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DARWIN AND BRYAN—A STUDY IN METHOD¹

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A FEW days ago a friend, with whom I was discussing the subject of this address, turned to me with the quick remark, "What I can not understand is why you, a scientist, should pay any attention to the attitude toward evolution of Mr. Bryan or any other layman." Others may be raising the same question, and an *apologia pro argumento meo* may be in order.

If I were only a scientist, I think I should pay no attention, beyond a smile, to writings like those of Mr. Bryan on evolution. Scientifically, it is of little moment whether Mr. Bryan or any other individual does or does not believe in evolution or in any other scientific theory.

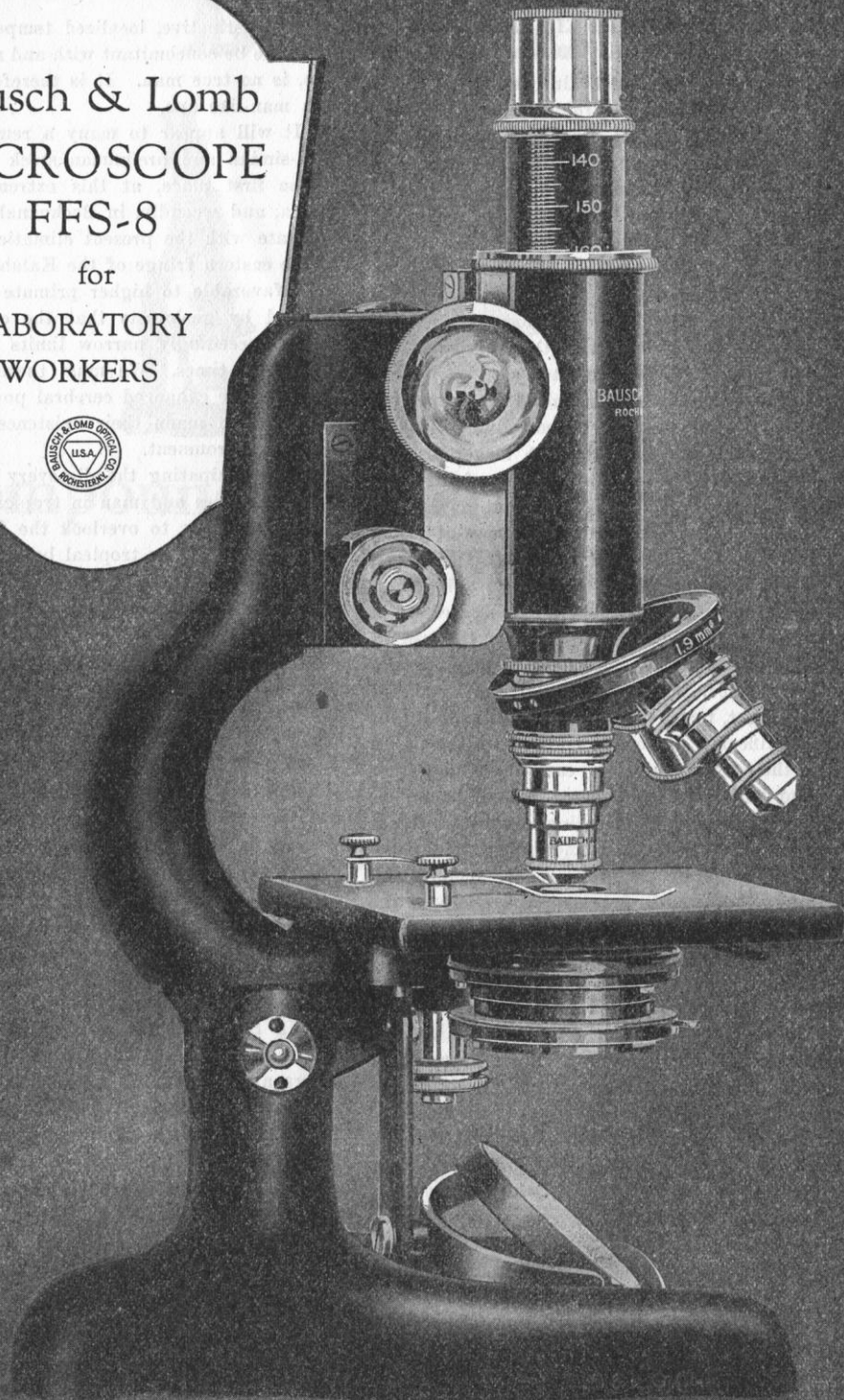
But I am not merely a scientist; in common with the majority of the members of Section F, I am a teacher. As teachers, we may well be jealous of that freedom of investigation and freedom of teaching through which the intellectual progress of the past has been won and through which the intellectual progress of the future must come. There must, of course, be limits to this freedom—liberty must not become license; but undue restriction can lead only to mental stagnation. Mr. Bryan's proposition to delegate to state legislature or church council the determination of the orthodoxy of scientific theory savors of the Middle Ages rather than of twentieth century America. And Mr. Bryan wields an influence not to be ignored. Tremendous moral earnestness and extraordinary oratorical power make a combination potent for right, but equally potent for error if misdirected—in no case to be disregarded.

To most of us the matter may have no personal bearing; to others the crisis is immediate. The par-

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section F—Zoology—American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D. C., December, 1924. This criticism of Mr. Bryan's method is based on a rather careful study of the following authentic publications: "The Bible and Its Enemies," 1921; "In His Image," 1922; "God and Evolution," in *New York Times*, February 26, 1922; "Moses vs. Darwin," in *Homiletic Review*, June, 1922; "Orthodox Christianity versus Modernism," 1923; "Is the Bible True?" in *The Bridal Call Foursquare*, November, 1924. No attention is paid to unconfirmed newspaper reports of his multitudinous speeches. References to Darwin and Huxley are based upon the following editions: "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin," Appleton, 1901; "More Letters of Charles Darwin," Appleton, 1903; "Darwiniana," Volume 2 of Huxley's *Collected Essays*, Appleton, 1893.

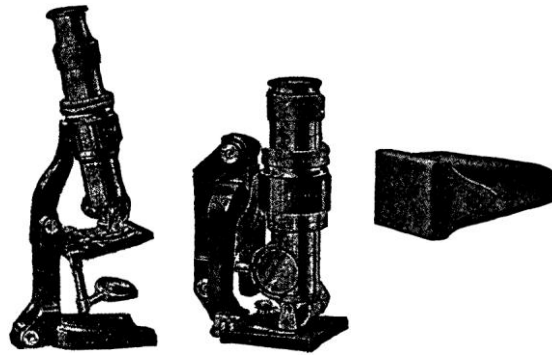
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