

Darrow, on the witness stand at the Scopes Trial. This compromise, which is widespread today among evangelicals, earned him no sympathy, however, from either Darrow or the liberal press. The very fact that he believed in God and the Bible was sufficient, in their view, to subject him to ridicule.

Nevertheless, the points made in his Digest article, and in the much longer declamation he had prepared (but was maneuvered out of giving by Darrow and the trial judge) for his trial summary, constitute a strong case against evolution even today. Acts & Facts readers should find it interesting and illuminative.

For Further Reading

The Last Message of William Jennings Bryan (Dayton, Tennessee: Bryan College, 1975), 32 pp.

"Their Stage Drew all the World: A New Look at the Scopes Trial," by R.M. Cornelius, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* (Vol. XL, Summer 1981), pp. 129-143

...If you call out for Insight...

No. 213
November 1991

You will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.
Based on Proverbs 2:3-5

Mr. Bryan on Evolution

by William Jennings Bryan

"He being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). The "Great Commoner," William Jennings Bryan, died over 65 years ago, but he was undoubtedly the most widely known creationist of his generation. The following article, first published in August 1925 soon after the famous Scopes Trial, was written by him shortly before his death, and we believe it should still be read today.

Are those who reject evolution as an unproved hypothesis unreasonable in refusing to accept, as conclusive, the evidence offered by evolutionists in support of a proposition that links every living thing in blood relationship to every other living thing--the rose to the onion, the eagle to the mosquito, the mockingbird to the rattlesnake, the royal palm to the scrub oak, and man to all? Surely, so astounding a proposition should be supported by facts before it becomes binding upon the judgment of a rational being.

It is not unusual for evolutionists to declare that their hypothesis is as clearly established as the law of gravitation or the roundness of the earth. Yet anyone can prove that anything heavier than air, when thrown up into the air, will fall to the ground; anyone can demonstrate the roundness of the earth by traveling around it.

But how about the doctrine that all of the species (Darwin estimated the number at from two to three million--the lowest estimate is one million, about a half million of which have been tabulated) by the operation of interior, resident forces came by slow and gradual development from one or a few germs of life, which appeared on this planet millions of years ago--the estimates varying according to the vigor of the guesser's imagination and the number of ciphers he has left in his basket? Can that proposition be demonstrated by every one like the law of gravitation or the roundness of the earth? On the contrary, no one has ever been able to trace one single species to another. Darwin admitted that no species had ever been traced to another, but he thought his hypothesis should be accepted even though the "missing links" had not been found. He did not say link, as some seem to think, but links. If there is such a thing as evolution, it is not just one link--the link between man and the lower forms of life--that is missing, but all the millions of links between millions of species. Our case is even stronger; it has been pointed out that evolution, if there is such a force, would act so slowly that there would be an infinite number of links between

Reproduced with permission from:

INSTITUTE
for CREATION
RESEARCH

1806 Royal Lane • Dallas, Texas 75229
800.628.7640 • www.icr.org

Distributed by:

Creation &
Earth
History Museum



10946 Woodside Ave. North • Santee, CA 92071
619.599.1104 • www.creationsdm.org

view article online at: <http://www.icr.org/article/mr-bryan-evolution>

each two species, or a million times a million links in all, every one of which is missing.

Thomas Huxley also asserted that no species had ever been traced to another; and, while a friend of Darwin, declared that until some species could be traced to another, Darwin's hypothesis did not rise to the dignity of a theory. Prof. William Bateson, a London biologist, prominent enough to be invited to cross the Atlantic and speak to the members of the American Society for the Advancement of Science, at Toronto two years ago last December, in discussing evolution, took up every effort that had been made to discover the origin of species, and declared that every one had failed--every one! Yet he still asserted faith in evolution, showing how much easier it is for some scientists to have faith along their own line of work than along religious lines.

Why should we believe that all species come one from another when no evidence has yet been found to prove that any species came from another? If evolution were true, every square foot of the earth's surface would teem with conclusive proof of change. The entire absence of proof is the strongest possible proof that evolution is a myth.

But those who reject evolution have another proof. Chemistry refutes all the claims of the evolutionists, and proves that there is no pushing power to be found anywhere in nature--no progressive force at work in the earth--no eternal urge lifting matter or life from any plane to a higher one. Chemistry has failed to find any trace of force active enough to raise life, step by step up, along the lines of the family tree imagined by Darwin, from "A group of marine animals, resembling the larvae of existing ascidians" to "Man, the wonder and glory of the universe."

