

Science vs. Evolution

(Abstract of address delivered by William Jennings Bryan, at Charleston, West Virginia, before the State Legislature, April, 13, 1923.)

Mr. President and Members of the Legislature:

I profoundly appreciate the honor you do me in inviting me to address you. I feel the more favored because I am permitted to speak to you on one of the most important subjects which any legislative body can consider—namely, education.

We live for the future more than for the present. Each generation is indebted beyond calculation to the generations that have preceded it and must discharge this obligation by rendering a service to the generations that follow. I gladly accepted your invitation and come to you with a message which I feel it my duty to deliver.

I am an enthusiast on the subject of education and would like to see every child born into the world given an opportunity for its fullest intellectual development. Children are a part of God's plan; they come into the world without their own volition, and every child has as much right to all the advantages which life can give as has your child or my child.

But the mind is a mental machine and needs a heart to direct it. If the heart goes wrong, the mind goes with it. The mind plans as willingly for the commission of crime as for the benefit of society. Education, if turned to evil, is worse than useless to the one who possesses it and may be very harmful to the public that pays for it. Religion in the heart is just as important, therefore, as training for the mind; more important, since "out of the heart" (not out of the head) "are the issues of life."

It is my purpose to show you how religious faith and Christian ideals are being undermined by teachers who believe that man is a descendant from the brutes and who, in our public schools and colleges, are substituting the Darwinian hypothesis for the Bible account of man's creation.

First, let me call attention to the difference between institutions and individuals. There is a difference between the ministry and the minister. The ministry is the highest of callings, but ministers vary all the way from the courageous and saintly servants of God down to the preacher who disgraces his calling.

There is a difference between public service and the public servant. Government is the first necessity of society, but officials vary from the patriotic statesman to the corrupt politician.

And there is a difference between law and the lawyer. The law is the greatest of all the professions, but the lawyers vary from the revered jurist to the despised pettifogger.

There is also a difference between the medical profession and the practicing physician. Medicine is the most popular of the professions, but doctors vary from the benefactors of the race who discover remedies for dread diseases to the quack and the impostor.

And there is a difference between banking and bankers. Banking is one of the most respectable of the lines of business, but bankers vary from the trusted financier to the embezzler who gambles on the market with the depositors' money.

So, likewise, there is a difference between science and the scientist. Science is one of the noblest of the departments of thought and has been of incalculable value to mankind; but scientists vary from the modest Newton, who felt that he had gathered but a few pebbles from the shore of the ocean of truth, down to the egotist who invites a comparison once used on the frontier—"the Lord's overcoat would not make him a vest."

A speaker, described by a Helena (Montana) paper as "a well-known scientist," was quoted as saying recently in a Presbyterian church there: "Science, in bringing to life the now generally admitted fact that this is a world governed throughout by law, has presented the most powerful motive to man for goodness which has ever been urged upon him. MORE POWERFUL, EVEN, THAN ANY JESUS FOUND." It is not more sacrilegious to point out the errors of a mistaken scientist than to criticize the faults of a minister, government official, lawyer, physician, or banker.

The scientist must not be elevated above the minister; the former deals with the physical world, while the minister deals with things that are spiritual and eternal. It is desirable that the student should study the sciences taught in the schools, but it is more than desirable—it is nec-

essary—that he shall also understand the science of HOW TO LIVE. If it were necessary to choose between the two, it is more important that he should know the Rock of Ages than the age of rocks.

Religion has no quarrel with science, and can not have, because real science is "classified knowledge." Nothing, therefore, can be scientific that is not true. All truth is of God, whether found in the book of nature or in the Book of Books; but guesses are not science; hypotheses are not truths.

There is a wide difference of opinion as to what evolution really means. Most of those who declare that they favor it think it means growth, like the growth of the chicken from the egg; or development FROM WITHOUT, like the improvement of the automobile. They are mistaken. "Evolution" is the word used by scientists to describe the hypothesis which LINKS ALL LIFE TOGETHER AND ASSUMES THAT ALL SPECIES ARE DEVELOPED FROM ONE OR A FEW GERMS OF LIFE BY THE OPERATION OF RESIDENT FORCES WORKING FROM WITHIN.

The Bible condemns evolution, theistic evolution as well as materialistic evolution, if we can trust the judgment of Christians as to what the Bible means. Not one in ten of those who accept the Bible as the Word of God have ever believed in the evolutionary hypothesis as applied to man. Unless there is some rule by which a small fraction can compel the substitution of their views for the views entertained by the masses, evolution must stand condemned as contrary to the revealed will of God.

But my purpose at this time is to show that science, as well as the Bible, condemns evolution. The evolutionists insist that the interpretation of the Bible should be determined by reason and not by popular vote of the Christians. For the sake of this argument, I will employ their logic and insist that science shall be interpreted by reason and not by popular vote of the scientists. If science is classified knowledge, then we are justified in rejecting as unscientific anything which is not established as true. On this ground, evolution should be rejected.

The hypothesis has its place, whether it requires four syllables to express it or is expressed in one syllable—by the word "guess." But the hypothesis is nothing more than a hypothesis until it is proven true. Huxley said of Darwinism: "If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, Mr. Darwin's view steps out of the ranks of hypothesis into that of theories; but so long as the evidence adduced falls short of enforcing that affirmative, so long, to our minds, the new doctrine must be content to remain among the former . . . still an hypothesis, and not a theory of species."

