

## INTRODUCTION

By H.C. Felder

As a Christian African American, I am very familiar with atheist arguments that Christianity is a racist religion. They contend that it supports slavery and genocide. And although I agree that there have been many Christians who used the Bible as a weapon of race, neither the religion itself, nor the Bible as its foundation, are at all racist. However, what I find interesting is that these same atheist, rarely if ever acknowledge the racist roots of their belief system.

In this paper, I intend to expose Darwinism as being even more racist than their accusations against Christianity. I will look at the seed of scientific racism as planted by Charles Darwin and how that seed matured into full blown racism. I will also examine and contrast the theological consequences of Darwinian evolution with the theological consequences of God's existence as our Intelligent Designer, as it relates to racism.

## DARWIN PLANTS THE SEEDS

### A New Idea on Race

One thing is clear; Darwin changed the idea of race. As Ken Ham and Charles Ware, authors of *Darwin's Plantation* wrote, "Before Darwin, the term 'race' was largely a political and geographical term. People that were closely related biologically (such as the English and Irish) were considered to be separate races."<sup>1</sup> However, since the time of Darwin and his theory of evolution, people now consider race based primarily on physical characteristics.

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1. Ken Ham and A. Charles Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1028-1029.

There is debate as to whether or not Darwin was a racist because he was a “staunch abolitionist.”<sup>2</sup> The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines racism as “a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and those racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.”<sup>3</sup> This is consistent with the definition of Jerry Bergman, author of *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin*, who uses the definition that “Racism is the belief that biological differences in humans create a hierarchy that ranks some races as superior and others as inferior.”<sup>4</sup> By either definition, Darwin’s own writings reveal that he was indeed a racist, regardless of his views on slavery. He clearly believed that the races are inherently unequal.

In his book, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin clearly stated that one of the three goals of his book was to consider “the value of the differences between the so-called races of man.”<sup>5</sup> He also wrote “The western nations of Europe, who now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors, and stand at the summit of civilization....”<sup>6</sup>

In describing those with darker skin, “he often used words like ‘savage,’ ‘low,’ and ‘degraded’ to describe American Indians, pygmies, and almost every ethnic group whose physical appearance and culture differed from his own.”<sup>7</sup> Darwin also had much to say in his journals about the locals he came into contact with during his famous trip on the *Beagle* in which he solidified his theory of evolution. Darwin concluded that the natives were

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2. John P. Jackson Jr. and Nadine M. Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, Science and society (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 69.

3. Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster*, Science and society (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 69, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism> (accessed March 25, 2013).

4. Jerry Bergman, *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin: A Critical Analysis of an Icon of Science* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2011), 211.

5. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 2d ed. (Akron, Ohio: Werner company, 1874), Kindle Electronic Edition, Location 143-144.

6. *Ibid.*, 2662-2663.

7. Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 162-165.

The most abject and miserable creatures ‘he had ever seen and that these poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world.’<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, on one of the last pages of his book, *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin expressed the opinion that he would rather be descended from a monkey than from a “Savage.” Darwin found the idea of being descendent from inferior groups revolting “The main conclusion arrived at in this work, namely, that man is descended from some lowly organised form, will, I regret to think, be highly distasteful to many. But there can hardly be a doubt that we are descended from barbarians.”<sup>9</sup> In the words of Jerry Bergman, “Darwin clearly held beliefs that today would be considered blatantly racist. Furthermore, his writings made a major contribution to the problem of racism and were widely used to support racism.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, it is interesting to note that Darwin’s above comments were made before the formulation of his theory of evolution, which is contained in his previous work having the complete title of *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* which was published in 1859. Darwin was obviously a racist before formulating his theory of evolution.

### SCIENTISM PROVIDES THE FERTILIZER

Not only was the man Darwin racist, but the theory of Darwinism is just as racist. Ham and Ware wrote “Although racism did not begin with Darwinism, Darwin did more than any

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8. Charles Darwin, *Journal of Researchers into the Geology and Natural History of the Various Countries Visited by H.M.S. Beagle under the Command of Captain FitzRoy, R.N. from 1832 to 1836* (London: Henry Colburn, 1839, facsimile reprint(New Yorke: Hafner, 1952), p.228; quoted in Bergman, *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin: A Critical Analysis of an Icon of Science*, 211.

9. Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 10978.

10. Bergman, *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin: A Critical Analysis of an Icon of Science*, 211.

person to popularize it.”<sup>11</sup> Darwinism provided the legitimacy to institutionalize racism and genocide.

### Darwinism Provides Scientific Legitimacy for Racism

#### *View of Races*

One of the most infamous court cases in American history is the Scopes trial. John Scopes was prosecuted for teaching evolution from *A Civic Biology* textbook written by George William Hunter. Although he won his case and was allowed to teach evolution, what most people do not know is that *A Civic Biology* used Darwinian evolution to teach kids scientific racism. Hunter wrote:

The Races of Man.— At the present time there exist upon the earth five races or varieties of man, each very different from the other in instincts, social customs, and, to an extent, in structure. These are the Ethiopian or negro type, originating in Africa; the Malay or brown race, from the islands of the Pacific; the American Indian; the Mongolian or yellow race, including the natives of China, Japan, and the Eskimos; and finally, *the highest type of all, the Caucasians, represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America*<sup>12</sup> (emphasis mine)

The effects of Darwin inspired racism did not stop with biology. Physical anthropology in the second half of the 19th century became focused on providing the physical evidence to support the racist theories of evolution. In the words John P. Jackson and Nadine M. Weidman, authors of *Race, Racism, and Science*, “the basic assumption of the science was that each race could be represented by its own essential set of traits, physical traits primarily, which were in turn associated with corresponding mental and moral characteristics.”<sup>13</sup>

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11. Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 166.

12. George William Hunter, *A Civic Biology: Presented in Problems* (New York: American Book Company, 1914), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 14, Location 2439.

13. Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, 72.

Now, with science fully in its corner, racism came out of the closet of society and started to occupy the ivory towers of academia. So convinced were Darwinists of their racial dogma, that Netherlands teacher Bernelot Moens attempted to “use artificial insemination to cross an anthropoid ape with a ‘Negro’ to demonstrate the close relationship between the two.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, one professor in the 1880s wrote “I consider the Negro to be a lower species of man and cannot make up my mind to look upon him as ‘a man and a brother,’ for the gorilla would then also have to be admitted into the family.”<sup>15</sup> And according to ethnologist and Darwinist Oscar Peschel,

The Negro is far removed from the European and close to the ape through its small build, through the relatively small breadth of its skull, through its relatively long upper limbs, and further the relatively short length of the thigh... Also the Negro is more animal, in that it gives off a disgusting odor, distorts its face in grimaces, and its voice has a harsh, grating tone<sup>16</sup>

### ***Genocide in the Name of Science***

Those who were now considered inferior by Darwin faced extermination by his disciples. For instance, “Documented evidence shows that the remains of perhaps 10,000 or more of Australia’s Aborigines were shipped to British museums in a frenzied attempt to prove the widespread belief that they were the ‘missing link’... Written evidence shows that many of the ‘fresh’ specimens were obtained by simply going out and murdering the aboriginal people in my country.”<sup>17</sup>

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14. Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 110.

15. Ernest Haeckel, *The History of Creation: Vol II*, translated by E. Ray Lancaster (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1876), p. 365-366; quoted in Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 42.

16. Oscar Peschel, “Mensch und Affe,” *Das Ausland* 36 (1863): 521, quoted in Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 112.

17. 1866 deathbed memoir from Korah Wills, mayor of Bowen in Queensland Australia, quoted in Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 190-200.

Darwinists, such as French writer Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) rejected all religion and all morality and followed only the god of Darwinism. As a result, he took Darwin's theory to a logical conclusion, "He called for the elimination of all moral sentiment that would stand in the way of a massive breeding program that would eliminate racial inferiors...the only solution to the racial crisis would be the elimination of the inferior races."<sup>18</sup> The idea of extermination of inferior races became more and more popular. The consequences of Darwin's views on race echoed throughout the subsequent decades with predictable results as Ham and Ware record "Stalin, Hitler, and Mao were responsible for the deaths of tens of millions — and it can be shown that they did this because of the influence of Darwinian naturalism, which fanned the flames of ethnic superiority."<sup>19</sup>

