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The Bible, Darwin, and Bryan, 1922.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER, ON
"THE BIBLE, DARWIN AND BRYAN," AT THE
TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 12th,
1922, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

WRHS

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CLEVELAND

The battle that was waged some forty or fifty years ago around the theory of evolution, and waged with so much bad temper, is again being waged in the year 1922, and with equally bad temper. The descendents of those who marshaled their hosts when Mr. Darwin printed his Origin of Species in 1859, are today, in an age much more critical than that age, and somewhat more advanced, again marshaling their hosts against this menace to civilization and to religion--the doctrine of evolution.

Mr. Bryan sees in the theory of evolution the denial of the authority of the Bible, the undermining of the foundations of the true faith--atheism or agnosticism. A certain Doctor Potter, who was Mr. Bryan's henchman in Kentucky, says of the theory of evolution that it undermines all the fundamentals of Christianity; it denies the supernatural in the scheme and process of life; it finds no place for a miracle or a miracle-working God; of necessity it must deny the deity of Christ; according to the evolutionist Christ came up through the insect, reptile, fowl, bird and beast; it denies the incarnation, the Virgin birth and the resurrection; it robs man of a spiritual nature and makes him a developed beast.

That being the case, what is to be done?

Expose Darwinism? Prove by logic and science that it is

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not true? Carry on a campaign of education revealing the fallacies of the doctrine? Oh, no. Pass a law outlawing it! That is the easiest and the simplest way of doing the thing. If you can get a majority of the reverential individuals in the legislature of Kentucky to agree with you, then evolution is dead!

Well, the sad part about it all is that you cannot outlaw any truth; you cannot legislate a truth out of existence; and evolution is a truth and a fact. One need not be a scientist or well versed in book learning to realize that evolution is a fact. Darwin did not discover it; the Greeks knew it. One need but go out into the fields for fifteen minutes and look at the rocks and study the strata and the fossils imbedded in them to realize that evolution is a fact.

And one need but spend a half an hour in any museum of natural history and observe, even uncritically, the remains of the various species from the earliest reptile to the reconstructed skeleton of the Heidelberg human ancestor, to realize that this world of ours is millions of years old; that it was not created 5682 years ago; that species have developed and changed; that the present species are the descendents of the past species, ~~which are subjected to the forces about them and change,~~ and that man himself has passed through a slow and laborious process of change from an earlier, more primitive

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condition to the present.

And, furthermore, that man is changing today as well as all nature. If there is any one fact that man can base his entire thinking on, it is the fact of change in life. Nothing is more certain than change. There are no two minutes alike in the world, because the present moment is built upon the past moment and is therefore different. The slow, relentless forces of nature that turned forests into coal beds are working today. We do not observe it because the process is so slow and quiet. We observe only the sudden, dramatic, cataclysmic changes in nature--the earthquake, the volcanic eruption; but the slow changes which the elements--climate, wind, storm, waters--effect in the world, the slow process of corosion and building up, ecorosion and building up, that goes on all the time, all the time,--that, we do not see.

But it is true that the world is becoming every minute--becoming; that it is dynamic and not static. Our liturgy expresses the thought when it says: "God, who renews every day the works of creation." Creation is a thing constantly going on.

Now, these changes that are evident are either determined by law or by whim; they either follow some universal principle or they are sporadic and accidental actions of some supernatural power, who does things as

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he whims at any given moment. Now, this latter view was the Medieval view, the primitive view; the former view is the modern view, the scientific view, and the whole of science is based upon this one fundamental fact: that the world is governed by law, a law that may be ascertained and defined. Once you deny the fact of the reign of law in the universe, you may just as well shut down all your laboratories and all your schools of science, because nothing is then positive.

If you drop a stone from some eminence at one moment and it falls to the ground, and at another moment that same stone dropped from the same eminence and the same position will not fall to the ground, then you have no law of gravitation, and all your science based upon that law crumbles to the ground. If the action of the stone is controlled by whim, by chance, there can be no science.

Now, both points of view are religious points of view; and that is the thought I want to leave with you this morning. It is assumed that only he who believes that God controls by a creative force every flap of the bird's wing, and every movement of the star, that each is a distinct and separate act of creation, unrelated to any law,--I say, that only he who conceives of the world in that way is a religious man; but he who conceives of nature controlled and determined by certain fixed and

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universal and immutable laws, that he is unreligious or anti-religious, that is not true. Both may be deeply religious. It is only a question of God's method of creation, of God's technique; that's all. How God works through the universe, by law, or by chance. But neither denies the presence of God in the universe.