The water witch uses the hypothesis; he guesses that the water can be found in a certain place, and bores a hole to prove it; but the hole is not a well until he finds water. The prospector uses the hypothesis; he guesses that there is ore at a certain point on a mountain side, and digs a pit to prove it; but the pit is not a mine until he finds the precious metals.

So with the lawyer; he tries his case upon an hypothesis; but the decisions of the court show that at least half of these hypotheses are wrong. A judge sometimes says to a young lawyer: "That is a good speech, and I will remember it if we ever have a case that fits it." His hypothesis was wrong. The doctor, the banker, and the business man are continually putting forth hypotheses, but they do not always work out successfully.

So with the scientist. It is a part of his business—guessing is his middle name. He formulates an hypothesis and then tries to prove it; but most of the hypotheses advanced by scientists in the name of science have been abandoned as erroneous. Unproven hypotheses may serve as playthings for the imaginative, but they are of no practical value until they are shown to be true.

Take evolution, for instance. It did not originate with Darwin nor with his grandfather. People have been guessing as to the origin of man as far back as there have been means of recording guesses. There is enough physical similarity between man and the brutes about him—although they are separated by infinite distance—to suggest to some ancients the POSSIBILITY of a common ancestry. The Greeks speculated on this, as did also the Romans. No one is able to award the booby prize for such wild guessing, because it is impossible to ascertain with certainty who first inquired whether he might be a blood relative of the brutes. Darwin's connection with this hypothesis is due not to origination of the idea,

but to the reasons which he advanced in support of the hypothesis.

Darwin imagined that species came by slow and gradual change, one from another, and suggested two so-called laws or explanations which he deemed sufficient to account for the origin of and change in species. These two laws or explanations were defined as "sexual selection" and "natural selection." Whatever he could not explain by one, he tried to explain by the other. Sexual selection has been laughed out of the classroom, and natural selection is being discredited as its insufficiency is being more and more disclosed. John Burrows, the great naturalist, announced his dissent from this in an article published just before his death.

In discussing evolution as applied to man, I have used "evolution" and "Darwinism" as synonymous terms, because DARWIN IS THE ONLY SCIENTIST WHO HAS EVER OUTLINED A FAMILY TREE EXTENDING FROM THE LOWEST FORMS OF LIFE TO MAN AND SECURED FOR IT THE SUPPORT OF ANY CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF EVOLUTIONISTS.

It is true that most of the evolutionists now discard Darwin's family tree and reject his so-called laws or explanations, but they cling to his conclusions—without anything whatever to support them. They are, therefore, more unreasonable than Darwin.

The whole case in favor of evolution is based on physical resemblances. Those who believe in the evolutionary hypothesis reject the Mosaic account of man's creation by separate act of the Almighty and give him a jungle ancestry, but they offer only circumstantial evidence in support of their speculation.

Darwin was much impressed by the similarity in appearance between man and the simians. On pages 220 and 221, chapter vi., "Descent of Man," second edition, he says: "The Simiadae then branched off into two great stems, the New World and the Old World monkeys, and from the latter, at a remote period, Man, the wonder and glory of the universe, proceeded."

Most scientists now reject Darwin's monkey-gorilla-ape line of descent and argue that man came by some other imaginary limb of the imaginary tree to which evolutionists attempt to trace all living things. The new limb to which they are trying to attach man's ancestry has disappeared entirely; not a fragment remains. So far as they have been able to discover, between man and the imaginary tree. When they have a house cleaning and sweep out all the stuffed "ape-men" and "men-apes" that they have used in the museums to prove man's descent from the simian line, they will be wholly at a loss for missing links to connect man with the brute creation. Some contend that the dog bears greater resemblance to man than the ape, while some see in the ass circumstantial evidence of a kinship nearer than any that relates man to either the canine or the monkey lines.

The trouble with circumstantial evidence is that one FACT will overthrow any amount of it. Let us suppose, for instance, that a man is accused of murder, and that ten witnesses—or, for that matter, a hundred, a thousand, or a million—testify to resemblances. If the defendant can prove that he was not within a thousand miles of the place when the crime was committed, that one fact will outweigh all the resemblances, to which witnesses may have testified, between him and the perpetrator of the crime.

The evolutionists have attempted to prove by circumstantial evidences (resemblances) that man is descended from the brute. No one will deny that they have labored industriously. Men who would not cross the street to save a soul have traveled around the world in search of skeletons. If they find a stray tooth in a gravel pit, they hold a conclave and fashion a creature such as they suppose the possessor of the tooth to have been, and then they shout derisively at Moses. If they find a skull, or even a piece of a skull, they summon the geologists, the biologists, the anthropologists, the paleontologists, the fossilologists, the archeologists, the psychologists, and all the other experts whom they regard as authorities and hold a post-mortem examination. Sitting as a coroner's jury, they solemnly declare that the Bible account of man's creation is a lie.

All of these resemblances and all this circumstantial evidence are overthrown by ONE SINGLE, INDISPUTABLE FACT—namely, that NO SPECIES HAS EVER BEEN TRACED TO ANOTHER SPECIES. With more than a million species (Darwin estimated the number at between two and three millions) to furnish proof, if there were any proof, they have so far failed to find one instance in which they can