

The Real Issue in Darwinism

Editor, Chicago Evening Post,
Chicago, Illinois.

My dear Mr. Editor:

Your editorial on "Defenders of the Faith"—a very happy designation, by the way—is written in such a spirit of fairness that I feel sure that you will give me space enough to set forth the real issue so that your readers can the more intelligently take sides. Observation extending over a third of a century leads me to believe that much difference of opinion arises from a misunderstanding of the real issue. Definition is often all that is necessary; in fact, truth is usually self evident when it is plainly stated. Politically, the drawing of a line so that the two sides can be separated the one from the other is often the end of the conflict. It is with a view to setting forth as clearly as possible the difference between the two schools that I venture to address you.

The Bible account of man's creation was once accepted as authoritative by all Christians. Those of us who still hold to the Bible account are, therefore, in possession until we can be dislodged by those who dissent from the Bible account. According to the Bible man was created by SPECIAL ACT OF GOD—created for a purpose and as a part of the Heavenly Father's plan.

The hypothesis advanced by Darwin is in direct conflict with the Bible account. His guess—for the word "hypothesis" is merely a scientific synonym for guess—makes man a lineal descendent of lower forms of life. Darwin himself in his "Descent of Man" outlined a family tree which he thought was about two hundred millions of years old. It began with marine animals and extended up through the fish, the reptile, the birds and the beasts and ended with monkeys, apes, chimpanzees, baboons, etc. After locating "the first man" in Africa, he says, "But why speculate?" This admission covers all of his guesses; he simply speculated. WITH MILLIONS OF SPECIES OF LIFE THEY HAVE NEVER YET FOUND A SINGLE INSTANCE IN WHICH IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT ONE SPECIES CHANGED INTO ANOTHER.

Last December Professor Bateson, of London, speaking at Toronto (see January issue of "Science") told the members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science that the origin of species is still a mystery. He said that scientists had FAITH in evolution but DOUBTS about the origin of species. This is the latest word from the scientists.

Our contention is that an unsupported guess ought not to be taught to the children of the public schools when it directly attacks the Bible. We have no objection to the teaching of any TRUTH. No truth disturbs Christianity, but we do object to guesses as put forth in the name of science before those guesses are confirmed or established by facts. Notwithstanding the failure to find even a single link to connect one species with another Darwinism is taught in the schools as if it were an established fact. Books on biology and zoology purport to give a family tree connecting man with animals and these imaginary trees cannot but make an impression upon the minds of the young people.

We contend that teachers paid by taxation should not substitute guesses for the Word of God when these guesses seriously affect the philosophy of life. When Christians want to teach religion they establish and support schools for that purpose. They contribute the money necessary and employ the teachers. Why should not atheists and agnostics do the same?

According to Professor James H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, MORE THAN HALF THE PROMINENT SCIENTISTS OF THE UNITED STATES DO NOT BELIEVE IN A PERSONAL GOD OR A PERSONAL IMMORTALITY. They have a perfect right to renounce God and to reject the doctrine of immortality; more than that, they have a right to open schools for the teaching of agnosticism and atheism, but why should they desire to undermine the faith of students and why should they be permitted to do so even if they do desire it? A Darwinite in Boston contended that a teacher had a right to teach whatever he pleased. That is a queer doctrine. Any man has a right to THINK as he pleased, but, when he asks compensation from others he must expect that his teaching will be controlled by those who pay him. Otherwise a comparatively small percentage of the country would assume control of the most fundamental things in our lives and assert

the right not only to teach but to demand pay from those who object to their teaching. Such a contention is, of course, absurd. School boards direct the instructors and the people direct the school boards.

The present agitation is merely an awakening of the Christian people to a knowledge of what is going on—not in all of our schools but in MANY of them. Not all of our teachers but many of them are undermining the faith of students and they are not willing that the Bible shall be defended in the presence of their students. For instance, the President of one great university became very angry because I presented the Bible side of Darwinism to the students of that university. In a public interview, given out next day, he declared that I was doing the students great harm when I tried to link their faith with what he called "discarded scientific theories." He said that my speech was of the kind that the parents and grand parents of the students used to listen to. Can Christians feel unconcerned when the president of a university ridicules the religious beliefs of the parents and grand parents of his students? Another university president in a speech on religion told his students that they should throw away their religion if they could not reconcile it with the teaching of biology, psychology, etc. What right has a professor, paid by the people, to advise his students to accept the guesses of biologists and physiologists in preference to Word of God?

Evolution, so far as it is applied to man, is nothing more than a GUESS and ought not to be taught as if it were a fact. It ought not to be taught even as a guess unless the teacher explains to his pupils that it is an unsupported guess. But why should a mere guess, without a fact in the universe to support it, be taught at all, when the effect of that teaching is to weaken faith in God and to undermine faith in the Bible as the Word of God?

Darwin brought an unanswerable indictment against his own hypothesis when, at the close of his life, he declared himself an AGNOSTIC. When he was a young man he believed in God; at the end of life he declared the beginning of all things to be a mystery insoluble by us. When he was a young man he believed in a future life; at the close of his life he said that the question must be decided by each individual for himself on uncertain vague probabilities. When he was a young man he believed that the Bible was the Word of God. He says that he was called orthodox and laughed at by some of the officers of the Beadle for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on a point of morals. At the end of his life he said that he did not believe THERE HAD EVER BEEN ANY REVELATIONS, which of course, excludes Christ as well as the Bible. He even asked whether a mind developed, as he believed man's mind was, from the mind of the lowest animal, could be trusted when it dealt with God and immortality. He brought man down to the level of the brute and then judged him by brute standards.

