

Let's Look at the EVIDENCE

PART I

By CHARLES C. RYRIE, Th.D., Ph.D.



Charles C. Ryrie, Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, is president of Philadelphia College of Bible. As an educator, Dr. Ryrie's experience includes positions at Westmont College and Dallas Seminary, where he was Associate Professor of Systematic Theology.

Among his publications are seven books and various articles appearing in outstanding Christian magazines.

This series on evolution is taken from the transcription of a preached sermon.

A discussion of what fossils, anthropology, and the Bible say about evolution.

UNDOUBTEDLY when the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is written, one of the forces for Satan which will stand in the forefront as accomplishing his purpose will be the theory of evolution.

Begun by Charles Darwin, this theory had its first expression in his *Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this short space of time we have seen this theory capture not only the scientific world but also other areas of thought. I am sorry to say that evolution has in many, many circles found a toe-hold in even the religious thinking of people.

The word *evolution* has two distinct meanings. It means to develop in a *general* or *non-technical* meaning, and the word can be properly used in this meaning. But evolution also has a *technical* or *specific* meaning. This is the meaning which is attached to the Darwinian theory—the theory which accounts for the origin of things apart from God, or the intervention of God in the process. In that sense evolution is something that is not true.

We talk about our society *developing*, certain group activities *developing* and we have in our minds that idea that *we* are developing. Thus that general *legitimate* idea is read into the specific *illegitimate* theory of evolution. For instance, because Child Evangelism can develop as an organization, we read that same idea of development back into the origin of things. A lot of people think that just as an *idea* can develop so also *man* can develop through the process that evolution proclaims. So I say that the *general meaning of development* has helped carry people to the idea of the origin

of things which evolution teaches.

I should like to make this a little more simple. When I talk about the difference between a Model T Ford and a '57 Ford I could say there was a kind of evolution. I mean by that there was *development*, or *progress*. However, if I talk about making any Ford out of *nothing*, that's evolution in the sense of *origin*, and you say "That's silly."

But when evolution comes along and in the name of science says that *we* are made out of nothing or out of an original speck of something, we agree, "Why, of course. That is obvious because we can make a fine '57 Ford and look how that developed from a Model T Ford. It is nothing to go back to an original speck of life and see development all through the ages."

Perhaps if you understand something about the man who conceived this theory, Charles Darwin, you will have a clearer understanding of the theory, although no man makes a theory.

And if he were a fine man, that would not make his theory right, nor would it make it wrong if he were a scoundrel. But I do want you to know some facts about the man.

Charles Darwin was the son of a wealthy Britisher, and, as sometimes is the case with sons of wealthy parents, he didn't much care for studies.

Charles was sent to Edinburgh University, but he had to leave, because he didn't make the grade. Then he was sent to Cambridge for the rest of his training, which was in ministerial studies. He was graduated, but he did not proceed with ordination in the Church of England.

Instead, he did something I suppose all students would

like to do when they get through their college or university courses—he took a sea voyage. It lasted, as I remember, six or more years. During this time some of these ideas about the origin of species were formulated in his mind.

When Darwin returned to England, after having written down some of these ideas, he received from another man a manuscript to read and to evaluate. When he read this manuscript, he recognized these ideas as the ones he had had for many years. So, in order to keep this other man from getting the credit for them, Darwin was forced to publish his own ideas. This he did in the *Origin of Species*, in 1859.

From this point on, if you read the life of Darwin, you will discover that his life was one continual battle—a battle against the tug of his early training toward the ministry and the ideas which he had now formulated.

Darwin said, “I will give absolutely nothing for the theory of natural selection if it requires miraculous additions at any one stage of descent.”

In other words, the battle raged because on the one hand he realized his own theory demanded that God be out of the picture. On the other hand his training for the ministry still tugged at his heart and conscience. Darwin’s life seemed to be a continual struggle against God and the call of God upon his life. As far as I can tell, Darwin never recanted. Some people say he did on his death bed, but I cannot find evidence that there was any real change of heart.