Life in and of itself was no longer considered sacred. The sanctity of life was now based on race. For some, the ultimate goal was the purification of the white race. Writer Edward A. Freeman wrote "The best remedy for whatever is amiss in America would be if every Irishman killed a Negro and be hanged for it."<sup>20</sup> And in the words of the famous American Science Fiction writer H.G. Wells, "there is only one sane and logical thing to be done with a really inferior race, and that is to exterminate it."<sup>21</sup>

## Hitler and Germany

Possibly nowhere was the logical out workings of the racist ideas of Darwin more prevalent than in Nazi Germany. In fact "By the 1860s, many German biologist, sociologists, philosophers, theologians, ethnologists, and economist converted to Darwinism, applying it

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18. Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, 108-109.

19. Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 257-259.

20. Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, 107.

21. Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 185.

easily to the natural and social realms.”<sup>22</sup> Darwin influenced German scientist to accept the idea that human evolution required the elimination of the inferior races. According German Darwinist Eugen Fischer, inferior races should only be allowed to live at the service and pleasure of Europeans “Therefore one should guarantee to them only the measure of protection that they need as a race inferior to us, in order to survive, but no more, and only so long as they are useful to us.”<sup>23</sup>

Racially based genocide was now scientifically justified “The German military commander in Southwest Africa, ordered the annihilation of all Hereros—men, women, and children—in what he called a ‘racial war.’ He explicitly justified racial annihilation using Darwinian concepts....an estimated 81 percent of the Hereros actually perished through the brutal German policies.”<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, German geographer and anthropologist Oscar Peschel “exonerated Spaniards for slaughtering Indians, claiming that it was not brutality—they were merely following natural law ‘We must say that this extinction [of human races] is a natural process, like the extinction of secondary animal and plant forms [in earlier geological eras].”<sup>25</sup>

### ***Used to Support Slavery***

Science based on Darwinian evolution was also used to support slavery. Darwinian ethnologist Friedrich Hellwald wrote “The British were foolish to end slavery, which would only result in ‘the extinction of the Negroes,’ who can survive in slavery, but cannot compete with the

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22. Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, 86.

23. Eugen Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards* (Jena, 1913), 296-306, quoted in Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 198.

24. *Ibid.*, 205.

25. Oscar Peschel, “Ursprung und Verschiedenheit der Menschenrassen,” *Das Ausland* 33 (1860):33, quoted in Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 188.

white race in free competition.”<sup>26</sup> Jackson and Weidman wrote regarding this time that “Common medical opinion held that freedom was unhealthy for Negroes, that they deteriorated mentally, morally, and physically as freedmen.”<sup>27</sup>

### The Theological Consequence of Darwinism

Ideas have consequences and so did the ideas of Darwinism as it relates to race.

#### ***The Devaluation of Man***

A major theological consequence of Darwinism is that all men are not equal. Based on Darwinian evolution, not only is the definition of who qualifies as man ambiguous, but also how you relate to different races also becomes an issue. As a result, there was even doubt as to whether the gospel message even applies to the inferior races as Ham and Ware wrote “Over the centuries, some missionaries have not seen the need to take the gospel to ‘primitive’ tribes because they are not considered sufficiently ‘human’ on the evolutionary scale.”<sup>28</sup>

It becomes easy to objectify a group once you rob them of their humanity. It permits you to commit atrocities that you would not otherwise commit. Inferior races become no more valuable than a lab rat.

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26. Friedrich Hellwald, *Culturgeschichte in ihrer naturlichen Entwicklung bis zur Gegenwart* (Augsburg, 1875), 656, 755, quoted in Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 189.

27. Jackson and Weidman, *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, 85.

28. Ham and Ware, *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, 48-49.

### *A New Morality*

If the evolutionary biologist John Alcock is correct when he says “we exist solely to propagate the genes within us,”<sup>29</sup> then propagating our genes becomes the highest good. It also becomes the ultimate purpose for everything.

