

# Evolutionists often tell us that the theory of evolution is a fact of science that has been proved.

They assert that there have been no credible challenges to the Darwinian principle that all different species share a common ancestor.

But is evolution really about science? Let's look at several early evolutionary thinkers to find an answer.

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that in them is.” Exodus 20:11

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:3

## Become a Part of the Discussion

Southern Adventist University fully supports the belief in a literal six-day creation. Recognizing that there are still unanswered questions relating to the creationist worldview, professors and students are involved in research to address these topics.

Southern provides the following resources to enable church and community members to become more educated about issues related to creation.

### Origins Exhibit

The hallways of Hickman Science Center, the home to Southern Adventist University's Biology Department, are being transformed into origins exhibits. Visitors of all ages and scientific levels are able to enjoy the detailed wall art depicting the complexity of God's creation, considerations of the geological column, and thoughts about an Intelligent Designer.

### E. O. Grundset Lecture Series

These natural history and research lectures, open to the public, are held each semester with guest speakers presenting on various scientific topics.

### Origins Weekend

Southern's Biology Department hosts invited speakers to present on origins-related topics on campus each spring.

### Faith and Science Website

Southern is host to a faith and science website, which showcases an interdisciplinary approach to origins: [www.southern.edu/faithandscience](http://www.southern.edu/faithandscience).

Located in Collegedale, Tennessee, Southern Adventist University provides a welcoming learning environment. To learn more about Southern or any of the above resources, call 1.800.SOUTHERN or visit [www.southern.edu](http://www.southern.edu).



<sup>1</sup> *The Temple of Nature—in a reference to Lord Monboddó*

<sup>2</sup> *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, by Manly P. Hall

<sup>3</sup> *Freemasonry: Its Hidden Meaning*, by George H. Steinmetz

<sup>4</sup> *The Meaning of Masonry*, by W.L. Wilmshurst

## Evolution: Is It Really About Science?

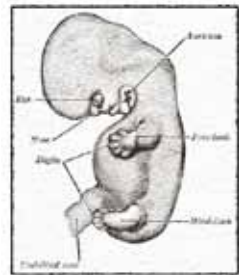
## Are humans born with tails?

Lord Monboddo (1714-1799), one of the scholars involved in the development of the concept of evolution, believed that humans were born with tails, which were somehow removed by midwives at the time of birth. He studied the philosophers, focusing on ancient Greek and Egyptian thought and the mystery religions (religious cults of the Greco-Roman world). He wrote extensively about the development of language and society, metaphysics, and the ideas of Sir Isaac Newton.



Monboddo believed in the Deistic concept of God and often quoted scripture. However, he asserted that the Genesis story of creation and the fall of man was nothing more than an allegory. He also believed that the fourth commandment was simply an attempt by

Moses to establish a day of worship for the Jews. He clearly stated that a philosophy of theism, or belief in God, should not be based upon revelation. Rather, the source of truth should be natural religion or what we can learn about God from nature. This in essence means that science and human reason, rather than Biblical revelation, are (according to Monboddo) the ultimate authorities.



He concluded that man evolved through a progression of steps from a vegetable-like organism to an animal such as the orangutan, which gave rise to primitive savages and finally culminated in civilized man.

It's very clear that these ideas were not based on any real scientific evidence.

The reports of humans with tails (which he based on stories from travelers) were not even factual. Monboddo's conclusions reflected speculations based on a philosophy and worldview that rejected the scriptural account of creation.

## Where did Charles Darwin's grandfather get his ideas?



Now let's look at another early evolutionary thinker. Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), the grandfather of Charles Darwin, was a respected physician, author, and poet. Beginning in 1791, he published several books about the science of his day and about philosophy.

Erasmus Darwin's style was to write poetry using the language of ancient heathen mythology. This was interspersed with lengthy articles

explaining the scientific ideas or philosophical concepts about which he was writing. He discussed a wide range of topics, including plant and animal biology, medical practice and disease, psychology, and a variety of philosophical ideas. In his lengthy discussions of geology, he often referred to the ideas of Scottish geologist James Hutton, who proposed long ages for the development of earth's geologic structure.

Erasmus Darwin was influenced by the writings of Lord Monboddo and used them as a reference source. Like Monboddo, he also borrowed ideas from Greek and Egyptian philosophy, ancient mythology, and the mystery religions. While he sometimes referred to scripture, he also quoted Monboddo's idea that the Genesis account is allegorical.

In his book *The Temple of Nature* (1803), Erasmus Darwin expressed the key concepts of the theory of evolution. This included the big bang, the origin of life from the sea by

spontaneous birth, and the development of complex life forms from simple ancestors. He discussed the transition from life in the sea to life on land using the metamorphosis of frogs from tadpoles as an example. He argued that the concept of spontaneous generation was not a contradiction of scripture and was supported by experiments of the scientists of his day.

He suggested that monkeys on the banks of the Mediterranean developed the use of a certain muscle in the hand, which improved their use of the sense of touch. As a result, these monkeys "acquired clear ideas and gradually became men."<sup>1</sup>

Like Monboddo, Erasmus Darwin was a Freemason. He borrowed heavily from these themes, using temple imagery and promoting Masonic concepts of the progress of society and a belief in the Great Architect of the Universe. Darwin also drew on the Eleusinian Mysteries and used Rosicrucian doctrines in his poetry. He conveyed the idea that Greek and Roman myths were based on ancient scientific knowledge that was transmitted through the mystery religions.

It is a fascinating fact that secret societies, such as the mystery religions, Rosicrucianism, and Freemasonry, apparently taught evolutionary concepts. Let's look at what several Masonic writers have to say:

*"In Freemasonry is concealed the mystery of creation, the answer to the problem of existence."*<sup>2</sup>

*"Ancient secret doctrine, which is concealed in Masonic allegory and symbols, teaches evolution as surely as Darwin ever taught it."*<sup>3</sup>

*"Man who has sprung from the earth and developed through the lower kingdoms of nature to his present rational state, has yet to complete his evolution by becoming a god-like being and unifying his consciousness with the Omniscient —to promote which is and always has been the sole aim and purpose of all Initiation."*<sup>4</sup>



Interestingly, these concepts are also incorporated into the teachings of spiritualism and the New Age movement. It appears that Erasmus Darwin took these concepts and espoused them as scientific truth. He used the early scientific views of his day as supporting evidence.

Ironically, much of the science upon which he based his conclusions was subsequently proved to be wrong. For example, the idea of spontaneous generation was based on observations of maggots appearing on meat left sitting out. This theory was later disproven by Louis Pasteur.

The evolutionary ideas as expressed by Erasmus Darwin had a significant influence on his grandson, Charles Darwin, who adopted the belief system and worldview of his grandfather. Charles had been exposed to his

grandfather's ideas while he was young and had copies of his books, which were said to be heavily annotated. He subsequently endorsed many of the same concepts that were promoted by his grandfather.

Charles Darwin was very successful in taking the evolutionary speculations of his grandfather and clothing them in scientific language, thereby giving them the appearance of scientific objectivity. But considering the source of these ideas, they seem to represent a worldview rather than science.

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