

and animals and much of the aquatic life. It may be argued, however, that small protected areas of the pre-flood seas were overlaid with freshwater during the flood and marine organisms could have survived. Obviously, additional research is needed, especially regarding the reestablishment of our present seawater salinity at the end of the flood.

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DARWIN'S LAST HOURS REVISITED

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The material presented in the tract, Darwin's Last Hours, does not correspond with the facts known about Charles Darwin. It is suggested that Christians not use the tract in any creation-evolution discussions.

Introduction

In 1975 I wrote an article entitled Darwin's Last Hours¹ as an answer to a tract of the same name. Since the appearance of that article, a number of critical references have been made to it in some publications.² My original concern was that this tract was being distributed in quantities to high school students for use in biology classes as support for the creationist position. When I was asked to evaluate it, I studied it very carefully. After some research in university graduate libraries, I felt that sufficient reasons had been accumulated to doubt its authenticity and question its proposed use. Apparently wishful thinking dies hard.

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The Darwin Tract

It is true that Darwin's undergraduate degree was a bachelor of divinity. However, he made the Beagle voyage before he could enter the ministry. On his return, he had lost all desire to become a vicar. Later he lost his Christian faith as well. The original tract carried a short account of a lecture, supposedly documenting Darwin's return to the Christian faith. A number of variants have appeared but all agree that the lecturer was a Lady Hope, a consecrated Englishwoman from Northfield, England, according to one version. The location of the delivery of the lecture is not specified.³ According to another source, the lecture was delivered on August 15, 1915 in Northfield, England. Subsequently it was published in the *Watchman Examiner*,⁴ date unspecified. According to yet an-

other source, Lady Hope gave her lecture in America and gave a report to the *Boston Watchman Examiner*.⁵ Still another account states that Lady Hope delivered her lecture at D. L. Moody's educational establishment at Northfield, Boston and her written account appeared in the *Boston Watchman Examiner*. That source does not take into account that Northfield is some distance from Boston.

There are two sources that report an American presentation and the publication in the *Boston Watchman Examiner*⁶ (date still unspecified). Finally there is still the confusion of the two Northfields. Until now I am unable to reconcile these conflicts.

Other than these differences, the several accounts are in agreement. In referring to her visit with Charles Darwin, Lady Hope described him as having been almost bedridden for some months before he died. He was sitting up in bed, wearing a soft embroidered dressing gown, gazing out of the window. When she entered the room, he was holding an open Bible "which he was always studying", said Lady Hope. She mentioned that Darwin commented on the book of Hebrews and referred to it as the Royal Book.

A careful examination of the account of her visit reveals a number of discrepancies with known facts. The first one concerned that time of her visit. According to the account, it was made on a glorious autumn afternoon. Darwin died April 19, 1882 so this visit would have been made at least six months prior to his death. Yet, if we check the record of his activities during this period, we find no evidence of his being bedridden. Earlier in August of 1881 he and his wife traveled to London to visit his brother, Erasmus. In the months following, he wrote two short papers for the Linnean Society about his studies on roots and chlorophyll bodies. His correspondence remained rather voluminous through most of these six months and continued until the end of February 1882.⁷ As late as March 7, 1882 he still attempted a short walk on the well-known "sandwalk," but suffered a seizure. There is no indication in any other work dealing with his life that would justify drawing the conclusion that Darwin passed through a lengthy period (six months) of being bedridden as the account seems to claim.

A second discrepancy which led me to doubt the reliability of the account of her visit with Darwin was that Lady Hope described him as registering agony when she reminded him of his work, *The Origin of Species*. Supposedly Darwin answered,

I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion out of them.

It was this quote that first aroused my doubts about the tract. One of the questions in my mind was the element of time. According to the record, Darwin first wrote on transmutation of species in his four notebooks. According to his journal in 1837, "In July opened first notebook on 'Transmutation of Species'."⁸ When he wrote these words he was 28 years old, and one could say that he was in his youth when he began his work. However, the public knew nothing of these notebooks at this time and his work did not stop at

that point. Reading his correspondence over the next years one sees that his thoughts followed a consistent direction. Twenty-one years later Darwin received the well-known Wallace paper and was astounded to find that it practically duplicated his own work. He recovered from the shock and, under the urging of his friends, Joseph Hooker and Charles Lyell, he hurriedly produced an abstract from his unpublished work on species. This abstract and Wallace's MS were then presented to the famous meeting of the Linnean Society in 1858. This was the first time that Darwin's theories were presented to the general scientific public. Darwin was 49 years of age and could not be referred to as a youth.

Actual Views of Darwin

The first edition of the *Origin*, published in 1859 when Darwin was 50, followed the appearance of this abstract. Considering these well-documented facts, it appears inconceivable to find Darwin referring to his work with the words "I was a young man with unformed ideas" as he is alleged to have done on his deathbed in 1881. One would believe that neither the writer of that account nor Lady Hope (if indeed it was she) had ever read *The Origin of Species*. Certainly anyone who has read the *Origin* cannot reconcile its earnest and lucid convictions with the disclaimers with which Darwin was supposed to have referred to it. Actually Darwin had deliberately prepared and released his abstract to ensure that he would also receive credit along with Wallace for his ideas on the origin of species.

