THE PARADOX OF A CENTURY

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When the theory of organic evolution was young, and the known facts — few though they were — seemed to favor it, most people said the theory was absurd. With the passing of a century many facts have been learned, most of which oppose the theory, but now people say, "Science has proved evolution and we must agree." Has there been a greater paradox in a hundred years?

The boast of science is that it is founded upon ascertained facts; but it is evident that if the truth were known and appreciated this contradictory situation could not prevail. In the short time at our disposal let us look at some of the discoveries, bearing in mind that evolution does not mean simply change, but changing one-celled animals into vertebrates.

A common belief in Medieval times was that life arises of itself from non-living matter. People thought it was natural for weeds to grow from soil, for rags and corn to generate mice, and for meat to generate maggots. Of course if this were true it would help the theory of evolution for it would remove the necessity of a Creator to start the organic world. Charles Darwin, in the first edition of "The Origin of Species" suggested that God may have created the first germs of life. But he did not include this statement in the later editions, probably because he no longer believed it, for in later life he stated that he believed God never made a revelation. Most evolutionists were either very agnostic about the beginning of life or else thought that it generated itself spontaneously.

In the latter part of the Nineteenth Century some very thorough experiments were performed by Redi, Spallanzani, Schulze, Tyndal, Pasteur and others which convinced the scientific world that life comes only from pre-existing life.

Notwithstanding this careful experimentation, there is a present belief that life did arise by chance combination of conditions in an ancient shallow sea and that it arose only once. It is true that amino acids have been synthesized by Miller from ammonia, methane, hydrogen and water vapor, but amino acid is not alive. No one can predict what may be formed in the future but the accomplishments of highly trained men are very different from the results of chance. Since man has such great ability he must have been planned and formed by God, just as the Bible states. At any rate we should not forget that life has never been observed to arise of itself, even after much experimentation.

Another discovery which is unfavorable to the theory of evolution is that "acquired characters" are not inherited. These are changes in a plant or animal caused by the environment, by use or by disuse. Examples are increased size because of good nourishment or the reverse; firm muscles because of use; thick fur in response to cold; pale color of plants because of lack of light, etc. No one doubts that such characters occur, but J. B. Lamarck and Charles Darwin claimed that they are passed on to the next generation.

Many experiments have been conducted to test this theory and they have failed to give positive results. For instance, a race horse six years of age may have greater speed than he had at three years and this increased speed is an acquired character. The colts which he sired at six years of age have no greater speed than the ones he sired earlier. Regardless of changes in the parent, each young animal starts back at the base line of the hereditary potential of its parents.

A hundred years ago very little was known about genes, the hereditary factors which carry characters or traits from one generation to the next. Now, however, they are known to occur in each cell of a plant, animal, or person. They are the most important particles in the chromosomes; and if you have taken a course in botany or zoology you have looked at chromosomes under the microscope.

In the division of cells and in the formation of eggs and sperms it is necessary that new genes be formed from the old ones. A hundred years ago it was thought that the genes might be formed slightly different each time and so perform a gradual progressive change over a series of generations. But careful study has shown that nature takes great pains to make the new genes just like the old ones. This is a significant discovery which biologists know very well but others do not appreiacte. If a gene changes at all it is by an accidental reorganization called a mutation, which occurs very rarely.

Of course you can see that if mutations-were of all kinds, good, bad and indifferent, the changes might still occur as Darwin postulated, only more slowly. Mutation has been widely hailed as the method by which Amoeba might change to Homo if given plenty of time. But look at the following examples of this type of change: cattle without horns; calves with short legs, dying at birth; calves with abnormal jaws, living only a few hours; yellow mice, always dying as young embryos in the homozygous or pure form; creeper chickens, a mutation causing death in the pure form; in fruit flies. small wings, crumpled wings, no wings at all, black body, white eyes, eyes reduced to a bar, crooked spines and many others; seedless grapes; seedless oranges; stringless green beans; barley that must be staked up to make it stand; among people, lack of color in hair, eyes and skin; also lack of enamel

on the teeth. In addition to these changes in bodily form, mutation causes a lack of vigor in the plant or animal. Very, very few such changes have been found to confer any benefit upon an organism, and so you see that these recent studies have made it hard to visualize what kind of changes would transform a moss to an apple tree or an amoeba to man. Atomic fallout causes mutations in the human race and no one thinks such changes will be a benefit.

