

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1 — Evidence of Creation?</b> .....	7
Where to Begin? .....	7
Tools for Inquiry: Logic and Observation .....	16
The Origin of Life: DNA and Protein .....	20
Comparative Similarities: Homology .....	43
Embryonic Development.. .....	54
Adaptation and Ecology: The Marvelous Fit of Organisms to Their Environments.....	63
Think About It! .....	68
<b>Chapter 2 — Darwin and Biologic Change</b> .....	75
Design without a Designer .....	75
Natural Selection .....	76
Change, Yes; Evolution, No .....	80
Natural Selection, Yes; Evolution, No.....	84
Mutation, Yes; Evolution, No .....	108
Variation, Yes; Evolution, No .....	126
Speciation, Yes; Evolution, No .....	133
Mutation-Selection in Biblical Perspective .....	138
<b>Chapter 3 — The Fossil Evidence</b> .....	149
Introduction .....	149
I. WHAT KINDS? .....	153
Invertebrates: Animals Without Backbones .....	154
Fossil Plants .....	163
Vertebrates: Animals With Backbones .....	166
Human Beings .....	174
Summary: Fossil Kinds .....	186
II. HOW FAST? .....	191
The Grand Canyon .....	213
<b>Index</b> .....	236

## Chapter I

# *Evidence of Creation?*

### WHERE TO BEGIN?

“Evolution’s just a theory. We don’t have to believe it, do we?” Every year at least one of my students would bring up the “evolution’s just a theory” argument, but I was ready. Feeling my heart starting to race, I would respond enthusiastically, “Oh, no. Evolution’s a fact, perhaps the best established fact in all of science. It’s the cornerstone of modern biology, and the basis for all of our thinking about the origin, meaning, and destiny of life!”

“It’s easy to prove evolution,” I’d say. “Just imagine you’re on a cruise around the world (all expenses paid!) with a young man named Charles Darwin.” Darwin had received college training in theology, but didn’t really care for Bible study. He tried medical school, but didn’t do well. He did enjoy nature study, and was an avid beetle collector. Both his interest in nature and his birth into a wealthy family helped make it possible for young Charles to travel as ship’s naturalist aboard the HMS *Beagle* on its five-year circumnavigation of the globe, 1831–1836 (not bad work, if you can get it!).



Sailing through the Atlantic and around South America, Darwin arrived at the now-famous Galapagos Islands, on the equator about 600 miles (960 km) west of Ecuador. While there he saw sea turtles hatch out of the eggs that had been laid in beach sand above high tide. As they scrambled toward the sea, most of the hatchlings were gobbled up by predators. Perhaps only three in a hundred of the tiny turtles made it to saltwater, and perhaps two of those were eaten up by predators beneath the waves! Maybe only one in a hundred of the turtle hatchlings survived to grow and perpetuate the species.

This cruel, wasteful, and inefficient struggle for survival made a powerful impression on young Darwin. He found it increasingly difficult to reconcile his scientific observations of deadly struggle with biblical teachings about an all-powerful, all-loving God.

On the positive side, the young man who grew up in England had been astounded by the astonishing variety and beauty of life forms he'd seen where the *Beagle* stopped for study of tropical rain forests. On the Galapagos, his attention was drawn to a fascinating group of small birds now called Darwin's finches. Some with big beaks crushed seeds to eat; some with small beaks ate insects; one variety even used spines or thorns from plants to pry insects out of their burrows in bark.

Two dozen years after his fantastic voyage, an older Darwin made his observations of variety and struggle on the Galapagos Islands the basis of an evolutionary theory that shook the world. Some have called Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) second only to the Bible in its influence on human history; others would put it first.

Despite the profound impact of Darwinian evolution, his theory is based, simply and convincingly I'd tell my classes, on two irrefutable observations leading to one inescapable conclusion. First, living things exist in incredible variety, and each new generation expresses a wide range of traits. Second, all living things experience an intense struggle for existence, and only a few of each generation survive to reproduce and pass on their





traits. Since there is variation and only some in each generation survive, the obvious and unmistakable conclusion is that some varieties are more likely to survive than others: **survival of the fittest!** In short form:

1. hereditary variation
- +2. struggle for survival
- =3. survival of the fittest

As I told my students, "Evolution is a fact; we see it going on around us every day. Does anyone doubt variation? Just look around the room, think of your parents and grandparents, or picture the many breeds of dogs, cats, horses, roses, oranges, etc. Does anyone doubt there's a struggle for survival? Think about lions pouncing on zebras, cats chasing mice, or kudzu vines destroying a forest (or getting out of bed Monday mornings). Add it up for yourself: nature 'selects' some varieties for survival rather than others. This **natural selection** of the fittest leads to evolutionary progress over time."

There is a price for this progress, however. Natural selection is based on a **struggle** to the **death**, what Darwin called the "**war of nature.**" *Hereditary variability can improve only if large numbers of the less fit die in each generation.* The horrific struggle and death Darwin saw in the Galapagos had caused him to begin doubting the existence of a loving God. But, in a complete about-face, Darwin came to see death in one generation as opening doors of opportunity for the next. *What had been ascribed to the creative power of God, Darwin credited instead to the creative power of struggle and death.* In concluding the book that changed the world's world view, Darwin wrote:

Thus, from the war of nature  
from famine and death,  
the production of higher animals  
directly follows.



## What happens when an evolutionary biologist is overwhelmed with scientific evidences of God's plan in nature?

*After three years* of trying to "prove evolution" to skeptical professors in his science department, Gary Parker finally realized that the scientific evidence we see in God's world agrees with what we read in God's Word.

In *Creation Facts of Life*, Dr. Parker respectfully describes the evidences he once used to "preach" evolution--but then he explains how the "rest of the evidence" points away from evolution and toward a perfect world created by God, ruined by man, restored to new life in Christ! In easy-to-follow conversational style, Dr. Parker discusses:

- DNA and genetics
- Life before birth
- Mutations
- Adaptations
- Natural Selection
- Fossils
- The Geologic Column
- The Grand Canyon



DR. GARY PARKER earned his doctorate in biology, with a cognate in geology (paleontology). He has earned several academic awards, including election to the national university scholastic honorary society Phi Beta Kappa, and a Science Faculty Fellowship from the National Science Foundation.

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