Another point to be considered is that the *Origin* was carefully revised by Darwin for each of the six editions. These revisions extended from 1859, the date of the first edition, to 1872 when the sixth edition appeared. There are documented instances of reactions to criticism by Fleeming Jenkin in the *North British Review*. Also in a letter to Hooker, Darwin noted that Fleeming Jenkin had given him much trouble. At this time Darwin was 63 years old and some thirteen years had passed since the first appearance of the *Origin*. It is understandable why I had such grave doubts as the veracity of the Lady Hope account.

Supporters of the theme of *Darwin's Last Hours* would have to believe in the existence of a monumental conspiracy by hundreds of people working to conceal the fact that Darwin was personally involved in the development of his work. In turn, this would have to mean that through at least 32 years of Darwin's life some other individuals had written papers under his name, published results of laboratory work that he supposedly had performed, and turned in papers consistent with his thoughts to learned societies under his name. Furthermore, what was Darwin doing all of this time? He could not have remained in ignorance of the events for such a lengthy period of years. This would be absurd with the documentation of the known facts about these events.

In writing the CRSQ article, I concentrated on the available correspondence of Darwin during the closing years of his life to make the point that none of these letters gave any hint of any change of stance prior to his death. My critics have simply ignored the evidence

of such letters. I had quoted passages from Darwin's correspondence spanning the period from the two years before up to two weeks before his death. The tone of all of these excerpts is consistent with Darwin's views as expressed in his various public writings during his entire active life.

Lady Hope

In his latest work, *The Rise of the Evolution Fraud*⁹ M. Bowden of England has discussed the issue of *Darwin's Last Hours*. In referring to my failure to find a Lady Hope, he reports that recently a Mr. L. G. Pine, one time editor of *Burke's Peerage* wrote Dr. C. E. A. Turner, Chairman of the Creation Science Movement, the following:

Now with regard to Lady Hope, I think that I have uncovered her identity, which should be a help to tracing the story . . . under the article in B. P. for Viscount Combermere I found mention of Elizabeth Reid Stapleton-Cotton, whose date of birth is not given (convention of those times), but who was born soon after 1841. She married in 1877 Adm. of the Fleet Sir James Hope, G.C.B. She was obviously much younger than he. He d. in 1881, and she married again in 1893 a Mr. T. A. Denny. She preferred to be known as Lady Hope right up to her death in 1922.

I think this is the Lady Hope in connection with Darwin, as no other at that time, i.e. around 1882 will fit.¹⁰

An interesting facet in this discussion seems to be the opinion of my critics that the veracity of the account would be established if Lady Hope could be identified. Nobody seemed at all concerned over the fact that this verification of the mere existence of Lady Hope did nothing towards establishing the truth of the story. I do not believe that the discovery of Mr. Pine of a Lady Hope adds anything in the nature of substantiation to the original tract, *Darwin's Last Hours*. The doubt as to the authenticity of the account rests, not on whether or not Lady Hope existed, but on whether the whole account is consistent with the facts known and the writings of Darwin.

An interesting development that occurred subsequently to the appearance of the Lady Hope account concerned Darwin's daughter, Henrietta. She was born about 1842 and married a barrister, Richard Litchfield. *The Humanist* reports that Mrs. Litchfield wrote to *The Christian*, February 23rd, 1922 as follows:

I was present at his (Darwin's) deathbed. Lady Hope was not present during his last illness, or

any illness. I believe he never even saw her, but in any case she had no influence over him in any department of thought and belief. He never recanted any of his scientific views, either then or earlier. We think the story of his conversion was fabricated in the USA. In most of the versions hymn singing comes in and a summerhouse where the servants and villagers sang hymns to him. There is no such summerhouse and no servants or villagers ever sang hymns to him. The whole story has no foundation whatsoever.¹¹

Lest there be come who think that the journal that refers to this letter might be suspect, I would repeat that actually there is no further need for additional evidence. It simply seems consistent with the other evidence.

Conclusions

After considering the above points, in my opinion it is very unwise for Christians to propose the use of the tract *Darwin's Last Hours* in any form as being any kind of worthwhile evidence in a discussion about the validity of macroevolution or creation. The writer believes that those who defend the creationist account of origins have the obligation to examine and study their supportive material as rigorously and painstakingly as they do macroevolutionary material. This means checking back to the sources and examining all relevant reference material. The cause of creation is not served by spurious reporting, nor by the dissemination of unfounded accounts. The use of evidence that is extremely questionable can only weaken the arguments of those who use it.

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QUOTE

Public education in the United States, from kindergarten through to graduate school, is actively (though in most cases not intentionally) fostering scientism and its correlate of ideological arrogance. When the basic humility and restraint of judgment and action consistent with a view of science as indeterminate, probabilistic, and heuristic are lacking, it is easy to turn to scientism, to find appealing the prospect of becoming part of the priesthood of scientism equipped to perform the sacred rites of uncovering.

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