Murray, London, 1881.
[Items in square brackets added for clarification]

Moses was the writer of the book of Genesis, so freeing science from Moses meant denying the origin and history of world as described in Genesis. Long ages and uniformitarian geology are so entrenched today that it comes as a surprise to many that there was a time when geologists actually accepted a Mosaic or Genesis framework to their thinking. In fact, the word “geology” meaning “the study of the earth” was coined by a Bishop, and many of the early geologists were clergymen who believed the rocks and landforms of the earth were the result of Creation and Noah’s Flood.

Lyell was a lawyer and he knew that no separation exists between religion or philosophy, and the way people study the world around them, i.e. science. By advising his followers to reject and replace Moses, Lyell was actually establishing an alternative world history where the authority of the God of Moses over the real world of rocks, fossils and living things, was ultimately rejected.



Charles Lyell (1797-1875)

Jesus and Moses

Lyell kept up the appearance of being a church supporting believer, as did most British gentry of the day, but he was obviously not bothered by Jesus’ warning that those who reject Moses eventually reject His words. Jesus said to the religious leaders of his time:

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

John 5:46-47

Therefore, it shouldn’t surprise us that this is what actually happened to Charles Darwin, one of Lyell’s most devoted disciples. It was only after Darwin took on Lyell’s world view of vast geologic ages that he could work out his own theory of evolutionary biology. In his book *On the Origin of Species*, which sets out his theory of evolution, Darwin describes his complete dependence on Lyell’s work.

He who can read Sir Charles Lyell's grand work on the Principles of Geology, which the future historian will recognise as having produced a revolution in natural science, yet does not admit how incomprehensibly vast have been the past periods of time, may at once close this volume.

Darwin, 1859, *Origin*, Ch IX, p282

A vast incomprehensible past, undocumented by any witnesses, allowed Darwin to fill it with his own theories about the origin of life, and of new and different life forms. The Bible sets out a clearly documented record of the origin and history of life that has the authority of a witness who was there. Lyell’s work gave Darwin the option of rejecting that authority and substituting it with his own.

Denying the Deluge

Darwin later confirmed that Lyell had indeed undermined the authority of Scripture with his vast ages and uniformitarian geology. In 1873 Darwin wrote to his son George:

Lyell is most firmly convinced that he has shaken the faith in the Deluge etc far more efficiently by never having said a word against the Bible, than if he had acted otherwise.

Charles Darwin, Letter to his son George H Darwin, 21 Oct 1873

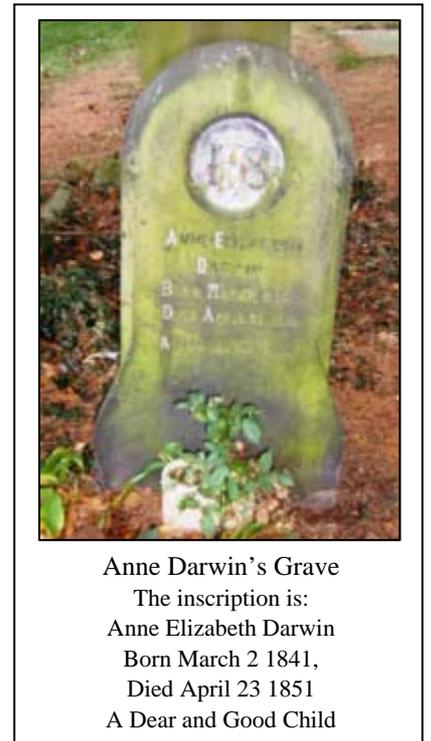
The Deluge refers to Noah’s Flood – a world wide catastrophe sent in judgement on man’s evil behaviour. Darwin, Lyell and their present day followers were and are not just rejecting God’s power as Creator, they reject His power and authority as Judge. Churches that pride themselves on believing that God is Creator and Judge, but accept Lyell’s vast uniformitarian ages are undermining the foundation of the gospel. If there is no judgement on sin, there is no need to be saved. By shaking faith in the Deluge, Lyell and his theological successors lull people into a dangerous ignorance of their perilous state unless they repent of their evil behaviour and accept the free gift of salvation offered by Christ.