A result of this thinking gives life to a new morality. Everything must now be judged on the basis of evolution. According to Richard Weikart, author of *From Darwin to Hitler*, “A number of social Darwinist thinkers argued that racial extermination, even if carried out by bloody means, would result in moral progress for humanity...since Europeans were morally superior to other peoples, the extermination of other races would rid the world of immortality.”<sup>30</sup> In this instance, murder now becomes right and the right to life, if not valued worthy, becomes immoral. It would also logically imply that actions such as rape and genocide are not bad, but ultimately good since it would allow the superior race to propagate their genes on to the next generation and further advances the idea of “survival of the fittest.”

## **AN INTELLIGENT RESPONSE TO DARWINISM**

### The Theological Consequence of Intelligent Design

Just as Darwinism has clear theological consequences, so does belief in an intelligent designer. That intelligent designer is consistent with the God of the Bible and I consider them one in the same, however, proving that is beyond the scope of this paper.

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29. John Alcock, *Animal Behavior: An Evolutionary Approach* (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 1998), p. 16,609, quoted in Bergman, *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin: A Critical Analysis of an Icon of Science*, 79.

30. Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, 183-184.

### ***The Inherent Worth of Man***

If there is an Intelligent Designer and that designer corresponds to the God of the Bible, then man has inherent worth and racism is wrong! If, as the Bible says, man is made in the image of God, then we have worth to God. If we have worth to God, then we have an inherent worth and every man, regardless of skin color, would be just as valuable as any other man. The Bible makes no racial distinctions. All men are equal in His sight.

Although there were Christians who supported racism, that view is anti-biblical. In fact, Darwinism replaced the previously held common belief that all men were brothers and sisters made in the image of the same God

Before the nineteenth century, the intellectual dominance of Christianity militated against some of the worst excesses of racism. Christian theology taught the universal brotherhood of all races, who descended from common ancestors—Adam and Eve. Most Christians believed that all humans, regardless of race, were created in the image of God and possessed eternal souls<sup>31</sup>

Darwinism helped shift the value of some men from a holy image bearer, to a monkey in a cage.

### ***True Morality***

If there is an Intelligent Designer and that designer corresponds to the God of the Bible, then there is objective morality. God would be the ultimate source of right and wrong, not man. Genocide would be objectively wrong since we are made in His image. Without such an objective standard, then either each man decides what is right, our culture decides what is right, or our nation decides what is right.

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31. Ibid., 103.

If each person decides what is right then we could not say that genocide, rape or murder is wrong, only that it is wrong for me. It would be completely moral for someone who does not share your view to steal from you, rape you, or even murder you.

If our culture decides what is right, then genocide of one culture by another would not be wrong. There would be nothing objectively wrong with one culture enslaving another culture as we have seen during America's history.

If our nation decides what's right, then a nation, such as Germany, could morally exterminate millions of its own citizens and not be wrong. Yet, we instinctively know that this was morally wrong, but why? It can only be because we are appealing to a higher authority that is beyond ourselves. Otherwise, all we can say is that it was wrong from my perspective, which would not make it objectively wrong at all.

## **CONCLUSION**

I have attempted to demonstrate that the doctrine of Darwinism is fundamentally racist. Racism is at the core of Darwinism and serves as its foundation. It cannot be removed. Darwinism falls if we remove the idea of man evolving from apes, with some of us being more evolved than other.

It was not my intention to demonstrate that science is racist. I hold no such view. I just do not consider Darwinism to be science. Even if all scientist agree that it is true, that would not make is scientific. Science is not based on consensus. No scientist has ever observed one species turn into another species. That is accepted as a dogmatic article of faith.

The retreat from racism by science was not primarily scientific, but was due mostly to political and moral rejection. Ironically, this could have never happened in a truly Darwinian world since there would be no moral authority other than "survival of the fittest."

Neither Science--as the study of nature, nor the Bible, nor the God of the Bible are racist. Racism has one source and that source is summed up in a little three letter word that has gone out of fashion. That word is "sin." Man is sinful and will validate the evil desires of his heart using whatever belief he holds high.

Darwinism, nor any other form of evolution, can address the issue of sin since from a physical perspective it does not exist. You cannot tell me how much it weighs or put it under a microscope. Yet everyone reading this knows that there is such a thing. And unless we can acknowledge it, we cannot fight it. If we cannot fight it, we cannot defeat it. As a result, racism and all of the evils of man's heart will go unchecked.

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