Now, if you accept change as a law in inanimate nature, in the inorganic world--in rocks and stones and mountains and rivers, then you must accept it also in the organic world, in the animalic world, in the world of plants and animals and man. You cannot have two different spheres of creation and two different types of existence.

If inanimate nature is the result of a creative force guided by law, if our entire solar system evolved out of some nebula through the millions and the millions of years, following some definite physical and chemical law; and if this earth of ours evolved out of some molten fragment from that same solar system, following some definite physical and chemical law, then it is true that everything on the earth, animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic--rock, mountain, beast or man, follows some definite law.

Now, it may be more difficult to find the law that controls human life than it is to find the law that controls the formation of mountains, because man seems

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to have an inner force that may be forming and changing him, while in the case of the mountains it is only an external, physical force that is changing them. But laws there are, difficult to ascertain, difficult to define, but nevertheless real. If you deny the principle of law in the universe and evolution in the realm of man, then your entire science crumbles to the ground.

What is involved, friends, is not the question whether man is descended from an ape; that is incidental; that seems to be the most troubling thing in Mr. Bryan's mind--that man is descended from a monkey. From what I have seen of men and their actions, they have not descended very far. What is involved is the entire scientific method upon which not only biology and geology are based, but our science of government--sociology. Why, every department of human thought in the last fifty or sixty years has transformed itself, revised and reinterpreted its doctrines, based upon the theory of growth and change and evolution.

Now, it is too bad, unfortunately, that what some people regard as religion comes in conflict with this theory of evolution; it is very unfortunate that some people will be compelled, as they have been compelled, because of this theory, to surrender some of their pet ideas and notions about life--those notions which, because of constant association, become so intimate and warm and

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desirable. It is too bad that some people will have to go through that process of agony which is involved in readjustment. Every readjustment is hard. That is why people hate to think. Thinking requires a readjustment of ourselves, of our habits of action and thought, to new ideas, and that requires an effort, and men naturally follow the line of least resistance; men do not want to think unless they have to.

I say, it is too bad that some people will have to go through these serious processes of readjustment. But the truth must have its way; the truth must conquer. And woe unto those men who, in this day and in this generation, would place the pitifully inadequate dam of law and prohibition and fine in the way of the on-rushing tide of truth. What the rack and exile and the autodafe and the dungeons of the Middle Ages failed to achieve, a law passed in some hinterland of thought in this state or that state will fail to achieve.

These men are sincere; and that is the rub. Mr. Bryan and his associates are very sincere, and that is what makes the proposition much more difficult, because the most difficult thing in the world is to argue with a man who is wrong and who is sincere. If he were not sincere we could say that he was just a charlatan who was trying to exploit the reactionary sentiment in this country for personal aggrandizement. But he is not; he is sincere.

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And he thinks that he is serving the ends of religion in fighting science. But he is not; he is hurting the cause of true religion; he is again confusing in the minds of men and women theology and religion--Bibology and religion; he is again confusing creed and dogma with spiritual faith; he is making, in a sense, religion by identifying it with obscurantism and Medievalism; he is making it ridiculous in the eyes of thinking men and women in the twentieth century!

The thousands that are today seeking God, a sustaining influence in their lives amidst all the confusion of the world about them, may turn in contempt from their quest when they are told that if they wish to know God they must renounce scientific truth; they must subscribe to certain dogmas and creeds, the products of human minds of primitive days; they must fill their minds, which have become disciplined by scientific training, with myths and legends and stories of serpents and angels and arks and similar things, and accept these as scientific truths, as real explanations of biological and cosmological problems.

I say that an attitude such as that upon the part of Mr. Bryan and his associates turn men and women from religion instead of turning them to religion. The day of the supreme authority of the Bible is gone. It may be a very lamentable fact, but the day of the supreme

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authority of the Bible, or of any book, or any church, in matters scientific is gone. And you cannot bring it back by legislation. Galileo may have been compelled to retract his statement that the earth does revolve around the sun, by being tortured in the Inquisition--and the church apparently was satisfied that it had compelled him to retract it--but the world, nevertheless, does move. And a law enacted here or there may, for a time, shut our schools to truth, but life does change, nevertheless, and species do evolve, nevertheless, and man does change, nevertheless.

We will go to the Bible, as we have gone in the past, for religious inspiration; we will go to the Bible for its profound and ancient wisdom concerning life and the problems of life; we will go to the Bible for its ethical grandeur; we will go to the Bible for its poetic greatness; we will go to the Bible for its marvelous diction; we will go to the Bible because of its honesty in treating of the fretted moods and the difficult problems of mortal man; we will go to the Bible for all the things that concern our spiritual life, the growth and development of our souls.