A Personal Tragedy

During the years that Darwin spent developing his evolutionary theory he experienced a tragedy when his 10 year old daughter Annie died in 1851. Randal Keynes, a great, great grandson of Charles Darwin wrote a biography of Darwin entitled *Annie's Box* which focuses on Darwin's family life. In the book he claims: "After Annie's death, Charles set the Christian faith firmly behind him." In a review of the book in *Science* vol. 296, p1974, 14 June 2002, the reviewer states, "Freed from the last vestige of belief that the world was perfect because God created it that way, Darwin continued without spiritual restraint to work out his theory on the origin of species."

Since Keynes' book was published many people have come to believe that grief over his daughter's death gave Darwin the impetus to publish his inherently anti-God theory. However, the real turning point in Darwin's life was some 20 years earlier when he adopted Lyell's Moses-free science. His grief over his daughter's death was just one more step on an already well established path away from God.

Keynes' book was the inspiration of the 2009 biographical film with the completely misleading name of *Creation*. The film is one of numerous promotions released during the Darwin anniversary year designed to make people feel good about Darwin as a person, and therefore, good about his theory of evolution.



Anne Darwin's Grave
The inscription is:
Anne Elizabeth Darwin
Born March 2 1841,
Died April 23 1851
A Dear and Good Child

Goodness Problem

Darwin may have been a good family man, but there is no goodness in his theory of how living things came into being. This is clear from his final summing up paragraphs of *On the Origin of Species*:

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms.

Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is 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."

Darwin, C. R. 1859. *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: John Murray. 1st ed. pp490-491

An endless struggle for life, resulting in famine, death and extinction has only the deluded grandeur of a Stalinist war on the masses, where those who are considered unfit are eliminated. This is the exact opposite of God's assessment of His finished creation. Genesis tells us:

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

Genesis 1:31

Genesis 1 and 2 describe a world of beauty and perfection where there was no famine, struggle, suffering or death. What God considered good is confirmed by looking at the life of Jesus Christ, who as the Creator incarnate “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick and disabled, and raised the dead – the exact opposite of Darwinian processes. Theologians who claim God used evolution, i.e. millions of years of death, disease and struggle, to bring living things into existence grossly insult the Creator and they will pay for it dearly on the day when we are all judged according to God’s word, and not by the words of Darwin or his followers such as Richard Dawkins and David Attenborough.

Darwin was aware of the dilemma between a good God and the observed suffering of living things. He expressed this in a letter to a Joseph Hooker, a close lifelong friend:

My theology is a simple muddle: I cannot look at the Universe as the result of blind chance, yet I can see no evidence of beneficent Design.

Charles Darwin, letter to Joseph Hooker, 12 July 1870

He later wrote in his autobiography:

A being so powerful and so full of knowledge as a God who could create the universe, is to our finite minds omnipotent and omniscient, and it revolts our understanding to suppose that his benevolence is not unbounded, for what advantage can there be in the sufferings of millions of the lower animals throughout almost endless time?

Nora Barlow, ed. *The autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882: with original omissions restored*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969, p90

Darwin's loss of faith in a good God because he saw a good God as incompatible with an evil world, reveals the essential flaw in all compromise creation positions e.g. theistic evolution, framework hypothesis, intelligent design, that refuse to take Genesis as serious history. These beliefs may superficially explain creative design, but they do not explain why the world is full of things that are not good, such as disease and death. There is a significant difference between a world that doesn't function well because it was made by an evil or incompetent creator, and a world that functions badly because it was corrupted after it was completed by God and given into man's control.

Only Genesis gives a clear, consistent explanation of why the world is tainted by death, disease and struggle for life, yet shows the vestiges of perfect design that are beyond chance. The world was made perfect, but the first man rebelled against God and God judged the world by cursing the ground and bringing death into the world. He later judged it again with the world-wide flood of Noah because of man's continuing rebellion. Genesis also provides the foundation as to why Christ the Creator is the only one who can save us from the eternal penalty of our rebellion against him.