On the contrary, the only active force discovered on the planet as pointed out by Edwin Slosson, is deterioration, decay, death. All the formulae of chemistry are exact and permanent. They leave no room for the guesses upon which evolutionists build other guesses, ad infinitum. Take water, for instance; it must have been on earth before any living thing appeared, because it is the daily need of every living thing. And it has been H₂O from the beginning. Every one of the millions of changes of species imagined by the evolutionists have taken place--if they have taken place at all--since water came upon the earth. But water has not changed; neither has anything else ever changed, so far as nature has revealed her processes to man.

When a few bones and a piece of skull are fashioned into a supposed likeness of a prehistoric animal, described as an ape-man, the evolutionists fall down before it and worship it, although it contains a smaller percentage of fact than the one-half percent alcohol permitted in a legal beverage.... Someone searching for fossils in a sand hill in Nebraska came upon a lonely tooth. The body of the animal had disappeared; not even a jaw bone survived. Professor Osborn summoned a few congenial spirits, nearly as credulous as himself, and they held a post mortem examination on this insignificant tooth. After due deliberation, they announced that the tooth was the long-looked-for missing link which the world awaited.

Give science a fact and it is invincible. But no one can guess more wildly than a scientist, when he has no compass but his imagination, and no purpose but to get away from God. Darwin uses the phrase "we may well suppose" 800 times and wins for himself a high place among the unconscious humorists by his efforts to explain things that are not true. For instance, he assumed that man has a brain superior to

woman's brain, and tried to explain it on the theory that our ancestors were brutes and that the males, fighting for female mates, increased their brain power. He also assumed that our ancestors were hairy animals, and tried to explain the disappearance of the hair on the theory that the females selected their companions and, because of a universal preference, selected the least hairy and thus, in the course of ages, bred the hair off. The two explanations would be funny enough, even if each did not make the other impossible--the two sexes could not do the selecting at the same time.

Evolutionists also explain to us that light, beating on the skin, brought out the eye, although the explanation does not tell us why the light waves did not continue to beat until they brought out eyes all over the body. They also tell us that the leg is a development from a wart that accidentally appeared on the belly of a legless animal; and that we dream of falling because our ancestors fell out of trees 50,000 years ago.

It is a calamity that highly educated men should while away their time in idle speculation instead of devoting themselves to the serious problems that demand solution.

Editor's Addendum

The foregoing article was first published in The Reader's Digest in August 1925 (Vol. 4, No. 40), less than three years after the Digest first began publication. At that time, the magazine was not as strongly committed to evolutionism as it is today (the editors have adamantly refused to publish creationist articles in recent years).

The article is of particular interest as a brief summary of some of the anti-evolution arguments of 65 years ago--arguments that, for the most part, are as cogent today as they were then.

It is interesting to note Mr. Bryan's sarcastic critique of the famous tooth which Henry Fairfield Osborn, Director of the American Museum of Natural History, had publicized far and wide as the ancient "Nebraska Man." Mr. Bryan died shortly before the discovery of a more complete skeleton of the creature, revealing it to have been not an ape-man (nor an ape, nor a man!) but an extinct pig!

Mr. Bryan also noted the significance of the universal law of deterioration. Modern creationists frequently use this same cogent evidence, although it is more accurately known as the law of entropy.

William Jennings Bryan, of course, was the most famous creationist of his day. Although he was not a scientist, his political eminence and oratorical ability impelled him into that role. He was born in 1860, so was 65 at the time of the Scopes Trial. He had been the Democratic candidate for president in 1896, 1900, and 1908, but was defeated each time, although known as one of the finest public speakers who ever lived. He was called "The Great Commoner." He served as Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson from 1912 to 1915.

Spiritually, he was a Presbyterian, and became an opponent of evolution after realizing the great war (World War I) was a direct outgrowth of evolutionary teaching in Germany, and that evolutionary teaching in American public schools and colleges was contributing significantly to the decline of morals and Christianity in general.

On the other hand, he was not a young-earth creationist, even advocating progressive creationism while being questioned by the ACLU attorney, Clarence