But we cannot go to the Bible for our physics and our chemistry and our biology and our geology and our medicine. The Bible was not to be a scientific text book; the Bible was not to be an historical text book.

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Every bit of scientific fact or historic fact reported in the Bible was brought in merely as a means of conveying some moral truth. Why, the entire story of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis was introduced for one purpose only--to establish the sanctity and the holiness of the Sabbath day. God created the world in six days, but He rested on the seventh. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

And the story of the flood was brought in not to tell people an interesting story, but to show the result of evil, the ruin which immorality effects in the world. These truths are eternal; they are as cogent today as they were four thousand years ago. We can with justice and without hesitation look upon these stories as myths and legends, beautiful in themselves, for myths and legends are beautiful in themselves, and seize upon the truth imbedded in them and feed our souls upon that truth.

The Italian painters of the Renaissance very often painted their Biblical characters in the garb and in the costume of fifteenth century Italy; they would put David and Saul and other Biblical characters in the dress of fifteenth century Italy. Did that in any way affect the value of their paintings? Not a bit. These men were not archaeologists; they were artists. Shakespeare's plays are full of anachronisms. Does that affect

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the glory and the greatness of Shakespeare's dramas? Why, not at all. Shakespeare was not a student of antiquities; he was a playwright; he was concerned with the struggles of the human heart and the human mind.

The Bible likewise dressed up fundamental truths in the garments of the day. It placed wonderful spiritual gems in settings borrowed from the knowledge and the learning and the science of the day; the settings may be readily discarded; the gems abide.

The Bible must stand, as it can very well stand, upon its own merit. No dogma or no creed concerning the divinity of it need prop up the greatness of the Bible, the majesty, the value of it, to men and women of today and of tomorrow. And it is a perfectly useless task in which Mr. Bryan and his associates are engaged in trying to bolster up the authority of the Bible by insisting that it is divine revelation bequeathed to man at a certain given moment; not divine revelation working through the soul of priest and prophet and sage through the ages, that same divine revelation which is even this day working through the minds and the souls of men and women, but a divine historical act of revelation at one moment at one time. And to do that he must deny the validity of scientific truth.

The authority of the Bible is based upon the inner authority, the cogency and the potency and the

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inherent grandeur and beauty of the moral and spiritual truths contained in it, and these will endure all the onslaughts of time.

As to the theory of evolution, it does not conflict with religion at all, except as some people misinterpret evolution. And religion has no reason to fear the doctrine of evolution, as it has no reason to fear any scientific truth. The orthodox Christian and the orthodox Jew may have reason to look with suspicion on the theory of evolution, and more especially the orthodox Christian; because if the fall of man from grace is not a fact--and apparently the theory of evolution maintains just the reverse, not a fall from grace and *from* perfection down, but from imperfection up.--I say, if the fall of man is not a fact, then there was no need for Christ to come and save the world.

If miracles have no validity in the science of evolution, then the miracle of the resurrection is not a fact, and these two are the essential dogmas of orthodox Christianity, and the theory of evolution does in a very, very marked degree undermine them; and Doctor Potter is very correct in complaining that this theory of evolution undermines much of orthodox Christianity. For that matter, it undermines much of orthodox Judaism--that the Bible is literally inspired, that the Bible was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, that the miracles of the Bible

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are actual facts, that the scientific stories of creation, and so forth, are facts. These, too, the theory of evolution questions. But the liberal Christian and the liberal Jew were not concerned with creeds and dogmas but with faith and ethics. These see no menace in the theory of evolution. To the liberal Christian the miracles of Jesus, His miraculous birth and His resurrection, are of little importance; but the man himself, His teachings, the Sermon on the Mount, the essence of His thought--these are the important things. He can see in the theory of evolution nothing that undermines the validity of the Sermon on the Mount.

And the liberal Jew sees in the Bible merely a vast compendium of spiritual thought and of grace; he sees in religion not a set of creeds and dogmas, but a pilgrimage to the shrine of God, the seeking of God in his own world and in his own life. That man has nothing to fear from this scientific fact or from any scientific fact; for the theory of evolution, whether it be the theory propounded by the neo-Darwinian or by the neo-Lamarckian school, or this theory or that theory--and there has been great divergence of opinion and great confusion of opinion, --I say, while the theory of evolution has not solved the problem of the origin of life, it has only wrestled with the problem of the origin of species; and the theory of evolution has not solved the cause of variation of species

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for science, after all, can solve no problem of causation; the ultimate cause cannot be apperceived, apprehended, understood, defined by human intelligence at all.