Darwin's Autobiography

Darwin wrote his autobiography in 1876, although it wasn't published until after his death. It was originally included in *The Life Letters of Charles Darwin* published by his son Francis in 1887. There were many omissions from the original manuscript, most of which seem to be at the request of Emma Darwin, his deeply religious Unitarian wife and all of which seem designed to make Darwin appear to be an acceptable Church supporting English gentleman.

Darwin on the Bible

By the time he wrote his autobiography in 1876 Darwin has completely dismissed the authority of the whole of Scripture. He describes his loss of trust in the Old Testament as follows:

Whilst on board the Beagle I was quite orthodox, and I remember being heartily laughed at by several of the officers (though themselves orthodox) for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality. I suppose it was the novelty of the argument that amused them. But I had gradually come, by this time, to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world, with the

Tower of Babel, the rainbow as a sign, etc., etc., and from its attributing to God the feelings of a revengeful tyrant, was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, (*sic*) or the beliefs of any barbarian.

Nora Barlow, ed. *The autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882: with original omissions restored*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969, p85

Note Darwin's description of Scripture as "manifestly false", not metaphor or useful symbolism with theological truth. Darwin, who was trained in theology, did not indulge in any of the modern-day doublespeak by theologians who claim Genesis and the Theory of Evolution tell the same story. Darwin knew very well they didn't, and because he believed his theory was true, he consistently also believed the Old Testament was false.

Having dismissed the Old Testament, Darwin then attacks the Gospels:

By further reflecting that the clearest evidence would be requisite to make any sane man believe in the miracles by which Christianity is supported,—that the more we know of the fixed laws of nature the more incredible do miracles become,—that the men at that time were ignorant and credulous to a degree almost incomprehensible by us,—that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events,—that they differ in many important details, far too important as it seemed to me to be admitted as the usual inaccuracies of eyewitnesses;—by such reflections as these, which I give not as having the least novelty or value, but as they influenced me, I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation.

Nora Barlow, ed. *The autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882: with original omissions restored*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969, p85

Darwin's claim that the Gospel records of the memories of the disciples, who were actually there, "cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events," exposes a major flaw in his own theory about the origin and history of life: It was written millions of years after the supposed events, unseen by any witnesses, and therefore can never be proven.

A Foundational Issue

Evangelical Church leaders who claim that Creation, the Garden of Eden, Noah's Flood and the Tower of Babel are not salvation issues should take note of Darwin's experience. Having rejected the foundation on which the New Testament is built, i.e. the original good creation, God's judgement, and mankind's inability to save himself as set out in the Old Testament, Darwin rejected the good news (gospel) of the Creator coming to earth, showing His divine power and goodness in the miracles, dying to pay the penalty of our rebellion against Him and rising to bring us new life.

Darwin knew that by rejecting the Bible as the real history of the real world he was rejecting the Christian faith. He goes on to write:

Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress, and have never since doubted even for a single second that my conclusion was correct. 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.

Nora Barlow, ed. *The autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882: with original omissions restored*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969, p87

Darwin understood some aspects of Christianity well. It is about how to get to Heaven, but is also about Hell and eternal judgement. Jesus spoke more on this subject than any other person in Scripture.

Here we see the reason many refuse to consider any evidence for creation and oppose the work of groups like Creation Research so vigorously. Like Darwin, they know that God's authority and power to decide our ultimate fate rest exclusively on His role as Creator. By denying creation they think they can escape God's judgement of their own lives. How sad that such people also fail to understand that God's power and authority as Creator also enables the same God to save us from our rebellion against him and give everlasting life to all those who come in faith and repentance. (John 3:16)

Theistic Evolution

Although he rejected the Bible and the Christian faith, Darwin was not an atheist. In 1879 He wrote:

It seems to me absurd to doubt that a man may be an ardent Theist & an evolutionist. ... In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. ... I think that generally (& more and more so as I grow older) but not always, that an agnostic would be the most correct description of my state of mind.