Since those days Darwin’s theory has been magnified and has become a great deal more involved. Here, however we are dealing, though not exclusively, with the evolution of man. I should like to summarize briefly the evidences which evolutionary theorists propose for the evolution of man, some of which apply as well to the evolution of matter.

The first one is what is generally called the *Carbon 14 test*. Sometimes it is called the test that concerns the decomposition of uranium. We have learned from atomic bombs that these elements decompose at a uniform rate. If you look at an element at a certain stage

of decomposition, and if you know the rate that it is decomposing, you can say that it is so many years old. It is just like looking at the lines around a person’s eyes. It takes so many years for those lines to appear. There is a certain uniform rate of decomposition.

Some of these elements are used to tell how old the earth is, or how old man is, or, more recently, how old the Dead Sea scrolls are. They have a legitimate use. They also have an *illegitimate* use. These are some of the things that people don’t tell you when they talk about the Carbon 14 test. They don’t tell you, for instance, that the test is reliable only with a *certain span of years*. They don’t tell you that when you get too far back the test is unreliable. They certainly don’t tell you that when you try to date the age of earth, *the test does not work*. That’s too many years ago! They show you that the test works within these narrow confines and *then they make you think that it’ll work when you keep going back and back into the history of the world!*

This is based on a false assumption. The assumption is that if something is decomposing at this rate now it has always decomposed at this rate. But that is false. Just because you have grey hair doesn’t necessarily mean you have reached a certain age. You may have had a fright which caused your hair to turn grey over night.

It is a false assumption to believe that uniform laws have always worked at a uniform rate. Maybe they haven’t. Let me illustrate. The Mississippi River has shortened itself in the last 176 years 242 miles because it fills in at the mouth at New Orleans. That’s one and one-third miles per year. Therefore we state as a scientifically provable fact that 742 years from now the Mississippi River will have shortened itself to the extent that the streets of New Orleans, Louisiana, will be joined to the streets of Cairo, Illinois!

“But,” you say, “that’s silly.” And it is.

It’s provable, the theory says, that the earth is so old because uranium decomposes at a certain rate. *But maybe uranium didn’t always decompose at that rate.*

Maybe it isn't scientifically provable that the earth is so many millions or billions of years old. That is one line of evidence, and it is based upon the false assumption that something which we can observe has always been going on at that same observable rate.

Here's another evidence that is used to prove the theory of evolution. You have heard the question asked, "Do human beings ever have tails?" and the answer, "Yes, every embryo has a tail at one stage in the development of the embryo in the womb of the mother. Therefore, all human beings at one time or another had tails."

That's a well-known "proof" of evolution. The development of the embryo in the womb of a mother is supposedly like the development through the evolutionary stages in the history of the origin of man. Let's just examine it.

They say that man started from an original something called an amoeba, or a speck of protoplasm. Then the stages of development upward were from amoeba to worm, to fish, to amphibian, to reptile, to fowl, to mammal, to man.

Some scientists say you can prove this by examining the embryo. In a certain medical school I once visited I saw on a shelf jars of embryo at various stages of development. Now while it is true that at one point the embryo has gill-like things on it, the appearance of those gill-like things, which resolve at a subsequent state

of development before the birth of the baby, don't have anything to do with breathing, as they do in the fish. *And they certainly don't make the embryo a fish!*

To take another example, it is true that at one point in the development of an embryo it has something like a little tail. This is due to disproportionate development of the posterior region, causing it, in comparison with the undeveloped, tucked-up legs, to look like a tail. But the fact remains that if you should take an embryo at any stage of its development, or a baby when it is born, or a young person when he is maturing, or an older person about to die, and put a sample of the flesh under a microscope and get a pathologist to look at that flesh, he will say, "*This is human flesh.*"

However, put a sample of monkey flesh underneath the microscope, or fish flesh, or flesh of any other beast and get a pathologist to look at that and he will say, "This is *not* human. This is something else."

