

Pritchard, Charles to Darwin, C. R.

8 Oct 1866

Transcription

Freshwater

1866 Oct 8.

Dear M^r Darwin,

As a matter of dutiful courtesy to you I take the liberty of sending you a copy of a Sermon lately preached before the British Assocⁿ at Nottingham.^{f1} In the *Appendix Note A*. I have stated certain reasons why I disagree with your (apparent) view of the gradual genesis of the Human Eye by Natural Selection.

^{f2} You will I am sure as gladly accord to the views held as a Mathⁿ or Astron^f—as I respectfully do to you as a great Naturalist & I trust you will for once at all events see that an Orthodox Clergyman can write & speak of a view which he does not accept, as a gentleman ought.

I grieve to say my eloquent colleague D. Moore indulges in railery where he ought either to have been silent or have given *reason* for outspeech.^{f3}

Should you read my preface you will see what is the spirit in which I think seekers after truth ought to meet each other.^{f4}

I rejoice greatly to hear of the well being of your boys,^{f5} & am dear Sir | very Sincerely yrs | C. Pritchard

Footnotes

^{f1}

The reference is to the published version of Pritchard's sermon (C. Pritchard 1866) given in response to William Robert Grove's presidential address at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Nottingham (W. R. Grove 1866). Grove's address supported the idea of the transmutation of species. CD's annotated copy of the sermon is in the Darwin Pamphlet Collection--CUL.

^{f2}

Pritchard opposed the view that the development of the human eye could be explained by the operation of natural selection over several millions of years (see however, letter to Charles Pritchard, 12 October [1866] and n. 3). His chief objection, based on William Thomson's calculations of the age of the earth, was that there was not

enough time for the changes CD described to have occurred (see W. Thomson 1862a and 1862b; for more on the controversy about the age of the earth, see Burchfield 1990).

[f3](#)

Pritchard alludes to the disparaging remarks made by Daniel Moore about Grove's presidential address and Darwinian theory in the introduction to his sermon preached at Nottingham on the occasion of the British Association meeting (see D. Moore 1866, pp. v--vi).

[f4](#)

In the preface to his sermon, Pritchard argued that there should be no conflict between faith and scientific inquiry, since each new fact would be a new illustration of divine truth. He was critical of 'suspicious timidity regarding science and scientific men' and of ignorant attacks on the supposed tendencies of science made by some in religious circles (C. Pritchard 1866, pp. vii--viii).

[f5](#)

Until 1862, Pritchard had been headmaster of Clapham Grammar School, where CD's sons George, Francis, and Leonard were pupils (*DNB*).