What the theory of evolution has attempted to do is to define the visible processes whereby species change and develop and transmute. The ultimate origin of life in the protoplasmic and the driving impulse that is in the world, making for variation within a species, and those dramatic and sudden variations whereby new species somehow organize,--these problems the theory of evolution has not solved and cannot solve. They are entirely within the sphere of faith, and God is enthroned there today as He was enthroned there before the days of Lamarck and before the days of Darwin.

Our good friend, Mr. Bryan, would concede evolution to rocks, perhaps to plants, and perhaps if he were forced he would also concede evolution to a horse. But he cannot for the life of him concede evolution to man; it is disgraceful to think that man is descended from some anthropoid ape; some special creative act had to call man into existence.

And yet, after all, to conceive of man as being descended from an ape is not any less degrading to the dignity of man than to conceive of him having been formed out of mud. And that is what the Bible says. And God took the dust out of the earth (we call it mud) and

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breathed into it the spirit of life." . . .

But isn't it more inspiring to feel that man today is descended from an earlier type, lower, coarser, more cruel, less gifted, and that through the centuries of struggle and effort man has risen from that lower level to a higher level, and a purer air? I say, isn't it more glorious to think of life in that way? Isn't it more promising than to conceive of man having been born perfect and then having fallen to the level in which he is today? -- very much like a gorilla in passions and hate; and we are even worse than a gorilla, for a gorilla does not kill its kind and man does.

I say, isn't it more promising to think that here fifty thousand years ago was this Heidelberg man, a low-browed, thick-jawed, cruel man, without any graces, without any comforts, and that man has evolved through his efforts and his struggles to the level of an Aristotle, a Plato, a Beethoven, an Angelo, or an Einstein? than that he has been falling from the heights of godliness and perfection to the slough in which he finds himself today? I think it has great promise; and there is hope that fifty thousand years from today these Bryans may yet be able to think rationally.

To sum up: whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the methods of evolution, the fact is that evolution is established beyond peradventure of

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doubt; whatever the fact of evolution may bring to bear upon the thinking of men and women, God is still in His universe. Biology is a science, and, like all sciences, it is not dogmatic. Whatever real truth it will bring into the world in the days to come, men will accept a religion having its source in God, who is the God of truth.

True religion has nothing to fear from any real scientific truth. Any truth in the realm of the physical which science will evolve and discover will be as eagerly welcomed by religious men as any truth evolved and discovered in the realm of the spiritual and the soul of man.

"The seal of God is truth!"

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I. Battle that was waged some 50 years -
bad temples. 1922. descendants of those
1869. Origin of Species - menace to Civil

II. Mr. Bryan - wet nurse of prohib. and
Weston of Am. Main Street - sees in Evol.
denial of lib. atheism.

1. Mr. Potter - his henchman in R (Lab)

III. This being the case - what is to be done?
Expose D? Persec - Pass a law
outlawing it! Get majority of Evolu-
tion is dead!

IV. Am not here to defend Evol. against
Mr. But Religion -

V. Evolution is, of course, a fact. Almost axiomatic

1. Darwin did not discover it. ^{after Read} Mr. Wallace
who did. ^{and found it} 1813. ^{in his} ^{Evolution} ^{Journal}
Mr. Wells, Mr. M. Patrick, Mr.
Matthew - in 1831. Mr. Lamarck
1801 - Mr. H. Charles Lyell.

2. Lyell knew it. W. Endemann to
account for it. to define laws
governing Origin & change in
Species.

3. One need not be scientist to realize it.

1. Field - 15 minutes. rocks - fossils -
furnace of life. In the ~~reproduction of~~
~~extrinsic life~~

~~2. Museum - 1/2 hr. from reptiles~~
~~to Heidelberg human ancestor~~
world within yr old. 5000. Species
changed reverted. Still changing

3. One fact constant in life. Change.
2 minutes alive. Spring on new.
forests into coal beds still going
on. Flow. See catastrophe. Earth
quake. climate, wind and water.

4. 3.14 p.m. 12th Nov 1900 - History.

VI. These changes which turn nebulae into ^{very much} worlds, stars and planetary systems
are either dictated by whim or law. If
former then science has no meaning.
1. Whim a strong life reduced to
chaos of sporadic, unaccountable acts.
primitive daemons -

VII. It has been assumed that form is not.
hatter not. God's methods. Technique.
what holds true of astronomy and geology must
hold true of biology.
VIII. If we accept evolution in inorganic.
inanimate also in organic.
1. In after all it is very difficult
to find dividing line bet 2.

