

HYDE PARK & BAYSWATER

NEW

ADDRESS

QUEENSBOROUGH STUDIOS

QUEENSBOROUGH TERRACE, BAYSWATER, W.

London 19th March 97

To Sir William Dawson

Sir

Having read "Relics of Primæval Life" I am very pleased with the evidence you have after long years been able to marshal in favour of establishing the existence of pre-cambrian fossils and I doubt not that much more will yet be discovered. Whether that be so or not it is not at all likely that every step in evolution will be realized by the discovery of fossil links.

Is that a valid reason why we should be wooden-headed? After such overwhelming evidence of evolution by natural or secondary causes

to shake our heads and say "all backward tracings lead to blind alleys" and therefore we must make room for periodical creations by miracle or final cause. Can you say that the line of ancestry of the horse ends in a blind alley?

In any case your creation theory is at least as much conjectural as the derivation theory, if not more so; for you admit that if your cube present at a new creation of species you would fail to see that it was the result of a final cause.

It seems to me that the slowness is daily & hourly endeavouring to hammer into human heads that the universe is governed by general laws and, ^{that} respect of persons, ^{is} there is none.

Man conceited & pig headed
 man, fancies himself the heir of
 an eternal future and that, it
 is highly derogatory to him, to
 suppose either that he emerged
 from the brute or that he is destined
 to pass into oblivion! Poor creature!

Man also worships a god of his
 own imagination. A being
 who makes grievous mistakes,
 and vainly endeavours to repair
 the same. Fancy a god
 repenting & grieving at heart
 that he had made man and
 attempting to ~~the~~ destroy
 the species by flood and
 finally decreeing to torture
 endless the great majority
 by literal or figurative fire!

Nature is severe but there
 is nothing in all nature like this.
 However this is idle conjecture.
 The question is what shall

4
the Naturalist believe in respect of the origins
of life & species? Does he say he believes they originated by "chance"?
Certainly not. But in any case the question
is not whether life originated by "some intention" (for
we cannot know the mind of God) but by what
means life began.

I for one frankly admit that we cannot get
life out of inorganic matter unless it is there
already in its elements. Now I maintain that
the elements of life are in inorganic matter.
I would define life to be the ascendancy of
self-conserving force against forces antagonistic
to the self." Organization in organic bodies is part
of the self-conserving force. Reproduction is another
part of the self-conserving force. Eating, digesting,
assimilating & secreting are other manifestations of the

self conserving force. But these are details.

The main fact of self-conservation is shared in degrees more or less by all inorganic bodies and some of the details of self-conserving energy are manifested even by inorganic bodies.

To begin with let us note the life like phenomena of Elasticity so ~~unimportant~~^{unimportant} in the inorganic world. How bodies give and take rather than break up. How some solid bodies when struck or rubbed become thrown into waves of vibration divided by points & lines of comparative rest thereby resembling the repetitions in the organic world. How a magnet may by mechanical division be cut up into many pieces each retaining

9
polarity in magnetic function like the original
reminding us of the dominion & subordination of an
Amoeba with retention of all the powers of the whole.
Then there is the fact that one electrified body
induces electrification in neighboring bodies and
one magnet begets the like state in an unmagnetized
body of like material simulating reproduction
in the organic world.

It is true the reproduction in the organic world
differs in many ways but then this may be due to
the fact that the chemical powers of "Carbon & Co."
are peculiar in the high combining capacity
they manifest as compared with the simpler, binary
ternary & quaternary compounds of most other elements.
You will readily admit that life is extraordinary
understood would be conspicuous by its absence from

4
A world such as ours if the rare
element Carbon were absent.
Thus the chance (?) of Carbon from
being absent from other planets
would probably result in the
absence of life as we ordinarily
describe it.

Given "Carbon & Co" a certain
condition of temperature, moisture
& light life can easily be sup-
posed to have resulted from
the much despised inorganic
state of matter.

Then when life, vegetable
was originated where the Earth
was first fitted namely within
the Polar Area it is clear that
it would originate as organless
protoplasm - first as starch
secondly as protoplasm just
as it is now, excepting that
no previous living matter
was necessary. The necessity
of light to vegetable life should

limit the evolution of living protoplasm
 (for probably many centuries) to evolution
 in summer and destruction in winter and
 thus evolution de novo from inorganic matter
 would occur again & again. By and by
 the waning of light would begin a struggle
 to live, on the part of certain protoplasmic
 masses, upon their fellow-protoplasmic
 so the kind of life of the fungus apart of the
 animal would be evolved. As need
 required organs would be given. Response
 to surrounding wants or circumstances of
 the respective kinds of being, alga, fungus
 and animal. But the old vegetable habits of

9

the Zoophytes, pulpy &c like
are great evidences as to whence
animal life proceeded.

It is true that we must
predicate the elements of
psychical as well as physical
life as inhering in inorganic
matter. But this is not
inconceivable when the
many resemblances between
feelings & forces are considered
as I have shown in my
"Conscious Matter." Nor is
there wanting a locus in
time wherein the psychical
state can arise, namely
at the instant force is
being received by a body.

Thus when a body receives
energy it feels, when the
body imparts energy it is
in the energising or physical
or volitional phase.

But what I contend above all is that
we are bound to know the Government
of all being most by acknowledging that
He being omniscient and omnipotent
knew & arranged the necessary states
or successions since for all ends that
we must look for the final cause
as having operated on at the foundation
of the universe and at no subsequent
period of time

I am
Yours
faithfully
N. Stewart Duncan

W Stewart
Dunbar
Club 197
Re⁴ Rules⁴