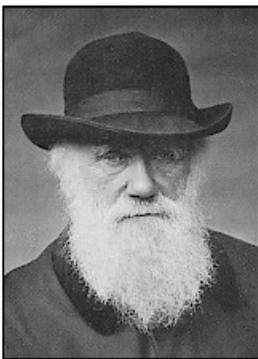
Charles Darwin, Letter to John Fordyce, 7 May 1879

Darwin is right in that it is possible to be a theist, i.e. believe there is a god of some kind somewhere, and believe in evolution. However, you then have to ask the question: What kind of god would deliberately use a process of death, disease, famine and struggle to make the world, and then declare it to be good? Atheist and Oxford Professor Peter Atkins called any god who would use evolution "a most malign god". (Big Questions, BBC1, 8 Feb 2009) If this is the only god available it is no wonder Darwin, and followers such as Peter Atkins, do not want to know him. Darwin and Atkins are being more consistent in their beliefs than those who claim to believe in the God of the Bible, but reject God's description of how He made the world.

The end result of Darwin's rejection of the Scriptures is shown in a letter he wrote 18 months before he died. In November 1880 a man named Frederick McDermott, who declared himself to believe that "Christ was the Son of God," wrote to Darwin, asking if Darwin also believed this, and if he believed in the New Testament. Darwin replied:

I am sorry to have to inform you that I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation, & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God.

Charles Darwin, Letter to Frederick McDermott, 24 November 1880



Charles Darwin 1880

This statement shows clearly Darwin's complete rejection of God's Word, and therefore, his rejection of God's Son. Here is a tragic fulfilment of Jesus' warning that "if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:46-47) Those who reject Moses, as Darwin did when he first chose to follow Lyell's vast ages, will reject Christ's words. Those theologians and Bible colleges who assume you can accept the millions of years proposed by Lyell, Darwin and their followers without rejecting Christ, beware of the effect on your students.

Darwin on Mankind

One of the most serious contradictions between Genesis and evolution is the place of man in the living world. Genesis states that man is a separate creation from animals, and is made in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 21-22) According to evolution man is just another animal that came into being as a result of millions of years of struggle and death, and therefore has no more significance than any other living thing in the ongoing struggle for life.

Nine months before he died Darwin wrote about his views on mankind:

But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"

Charles Darwin, Letter to William Graham, 3 July 1881

Darwin is consistent in his thinking on man and monkeys. If human beings are just animals that came into existence by a long naturalistic struggle for survival our thoughts are no more significant than those of the monkey-like creatures he believes we came from, and indeed of the simpler creatures that supposedly gave rise to the monkeys. According the Bible mankind is made in the image of God, who called Himself the Word (John 1:1) and our thoughts matter to God and our fellow human beings. We are designed to communicate our thoughts with God in prayer, and with each other in speech and writing.

In the same letter as above Darwin goes on to say:

Lastly I could show fight on natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilisation than you seem inclined to admit. Remember what risks the nations of Europe ran, not so many centuries ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is. The more civilised so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence. Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilised races throughout the world.

Charles Darwin, Letter to William Graham, 3 July 1881

Darwin walking down the streets of London or Manchester and seeing the Islamic mosques would be horrified, as they are the evidence of the philosophic and religious vacuum his theory has made of British Culture, which other religions have moved in to fill. Darwin's racism comes to the fore when he goes on to claim that the struggle for existence will keep going within mankind, and non-European races will eventually be selected out by Caucasians (Europeans). Not only is time proving him wrong, but his attitude is the direct opposite of the Bible based belief that all human beings are made in the image of God and are, therefore, equally precious in His sight.

Again we see how evolution is an anti-Gospel theory. Darwin's idea of selecting out the "lower races" is the opposite of Christ's desire that people of all nations would become His disciples. Jesus sent his disciples out with this commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

The Apostle Paul explains why Christ has authority to claim disciples from all nations when he spoke to a group of philosophers in Athens.

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.