Even though a human embryo may go through certain stages which seemingly are similar to what the evolutionist says that man went through in his ascent which finally evolved into man, it is still a *human* embryo. It is not an amoeba, then a reptile, then a fish, then a mammal, then a man. It is a human person all the time, developing in the womb.

Now the theory of evolution says that man developed, not from the lower forms of *man* but from *lower forms of life*. And that's a different thing. Evolution makes claims analogous to a Ford evolving from a piece of

paper—from a different kind of thing—and then through certain processes going from paper to rubber bands to furniture to microphones to Fords. That's quite a different thing from saying a *Model T* suddenly became a '57 Ford. A human embryo, yes, it goes through certain stages of growth in order to become a baby. But it is *human* and the product is a *baby*. Excuse me, if I am blunt, but a woman never fears she is going to bring forth a fish, or a reptile, or a monkey. God has set certain unalterable laws, He said in the beginning, that each should bring forth "after his kind" (Gen. 1:21,24).

Humans beget humans and animals beget animals. Never is there a crossing. Never is there any mixture or confusion.

Similarity, if there is similarity between an embryo and the so-called theory of evolution, does not make proof.

I should like to illustrate this very ridiculously. I have a motor in my Ford and I also go to the laundry some times to wash my clothes. There is a motor in the washing machine. Both of those motors have some similar things about them. But if I want to get my clothes clean, I don't lift the hood of my car and throw them on that motor.

Similarity doesn't mean equivalence; and, yet, that is what the theory of evolution would have us believe.

Next month. *What about fossils and the theory of evolution?*



Let's

Look

at the

EVIDENCE

“A H, but you cannot deny the fossil. Fossils do exist.” So says the evolutionist.

Yes, fossils do exist and are put forth as an evidence of the proof of the theory of evolution. But fossils have to do more with the origin of the material universe than with the origin of man.

There are some facts about fossils you ought to know. One of them is that there are millions of fossils. They are proof that there existed millions of creatures. I am not talking about any remains of any man-like things but simply animal or vegetable fossils.

The geologist has a neat classification system. The fossils which appear in one stratum of rock belong to one age, those in another belong to another age, and so on. The Grand Canyon is supposed to show all of the ages in one place. The lower you go, the older the stratum, supposedly, and the older the fossil. That's what you are told in college.

When you get into graduate school this is what you will discover—that the fossils which appeared, let us say, in the lowest stratum of the Canyon, in another place in earth appear in a higher stratum. Now that is very disturbing because these fossils are supposed to be very old in that lowest age, and here they are later on somewhere else. This fact upsets the time tables.

Here is another thing the professors do not tell you. When you look at fossils anywhere in the world, you always find *fully developed* fossils.

Never yet, of all the millions of fossils found, has there been produced a fossil which shows how species changed.

There are always fossils of frogs, monkeys, of this vegetable, of this animal. Never fossils of the cross between the species. Amongst millions of fossils, *would you not think that there would be at least ONE fossil that shows how the amoeba became a worm, or the worm a fish, or the fish a reptile, or the reptile became a man?* Would you not think that of the millions of evidences there would be *one* that would show the change between species?

And there's not a single one!

There's another test, one from anthropology, that you

By CHARLES C. RYRIE, Th.D., Ph.D.

Child Evangelism

OCTOBER 1958

A discussion of what fossils, anthropology, and the Bible say about evolution

should know about. You ought to know what the real facts are.

First, there is what is called the *Nebraska man*. Actually, the remains of the Nebraska man consist of one tooth. That is all. There is the Java man, sometimes called *Pithecanthropus Erectus*. That simply means, Erect Ape-man. The remains of a piece of the top of a skull, a piece of thigh bone, and three teeth scattered 50 to 70 feet apart in a river bed—not in stone, but in sand. From these fragments we are supposed to believe we have a missing man!

