

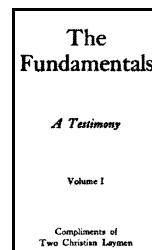
# Evolution and Creation in Historical Perspective

Introduction: *The Lesson of History*

## I. From John Scopes to Michael Ruse

### Background:

- 1859 - Darwin published, *The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection.*
- 1871 - Darwin published, *The Descent of Man.*
- 1878 - Julius Wellhausen, a German O.T. professor, published his two volume *The History of Israel* which explained the evolution of Israel's religion from polytheism to monotheism. He replaced Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch with the JEDP documentary hypothesis. This attack on the integrity of the Bible spread from the European seminaries to American seminaries.
- 1890s- A decade of heresy trials were held in the major denominational seminaries in an effort to dislodge faculty who denied the integrity of the Bible. The trials were somewhat successful at first but died out by the turn of the century—theological liberalism had gained a sure foothold in most seminaries with the exception of Princeton.
- 1909 - A layman financed the publication and distribution of the four volume *Fundamentals* in an effort to counter the growing unbelief. The volumes contained articles by leading conservatives defending the Bible against evolution, biblical criticism and the social gospel. The five fundamentals defended were:
- [1] the verbal inerrancy of the Bible
  - [2] the deity of Jesus Christ
  - [3] the virgin birth of Jesus Christ
  - [4] the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ
  - [5] the personal return of Jesus Christ.
- 1917 - Walter Rauschenbush, a baptist minister and theology professor, published *A Theology for the Social Gospel.* He argued that sin is societal rather than individual and that the remedy is education rather than atonement. He advocated creating a Christian social order, one that did not require conversion.
- 1919 - By the end of WWI most denominations were deeply divided over these issues.



### In Summary:

Darwinian Evolution  
Biblical Criticism                      >>>    Rise of American Religious Liberalism  
Social Gospel

## Scopes Trial, 1925 (Dayton, Tennessee)

John T. Scopes was arrested and tried in Dayton for violating a Tennessee law forbidding the teaching of evolution in the classroom. The prosecuting attorney was William Jennings Bryan, the defense attorney was Clarence Darrow. Scopes conviction was later overturned. The 1960 film *"Inherit the Wind"* often used today in science, social science and history classes presents a fictionalized trial that displays a consistent pro evolution / pro Darrow bias. It lampoons biblical Christianity, often at the expense of the historical record.

Test Your Knowledge? True or False

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Dayton Board of Education initiated the law suit against Scopes.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The presiding judge harbored pro-evolution sentiments.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Darrow's defense included dozens of scientists who argued against creation.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The most dramatic part of the trial was the examination on the witness stand of Bryan, the prosecuting attorney, by Darrow, the defense attorney.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The women on the jury were sympathetic toward Scopes.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The trial concluded abruptly when the defense attorney, Clarence Darrow, admitted the guilt of his client!
7. \_\_\_\_\_ John Scopes received the maximum sentence – six months in jail.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ John Scopes, in fact, was only a substitute for the regular biology teacher. He later admitted that he had skipped the lessons on evolution.

### ***Aftermath: We Won the Skirmish, We Lost the Battle***

- 1962 (Engle vs. Vitale) - state required devotional prayers are banned from public schools.
- 1963 (Abington vs. Schempp). - state required devotional Bible reading is banned from public schools.
- 1968 (Epperson vs. Arkansas) - laws against teaching evolution are unconstitutional.
- 1980 (Stone vs. Graham) - posting the Ten Commandments in the classroom is unconstitutional.
- 1981 Act 590, the Evolution-Creation Act was passed 69-18 and signed by Frank White, governor of Arkansas.

### **Scopes II Trial, 1981-1982 (Little Rock, Arkansas)**

Act 590 "Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution Science Act" stated that these two views must be taught side by side without any reference to religious instruction.

The definitions of the two views were stated:

#### **Creation Science**

1. Sudden creation of the universe, energy and life from nothing.
2. Insufficiency of mutations and natural selection in bringing about development of all living kinds from a single organism.
3. Changes only within fixed limits of originally created kinds of plants and animals.
4. Separate ancestry for man and apes.
5. Explanation of the earth's geography by catastrophism including the occurrence of a worldwide flood.
6. A relatively recent inception of the earth and living kinds.

#### **Evolution Science**

1. Emergence by naturalistic processes of the universe from disordered matter and emergence of life from non-life.
2. Sufficiency of mutation and natural selection in bringing about the development of present living kinds from simple earlier kinds.
3. Emergence by mutation and natural selection of present living kinds for earlier kinds.
4. Emergence of man from a common ancestor with apes.