Do we deserve to be called fanatic when we insist that a teacher in the public schools should not impair faith in God? We have "In God We Trust" on our coins. Why should a teacher lead a child to laugh at such an inscription? When the witness takes an oath in court he appeals to God to help him to be truthful. Why should teachers be permitted to weaken faith in the oaths that we administer? The President takes his oath before an open Bible—why should a teacher, paid by taxation, be permitted to make fun of the Bible?

Let your people understand the real issue, Mr. Editor, and there will be only one side to this question. The intolerance is not on the side of the more than ninety per cent of the people who are still Defenders of the Faith; the intolerance is on the side of a small percentage who exaggerate the mind's part and belittle the heart, out of which "are the issues of life."

It was necessary to take the management of political parties out of the hands of the bosses and put the authority in the hands of the voters. If that was wise, why not take public instruction out of the hands of the atheists and skeptics and put it into the hands of the taxpayers? The Christians are not asking that religion be taught in our public schools; they are protesting against the teaching of IRRELIGION in the public schools. They are not asking that any man shall surrender his opinion or violate his conscience; they are only asking that teachers who are atheists and agnostics shall either obey their employers or else build schools of their own for the spread of unbelief. If we are to have a neutrality in religion in our schools it must be a real neutrality, not a sham neutrality that ties the hands

of Christians and turns education over to the members of the "Ancient and Honorable Order of Apes." Those who look to the jungles for their ancestry can teach this doctrine to their own children if they wish but they ought not to be allowed to make monkeys out of all the children.

Very truly yours,

W. J. BRYAN.

MR. BRYAN IN KENTUCKY

Following is a news report of Mr. Bryan's speech before the Kentucky legislature Jan. 19, 1922. Senator Frank E. Daugherty introduced him as follows:

"Every liberty loving nation of the earth, must, to make itself safe and preserve its highest ideals, have among its citizenship, men who are willing to sacrifice all in order to preserve and hold sacred these God given rights to his fellow-citizens. He must be able to foresee and boldly proclaim that which is best, and give warning of those things that are hurtful and cause a nation's downfall and decay. He must have courage, and with it an honest heart that goes out, feels and acts for humanity."

It is that type of a man of which I have just spoken that I have the honor to present to my fellow Kentuckians, to whom he is no stranger, and whom we love to honor: Honorable William Jennings Bryan an ideal American Citizen."

BRYAN GIVEN APPLAUSE

(By Robert E. Dundon, In Lexington Herald.)
Frankfort, Ky., Jan. 19.—William Jennings Bryan addressed the general assembly in joint session today, taking occasion to deliver an attack on any state-supported university which sanctions or approves the teaching of the Darwinian theory of the origin of species. Mr. Bryan, who was introduced by Senator Frank E. Daugherty of Bardstown, said that his subject would be divided into two topics, the first on state trade commissions, which he is advocating in every state, the other, what he called the "teaching of irreligion in our public schools and universities."

Starting with the former, he said that the farming class of the entire country has been suffering from acute deflation, and that the consumers also have been hard hit by industrial depression. He said that the farmers were demanding relief, and that the so-called "agricultural bloc" at Washington was only a concrete expression of their efforts to get clear of disaster.

"They have found it necessary to employ coercion on congress," he added. "These bills have been passed, two through both houses, to become laws, and another now awaiting action of one house after passing the other, all designed to relieve the condition of the farming class."

Mr. Bryan said that he is advocating State Trade Commissions, on the same plan as the Federal Trade Commission, and with power from the state to inquire into the action of merchants in holding up prices. He said that the commissions should have the power to go into offices and look at the books, and see that the percentage on turn-over is not too great. It was his hope that the present legislature should enact some such law at the 1922 session of the general assembly.

In speaking on the orthodoxy of the universities, Mr. Bryan was very emphatic in his denunciation of the teaching of Darwinism. He was flanked by a number of books, one of which he said was a text book on zoology, from which he read the theory as to the primates indicating that man is descended from apes.

Attacking the textbook, Mr. Bryan endeavored to show that there is no real proof for the evolution hypothesis, and claimed that the teaching of such ideas would result in an undermining of the belief of youth in the Christian religion.

He cited a number of instances to prove his contention. His remarks were enlivened by several humorous references.

Speaking of his own ancestors, Mr. Bryan said that he didn't know anything about them further back than his great-grandparents, but that as one of his great-grandparents was from Kentucky, he was sure that they were all right.

In conclusion, Mr. Bryan declared that he wants a state law passed to bar the teaching of Darwinism in any institution supported by state funds. He said that if agnostics or atheists or unbelievers of any sort wish to teach their belief, they should have the right to establish their own schools as Christians do, but should not be permitted to teach them in an institution maintained by public taxation.

Mr. Bryan's remarks were frequently applauded by a considerable portion of both the senators and representatives.