When the evolutionist talks about his anthropological evidence and says, "We have missing links," I feel like saying, "You don't have a chain let alone the missing link. All you have are three teeth, the top of a skull, and a piece of thigh bone. And a lot of plaster of Paris. Yet you find the next time you go to the museum at UCLA or USC that these so-called men are all on display there.

What does all this amount to? The theory says, "From amoeba or speck of protoplasm or something to man, and here's the proof." I say the evidence is very scanty. The only evidence that is real is the fossil evidence. And it is not very good for the evolutionist because it does not present us with the fossils of the crossing over between species. It is, however, very good for the Bible believer, because the fossils present us with fully developed species within the limitation God set upon all animals and man—that each should breed "*after his kind*" (Genesis 1: 11, 12, 21, 24, 25).

I want to say that I do not believe in so-called *theistic* evolution. I do not believe that it answers the question to say that God made the original amoeba and then these things took over. I have just as many problems in finding how that amoeba became a reptile and a reptile a mammal and a mammal a man as how that amoeba got there in the first place. Theistic evolution allows God only the privilege of having started the original spark of created life, and that is not what the Bible teaches.

God intended His Word to be plain. He intended you and me to understand it. It is a *revelation*, not something hidden. When I read Genesis I must remember that a man who had his Ph.D. from the universities in Egypt wrote these documents. A man who was trained in all the wisdom of the world was the human instrument God used.

It looks to me as if I am dealing with very intelligent records in the Scripture. The Bible does not say everything about everything. But what it does say is plain and should be taken that way.

I read "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The account does not say that God fooled around and evolved them. But it tells one direct act.

Then I read something very strange, "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (v.2).

How many millions of years may be involved in verse two of Genesis 1 I do not know. There may be millions of years when the Spirit of God was, so to speak, just holding things together, moving upon the face of the water.

When I get to verse three I see He moved in orderly sequence. Verse one says nothing about time. Verse two says nothing about time. But beginning with verse three you have time periods marked off. "The evening and the morning were the first day" (v 5). "The evening and the morning were the second day" (v 8). "And the evening and the morning were the third day" (v 13). And so on through the seven days of creation or a re-creation of the face of the earth.

I think the Lord knew the word for *age* and could have put it there. If the Lord had wanted me to understand that He meant *periods* or *ages*, He had the wisdom and concern for me to have written it that way. But He didn't. He wrote "*day*." And not only did He write "*day*" but He wrote "the evening and the morning." One does not speak of the evening and the morning of an age or period. Not only that, but He wrote *first* day, *second* day, *third* day, and so forth. Every other place in the Old Testament where you find *day* with a numerical adjective like *first*, *second*, *third*, it means a twenty-four-hour period.

It is true that the word *day* used alone does not always mean a twenty-four-hour period, but in every place in the Hebrew Bible where you have day with a numerical adjective, it invariably means a twenty-four-hour period. And when I have evening and morning attached to that, it seems to me that God is talking about days and not something else.

Now, why get excited about this? Because, if evolution be true, if we did develop through these various species, if from amoeba now we have man, it is a little thing to expect that some day from man we can have a God!

If evolution be true in bringing us from the place from which the evolutionist says we have come, then I don't need a Saviour, a Redeemer. I don't need God to come in flesh and save me. Some day I'll be God. All by myself. I don't need somebody to save me.

Evolution has taken hold of the minds of people because it gives them a way to keep God out of the picture not only in creation but also in redemption.

That is why I get excited. And so should you. If evolution be true, I ought to quit preaching. And you ought to quit teaching Good News Clubs.

Don't worry about the children. They'll develop all right. Look where we've come from. You don't need to tell them about a Saviour. They don't need a Saviour.

This is as anti-God as anything can be.

That is why I say that when the history of this century is written, if it is written by a Christian, he will have the discernment to say, "Evolution has been Satan's master stroke in diverting men's attention from the Gospel of the redeeming grace of God."