Another remarkable discovery is that the theory of recapitulation has no foundation of objective facts. It is a wonder that it was not given up long ago, for the so-called gill slits in the human embryo never are accompanied by gills or primordia of gills and they never break through to make slits. They are simply a series of furrows between arches. The theory did not apply to plants, and the experimental embryologists, an active group, never found it useful. Yet it may be ten years before some teachers will cease to reiterate this big blunder, which Ehrlich and Helm says is "biological mythology.'

The general form of a young embryo of man or pig or bird is far removed from the shape of a fish, for it has a large brain, a large heart but no arms, legs, fins. or any kind of appendage until a later stage of development. In fact the proportions are not like those of any mature, free-living animal. The heart is formed early because the embryo needs blood; the brain gets an early start because it is a complex organ and needs much time for its development. There still is purpose in the world and science is not harmed by recognizing it.

Still another anomaly for the doctrine of evolution is the fact that all the branches of the animal kingdom appear together in the Cambrian system of rocks. (Some geologists exclude the vertebrates but Dunbar says fish skeletons are present.) Below the Cambrian there are no fossils except a few worm burrows and seaweeds and even "they are doubted by some geologists. If all life developed gradually from simple cells there should be simpler and still simpler fossils in the deeper rocks, down to the spicules of sponges and shells of the one-celled plants called diatoms. This situation was partly known a hundred years ago but it was thought that such fossils would be found after further search. However, some geologists have spent the best years of their lives looking for fossils below the Cambrian, but all in vain.

When I visited the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River I was fortunate enough to hear a lecture on the formation of that "big gully" as the cowboy called it. The lecturer said that the deepest fossil which they had found was a trilobite. This was an animal with a hard exoskeleton and many legs, resembling a crayfish or crab. After the lecture I asked the speaker why such a complex animal was the deepest, instead of something simpler. He replied quite truly, that they are found just that way.

The last discovery which I shall mention has not received the publicity which it deserves but it is well recorded by different trained workers. It is that skeletons of the modern type of man, *Homo sapiens,* are fully as old as those of famous cave men and other peculiar types.

When Eugene Dubois found a skull cap, a femur, and three teeth in Java in 1891, naming the find *Pithecanthropus erectus,* this discovery received tremendous publicity. But the two skulls which he found at Wadjak, Java, of the same age, were not made public until twenty years later. Why ? "They were not what he was looking for "and did not fit his theory of evolution. These Wadjak people are described as much like the present black men of Australia, whose skill is widely recognized.

There is no scientific reason why we should not claim that Wadjak man is our ancestor and *Pithecanthropus* a degenerate, extinct type. For Wadjak man represents the rule rather than the exception. In China, in southern Africa, at Kanjera, Africa, at Swanscombe, England, and at Fontechevade, France, the story is repeated: men of *Homo sapiens* type are found who lived as long ago as the peculiar and so-called "primitive" types.

Here then, is the paradox: when the information — meager though it was — seemed to favor evolution, the masses of people shouted, "Absurd"; now that new discoveries make it a poor interpretation they bow their heads sedately and say, "Of course we agree." One is reminded of a cartoon illustrating the popularity of General Dwight Eisenhower. When he returned from the Second World War he was tired and wanted to rest but there was a popular demand that he run for President of the United States. The cartoon represented the boom as a tree: Eisenhower had taken an ax and cut the trunk quite in two, but still the tree stood erect. Likewise the factual support of evolution has been sundered, but still we hear that it is true. Certainly the theory is in unstable equilibrium, and how long will it stand?

Here is illustrated the power of repetition. For a hundred years the evolutionary story of impersonal, materialistic law has been reiterated in glittering generalities, omitting troublesome details, until people tired of making objections and acquiesced. Let us as Christians be just as persistent in proclaiming the truth that, "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth"; and "God so loved the world that he gave is only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."