

Introduction



These are accurately recorded notes of interviews, conducted by David Harding, with Mr Charles Haddon Spurgeon by means of one of the marvels of modern science, namely, a computer. In each of them a further dimension of Mr Spurgeon's antipathy to the modern theory of origins is explored.

Spurgeon, born at Kelvedon, Essex in 1834, was converted and baptised at the age of sixteen and began preaching soon after. His London ministry began at the New Park Street Chapel at the age of nineteen. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was built for him, opening in 1861. His ministry ended with his death in 1892 at the age of fifty-eight. More information about his life can be found in *Travel with C.H. Spurgeon* by Clive Anderson (Day One).

Charles Darwin's book, published in 1859, and known by the shortened title *The Origin of Species* or simply *Origin*, was at best a hypothesis. It made bold statements about the origin and development of life. Darwin's ideas were not new. Similar ideas can be traced back to Greek philosophy, but his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), spawned the ideas which influenced Charles's thinking. Nevertheless, *Origin* was the first work to gain widespread

INTRODUCTION

publicity. It was seized on by atheists to develop evolutionary concepts, despite its flawed scientific basis, and was used to repudiate the biblical account of creation. Some leading evangelicals have yielded to the pressure to make the Bible fit Darwinism, despite Darwin himself viewing his theory as unsubstantiated by the evidence available. Spurgeon's preaching and correspondence is littered with relevant comments opposing the theory.

Spurgeon was, in some ways, a man of his day. He interpreted Genesis 1 literally, and yet he felt that this approach permitted a unique form of what is sometimes called the 'gap theory'. This may shock Spurgeon's admirers, but it would be dishonest to proceed as if he held to a 6,000-year-old creation. He considered that the planet earth was alone in the universe (if I understand all his references) at first. It was created (he seems to say) in a chaotic and unformed state for what *may have been* the equivalent of millions of years of time. The Appendix explores his attitude to the possibility of his having misunderstood the Scriptures. I consider any version of gap theory to be contrary to a correct exegesis of Genesis 1, taking into account references within Genesis and elsewhere to all that was accomplished 'in the beginning' or 'in six days'. I sincerely hope that Spurgeon's replies convey the honest and humble spirit he had about any matter on which he may have erred.

Two things emerge from the Appendix. First, that Spurgeon held to the inerrancy and authority of the whole Bible. Secondly, he is no ally to those in our day who believe that evolution was the process that brought about a species from which God chose a pair and breathed into them the image of God. Spurgeon places creation week in the recent past. He commends Mr Hely Smith for justifying the biblical account when he refutes various claims and fabrications

by evolutionary scientists that originally dated certain pottery at 18,000 years old.

I adjusted Spurgeon's original statements for two reasons. The first is brevity. The original manuscript was over 50,000 words. Spurgeon repeated himself with poetic, Victorian verbosity! Secondly, some phrases and words have been adjusted to make it agreeable to the modern ear or to clarify the sense for an interview style. Nothing is out of context. Spurgeon was unambiguous in preaching. If anything is out of context, he will one day inform me. I shall anticipate that interview with joy.

Those who quote Spurgeon as the prince of preachers, and honour him in other areas, can see what kind of man he was in this vital and foundational area of the Christian faith. How can they profess admiration of him and yet be dismissive (or even derisive) of his evangelical descendants who have even more reason to take the same, and even more consistently scriptural stand? I prepared these interviews to assist my friends in creation science ministries in their support of the churches in the battle with evolution and its mongrel offspring, theistic evolution.

Spurgeon stood virtually alone with his hand on the Bible. Even his errors of understanding arose within a conviction of the inerrancy, infallibility, sufficiency and perspicuity of Holy Scripture. He had no creation science movement showing those evidences that we are privileged to review. He was certain that the Bible is self-interpreting, needing no external verification. This should be sufficient for every believer. Spurgeon states that, as we should expect, the discoverable facts in the universe can only, and will always, confirm the infallible statements in the Word. Scientific evidence supporting the historical data of Genesis 1-11 is

INTRODUCTION

increasingly available to us. There is, as Spurgeon also clearly stated there would be, an ongoing lack of any supporting evidence for evolution, especially any missing link, on which Darwin staked the whole of his hypothesis. There are also mountains of scientific facts flatly contradicting the evolutionary scheme or fundamental sections of it.

Some, may, by some mental gymnastics, be able to square the circle through theistic evolution, but Spurgeon laughed in the face of evolution. In his own words, 'I do not hesitate to say that the whole theory of evolution is more monstrously false and foolish than any other ever conceived beneath high heaven. It is a marvellous thing that men should be able to squeeze their minds into the belief of an absurdity which, in time to come, will be ridiculed to children in the schoolroom as an instance of the credulity of their ancestors.'

What will those who have moulded their theology do when Darwinism is debunked? Some scientists have already moved from gradualism to 'punctuated equilibrium', and left those who have altered their theology stuck with concepts that some atheistic evolutionists have difficulty with. These theologians, and their reputations, may flounder when the 'theory' arising from the voyage of the Beagle finally sinks without trace. They have built doctrinal structures on faulty foundations. It appears that only their theological inconsistencies have allowed them to build the remainder of their theology in a more evangelical way. It is sad that they did not treat the early chapters of Genesis with the same care.

I now leave you with the interviews, conducted with the aid of modern technology and its wondrous ability to search vast amounts of text on given topics in a relatively short space of time.