Acts 17:26-27

Note that it is because all human beings are descended from the one created man that God is the Lord and Saviour of all people. Paul explains this in detail in his letter to the Romans. He wrote:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. ... For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:12, 19

If evolution is true there was never one uniquely created man who started out good and rebelled against God, from we are all descended, and therefore, are all in need of a Saviour. If evolution is true man's rebellion did not bring death into the world. Instead, the human race began as a group of hominids who had no knowledge of God or righteousness, struggling for existence in a world already filled with death. If human sin did not bring death, then having one's sins forgiven will not guarantee eternal life.

Darwin knew that his theory was contrary to Christianity but he was a quiet man who did not get involved in public controversies. In fact, he didn't need to. He knew the best way to attack Christianity was not with strident opposition, but by quietly undermining its foundations. In 1873 he wrote to his son George:

I have lately read Morley's Life of Voltaire & he insists strongly that direct attacks on Christianity (even when written with the wonderful force & vigour of Voltaire) produce little permanent effect: real good seems only to follow from slow & silent side attacks.

Charles Darwin, Letter to his son George Darwin, 21 October 1873

For over 150 years Darwin's theory has been a slow silent attack. By being told that evolution is scientific fact several generations of students and TV documentary viewers have been educated to believe in an alternative history of the world that directly contradicts the Bible. People are not stupid, they know that if the Bible is wrong about the origin and history of the world and of the human race, then there is no reason to accept its authority over their lives and trust it for their destiny.

The effect on the generations succeeding Darwin is seen in his own descendents. His great great grandson declared:

I don't believe in God: how could I, given my great great grandfather's theories? But perhaps I would feel happier if I did. Just because I have rejected conventional religion, it does not mean there isn't a void to be filled.

Sunday Times, (UK) 12 November 2000

Darwin is Buried

Darwin died in 1882 and was buried in Westminster Abbey where over the centuries much good theology has also been buried. His grave bears the simple inscription: Charles Robert Darwin, Born 12 February 1809, Died 19 April 1882.

Pall bearers at the burial service included Sir Joseph Hooker, Alfred Russel Wallace, James Russell Lowell (U.S. Ambassador), and William Spottiswoode (President of the Royal Society). On the Sunday following the burial service, Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, preached a memorial sermon and said: "I think that the interment of the remains of Mr Darwin in Westminster Abbey is in accordance with the judgment of the wisest of his countrymen. It would have been unfortunate if anything had occurred to give weight and currency to the foolish notion which some have diligently propagated, but for which Mr Darwin was not responsible, that there is a necessary conflict between a knowledge of Nature and a belief in God...".

Source: [Westminster Abbey](#)

In claiming that burying Darwin in a Christian church was a wise thing to do, the Bishop of Carlisle reveals much about the then leadership of the Anglican Church who were ignoring the Biblical teaching that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). Darwin rejected Christ, called himself an agnostic, regarded Scripture as manifestly false, and advised people on how to undermine Christianity. Modern day theologians and evangelists who want to import Darwin's teaching into Christianity are showing the same lack of wisdom.

A Choice of Faiths

In the Bible, faith is described as being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1) Darwin had no faith in God, but displayed remarkable faith in things that neither he nor Lyell saw happen. The Creation versus Evolution issue is not an issue of science versus faith, but rather how people interpret scientific findings in the light of the faith they willingly have. Ultimately it is a matter of truth vs error. Who do you trust to tell the truth about the real history of the real world?

So what is your choice?

You can have faith in Lyell and Darwin, who were not there at the beginning; or faith in the Creator Christ, who was there and has told us clearly what He did, and better yet, died for our sins and rose from the dead to show that He could raise us from the dead and give us eternal life in New Heavens and Earth, where there will be no more death, suffering or struggle for life.

References

Quotes from Darwin's *Origin* are from:

Darwin, C. R. 1859. *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: John Murray. [1st edition]

Quotes from Darwin's other books are from *The Complete Works of Charles Darwin Online*.

This archive of Darwin's writings includes several editions of *Origin*, and can be accessed online at: <http://darwin-online.org.uk>

Quotes from Darwin's letters are from *The Darwin Correspondence Project*, and can be accessed online at: <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk>

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Photo of Anne Darwin's grave by Randall Hardy

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