

CONTRASTS ARGUMENTS OF DARWIN AND BRYAN

Contrasting the manner and method of debate of the great proponent of evolution and its chief opponent, Prof. Edward L. Rice, of Ohio Wesleyan University, addressed the zoological section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, of which he was the presiding officer during the past year.

Prof. Rice summarized his address as follows:

"Mr. Bryan's attack upon evolution has, of course, no scientific significance but it is dangerous alike to freedom of investigation and teaching and to religion. This danger justifies the present address, the aim of which is to further emphasize the unscientific and illogical character of Bryan's argument by a comparison of his method with that of Darwin.

"Darwin's work is a perfect example of the inductive method, - hypothesis (Mr. Bryan's 'guess'), followed by the most careful verification, and leading to a degree of probability amounting to practical certainty, - all that the inductive method can ever attain. The known scientific facts upon which the evolution theory bases are ignored by Bryan or categorically denied.

"Bryan's main attack upon evolution is a deductive argument based upon the assumption of the literal accuracy of the Bible in general and of the first two chapters of Genesis in particular. This assumption is not Biblical; it has not been uniformly accepted in the early church, nor is it accepted by the leading Bible scholars of today.

"Darwin's method is characterized by an unbiased search for truth and the utmost frankness in the meeting of difficulties and objections. Mr. Bryan, on the other hand, ignores objections. His method is that of the special pleader for a preconceived idea.

"Mr. Darwin takes the attitude of science in recognizing that most beliefs (scientific, religious, and practical) are incapable of demonstrative proof; Mr. Bryan considers all of his own beliefs as of a certitude permitting no discussion.

"Darwin's work represents the study of a lifetime; Bryan's is a mere avocation of a man busy in other lines - the amateur versus the professional.

"Sarcasm and ridicule are as conspicuously present in Bryan's writings as they are absent from Darwin's.

"Happily, not all theologians follow the dogmatic method of Mr. Bryan; nor unhappily, is Mr. Darwin's scientific method characteristic of all his followers. It is to be hoped that the outcome of the present controversy may be the alliance of a more scientific religion and a more religious science."

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