All matter is alive. All plants are
alive. All minerals are alive. Radio
matter to atoms, 300 millions in space
, an inch, to electrons 1,000 in length
of an atom, and you have energy then
moving at rate of 200,000 miles per second.
All is a sea of Energy. All derives
from it.

1. Same laws which govern one govern the other. There are no 2 diff.

spheres & Extensives. All is One and
1/2 hr. in musere. from rephl b. Heideck
mar L. Heideck

IX. Have given my life, I feel zip. Human
life more difficult to define.

Summer impulse. Well, Alberto.

But they exist. Else our K. &
biology. Intel. psych. Any attempt
to build Ethics. are vain reasoning

X What is needed is not exp. but
white sc. method.

1. Br. is humbled than was should
to desc. from weekly. We have
not descended for. Weekly
don't mind relat. Why should

2. What our ancestors were is not
1/2 as imp. as what our descendants
shall be — and to turn our backs
upon Sp. Method, the contributors
modern Chris't — is to return to
a condition even less desirable,
than this is necessary and vital.

XVIII. Religion need not fear Evolution.

Orthodoxy, need fear it.

1. Jewish. Bible. miracles. physical resurrection. But Ethics. To do justice.

2. Christian. Fall of Man. Miraculous birth Resurrection - but Personalism - Sermon.

XIX. Evolution does not outlaw God.

It does not explain origin of life, but of species. It does not account for inner world - which may account for variations in species.

It ~~cannot~~ only define visible processes.

1. Ultimate source of life.

2. Driving impulse in world. Still within sphere of faith.

It is wrong to assume that the doctrine of Evolution necessarily implies that there is no ^{supreme} intelligence in the world, no purpose. That all is determined by blind, unconscious forces which work rebelliously thru natural selection, that will, desire, aspiration play no part in molding life; life changes thru internal volitions as well. We see bee, you want to feed. Word becomes flesh!

2. Intelligent life for a constantly
trying to express itself more fully
and abundantly, God!

XV. Story of Israel applied to Man.

1. If man descended from Ape.
Hope for him If from Angel.
Long flight indeed.

2. Epic from Heidelberg - low - how
to Butcher - Spunge - Eustace.

3. Hope for Bryan is 5,000.

XVI. True Rel. welcomes Science

1. xN/1 523 2 1m1A

XV. List of the Bible. 5 Sec. in the Bible

1. Creation Story
2. Flood Story
3. Stories of the Patriarchs
4. Italian painters. What and
detest. Were not archaeologists
5. Shakespeare. No student's
antiquities -
6. Bible dressed up with in
garments of the day. Jews in
settings borrowed of the day.

XVI. Bible can stand on its own
merits. Needs no breaking of walls.

1. No special act of translation.
2. Never authentic - poetry &
copying -

XVII. Incidentally Bible itself shows
Events.

1. Herod's sin.
2. God Eats - walks - "If I ascend
3. Sacrifice - "I shall not command
~~of them~~

X. Too bad that what people regard as
Rel. comes in conflict with thes.

1. Will be compelled to surrender
^{views} - ^{readjust}. Hark! Think!
that's why people would rather pass
laws than think!

2. But truth must conquer! We
who these plow-pitifully inadequate
dams & pit in way - What sacks
packed - a low-hunter land -

XI. These men are sincere. Rule!

1. Most dangerous man is a man
who is wrong - but is sincere!

2. If he were not - character & spirit

3. Sincere - of a generation - 30 years was.

(4). Blame them only for dying to
compell! blame you for not going to the top!

XII. Hart care & the religion.

1. Ridiculous.

2. Men humpy - Myths - angles.

XIII. Way of superior author of Bible in
matter of Science fine cannot be it
back by Epist Pat as -

1. Science -

2. We will go to the Bible or modern

3. We cannot go to it if can
Physics - Chemistry - cosmology

For my own part, I would as soon
be descended from that heroic little
monkey, who braved his dreaded
enemy in order to save the life
of his keeper; or from that old
baboon, who, descending from the
mountains, carried away in triumph
his young comrade from a crowd
of astonished dogs - or from a
savage who delights to torture
his enemies, offers up bloody
sacrifices, practices infanticide
without remorse, treats his wives
like slaves, knows no decency,
and is haunted by the grossest
superstitions.