5. Explanation of the earth's geology and the evolutionary sequence by uniformitarianism.
6. Inception several billion years ago of the earth and somewhat later of life.

This approach, ironically, is consistent with the Scopes trial argument of the ACLU attorney Darrow in 1925 when he stated *"It is bigotry for public schools to teach only one theory of origins."*

Two months after the law was signed the ACLU filed suit challenging the law's constitutionality. On January 5, 1982, after a month long trial including many expert witnesses, Judge William Overton ruled that the bill was unconstitutional. A month later the Arkansas Attorney General, Steve Clark, announced that the state would not appeal the ruling. Clark said he favored the bill but felt that the bill used language too close to biblical wording and because he felt the three judge panel of appeal was biased against creation-science.

## FTE Symposium, 1992 (Dallas, Texas) & AAAS Symposium, 1993 (Boston, Massachusetts)

In 1992, the Foundation for Thought and Ethics, an evangelical organization, sponsored a symposium on the SMU campus entitled, "Darwinism: Scientific Inference or Philosophical Preference?" The primary contenders were Phillip E. Johnson, author of *Darwin on Trial* (a Creationist) and Michael Ruse (a Darwinian). Ruse, a philosophy of science professor at the U. of Guelph in Canada and the chief expert witness in the Scopes II trial a decade earlier, argued for evolution as science. Johnson, on the other hand, argued that both creation (intelligent design) and evolution rest upon philosophical assumptions which are beyond empirical proof.

The following year, Professor Ruse was asked to speak at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) symposium entitled, "The New Anti-evolution." In Ruse's presentation he recounted the Dallas meeting and the arguments of Phillip Johnson. He then stunned the pro-evolution audience with the acknowledgment that *"evolution... akin to religion, involves making certain a priori or metaphysical assumptions which at some level can not be proven empirically."*

His audience was stunned. In the question answer session that followed, Ruse assured them he was still an evolutionist but he stated bluntly, *"Folks give up, modern philosophy of science is now showing that science is just as much a religion as creation science, so frankly folks there's nothing that you could do, and if I could go back ten years to Arkansas I'd just reverse everything.... Now, whether or not – how that fits in with your laws – one has to ask the lawyers, those sort of things."*

## II Theistic Evolution – A Third Option ???

**Theistic Evolution** - Out of the tension between Science and the Bible has come a proposed alternative that seeks to blend the dominant evolutionary theory and a belief in God and the Bible.

Theistic evolution affirms that the process of evolution is guided by God to accomplish his purpose. To this, many evangelical theistic evolutionists add special intervention(s) by God at one or more crucial points:

- [1] the creation of matter in the beginning,
- [2] the creation of the simplest life form, and
- [3] the creation of man.

Otherwise, the development of the diversity of life plant and animal life is explained by current evolutionary principles (ex. random mutation, natural selection, etc.)

### Objections to Theistic Evolution:

- [1] The Bible presents God's work in creation as purposeful (displaying intelligent design) which is in contrast to evolutionary theory of randomness as the dynamic of change.

*"These statements seem inconsistent with the idea of God creating or directing or observing millions of random mutations, none of which were 'very good' in the way he intended, none of which were the kind of plants or animals he wanted to have on the earth." [Wayne Grundem, Systematic Theology, 276.]*

*"And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kind." And after three hundred eighty seven million four hundred ninety two thousand eight hundred and seventy one attempts, God finally made a mouse that worked." [ibid., 277.]*

- [2] The Bible presents God's creative word as bringing immediate response.  
*"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." (Psa. 33:6, 9)*
- [3] The Bible says God made plants and animals to reproduce according to their kind. (Gen. 1:11,24) Micro-evolution (change within a species) may be consistent with this, but not Darwinian macro-evolution (change between species).
- [4] If evangelical theistic evolutionists allow for the special creation of Adam and Eve, then why reject His intervention in the creation of other living organisms? To disallow the special creation of Adam and Eve, on the other hand, is to break with not only the Creation account in Genesis but also the Bible and evangelical theology in general,. (Ro. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49).

*"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." (Ro. 5:19)*

**Summary:**

*"Theistic Evolution is really a child of embarrassment, which calls God in at periodic intervals to help nature over the chasms that yawn at her feet. It is neither biblical a doctrine of creation, nor a consistent theory of evolution." [Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 139-40.]*