

## The emperors who had no clothes

I would like to comment on Dominic Statham's letter in the recent *J. Creation*.<sup>1</sup> The reason being that I think Milt Marcy has correctly captured something of Lyell's subterfuge, even if the quote given by Marcy is part of Lyell's historical sketch. I have recently written about Lyell, and his relationship with Darwin and others, and published this across several chapters in my book *Cracking the Darwin Code*. It is evident that Lyell's public statements have been at odds with his private thoughts and actions throughout much of his academic life (and others, such as Malcolm Bowden in *The Rise of the Evolutionary Fraud*, have pointed this out). It is true that Lyell appeared to reject progressive evolution in public statements prior to Darwin's publication of *Origins*,<sup>2</sup> but that is not the whole story. Lyell befriended Darwin when he returned from his *Beagle* voyage and, as Darwin commented, "Lyell entered in the *most* good natured manner, and almost without being asked, into my plans."<sup>3</sup> Lyell was one of only two people who knew of Darwin's secret notebooks that formed the basis of *Origins*, and encouraged him to write.

As well as supporting Darwin's work behind the scenes, Lyell was also secretly working to undermine the Anglican clergy, especially through involvement in geological science. Grinnell wonders why the Geological Society of London was so successful when other specialist societies failed for lack of interest, and notes that it was full of lawyers, doctors, and politicians. This interest may have been for the purpose of undermining the political establishment with its monarchical theory of government. The Tory Anglicans were influential in society and government and upheld the divinely appointed monarch and the scriptural foundation of law.

Attacking Scripture, Flood geology and the design argument weakened their position, as Grinnell, for instance, points out.<sup>4</sup>

Lyell's own letters reveal that he was working to 'free the sciences from Moses' through a secretive 20–30-year plan. This idea stems from Voltaire's methodology of a slow and silent attack against Christianity, which Lyell draws attention to. Lyell in fact followed Voltaire, perceiving the effective way that Christianity was undermined prior to revolution in France. On the 14 June 1830 Lyell wrote the following:

"I am sure you may get into Q.R. [Quarterly Review] what will free the science from Moses ... . If you don't triumph over them, but compliment the liberality and candour of the present age, the bishops and enlightened saints will join us in despising both the ancient and modern physico-theologians. It is just the time to strike, so rejoice that, sinner as you are, the Q.R. is open to you. If I have said more than some will like, yet I give you my word that full half of my history and comments was cut out, and even many facts ... it was anticipating twenty or thirty years of the march of honest feeling to declare it undisguisedly. I conceived the idea five or six years ago that if ever the mosaic geology could be set down without giving offense, it would be in an historic sketch."<sup>5</sup>

And when we turn to look at Darwin's letters we see that he was aware of, and was sympathetic to, Lyell's long-term plan. As Darwin admits, this was based upon Voltaire's maxim—that the best attack against Christianity was the slow and silent attack:

"... Lyell is most firmly convinced that he has shaken the faith in the Deluge far more efficiently by never having said a word against the Bible, than if he had acted otherwise ... . I have lately read Morley's *Life of Voltaire* and he insists strongly that direct attacks

on Christianity ... produce little permanent effect: real good seems only to follow the slow and silent attacks."<sup>6</sup>

"... yet it appears to me ... that direct arguments against Christianity and theism produce hardly any effects on the public, and freedom of thought is best provided by the gradual illumination of men's minds, which follow from the advance of science."<sup>7</sup>

When we look at the writing of Darwin and Lyell we may note that they admitted in private that they were promoting a cause through subterfuge. Dominic has of course previously commented along similar lines in a CMI article.<sup>8</sup> The cause was an attack upon the Anglican-Monarchical establishment with its commitment to the Mosaic basis of law, and to do that they sought to undermine Scripture and the doctrines of the church. They used a methodology first outlined by Voltaire as a slow and silent attack on Christianity.

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### References

1. Statham, D., Letter: The emperors who had no clothes. *J. Creation* 28(3):49, 2014.
2. Probably because leading old earth geologists at the time, such as Dean William Buckland, could point out that the geological record presented evidence of change but not progress (as it still does). The trilobites, for instance, had the most complex eye structure, with 400 compound lenses.
3. Keynes, R., *Fossils, Finches and Fuegians: Charles Darwin's Adventures and Discoveries on the Beagle 1832–1836*, Harper Collins, London, p. 379, 2002.
4. Grinnell, G., The origins of modern geological theory, *Kronos* 1(4):68–76, 1976.
5. Lyell, K., *Life, Letters and Journals of Sir Charles Lyell*, John Murray, London pp. 268–271, 1881.
6. Himmelfarb, G., Letter from Charles Darwin to George Darwin, his son, in 1873; in: *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, Chatto and Windus, London, p. 320, 1958.
7. Herbert, S., Letter from Charles Darwin to Edward Aveling, Karl Marx's son in law around 1880; in: *The Place of Man in the Development of Darwin's Theory of Transmutation: Part II, J. History of Biology* 10(2):161, 1977; quoted in: Bowden, M., *The Rise of the Evolutionary Fraud*, Sovereign Publications, Bromley, Kent, p. 98, 1982.
8. Statham, D., *Darwin, Lyell and Origin of Species*, 5 November 2009, creation.com/darwin-and-lyell.