

# WHAT IS EVOLUTION?

## *Forum Definitions*

**E**MERSON once wrote to Thomas Carlyle and informed him that Margaret Fuller had decided to accept the universe; whereupon the canny Scotchman replied, "By gad, she'd better!" So it is with the theory of Evolution. Contrary to the belief of the late Governor Peay of Tennessee and the equally late William Jennings Bryan, it is not a question of whether we shall accept Evolution as truth. It is simply a question of "By gad, we'd better!" The alternative is that fossilization of the intellect which most certainly overtakes the stand-pat mind in a world of changing, shifting values.

From the hundreds of definitions received this month, it is evident that a fair cross-section of the American public has been profoundly moved by the battle over Evolution. Here are some of the more pertinent exhibits:

Evolution — the process of crawling up hill a foot at a time and slipping back only eleven inches. (*Georgia Harkness, Elmira, N. Y.*)

Evolution is the NOW and the SHALL BE of the WAS in the beginning. (*J. Landseer MacKenzie, New York City.*)

Evolution is the superstition of primitive Nature-worshippers who believe that the oyster (or was it the amœba?) entertained an ambition to become bigger, better, and bi-pedaled. Through a series of long and sustained efforts, covering unreckoned billions of years, Homo Sapiens finally arrived. With this remarkable achievement, all ambition expired — as well it might! The net result is US, devoted chiefly to making life ever more dangerous, difficult, and unhappy. (*Arthur V. Watts, Minneapolis, Minn.*)

Evolution is the flattering yet annoying doctrine that man and the universe have been worse and will be better off than they are: flattering in that it gives man the highest place as yet reached; annoying because man would fain boast of his ancestors too. (*James Greek, Union City, N. J.*)

Evolution — that which affords man the consolation of being able to trace his asininity back to the apes. (*Charles C. Schmidt, Downingtown, Pa.*)

Evolution is a little bit of Darrow in Tennessee. (*William A. Ward, Clinton, Conn.*)

Evolution — the *bête noire* of timid souls who, straining at the gnat of truth, swallowed the camel of ignorance. (*L. L. Rice, Mayland, Tenn.*)

Evolution is a monkey's tail fastened to the philosophies of the great Golden-Age Greeks. (*G. J. Trew, Washington, D. C.*)

Evolution — the expression of an animal of the sea, living on the land, and wanting to fly through the air. (*H. Theodore Stubbs, Locust Valley, L. I., N. Y.*)

Evolution is that force of nature which is credited with having made men out of monkeys, and conversely has most assuredly made monkeys out of many men. (*E. Wilbur Cook, Jr., Danville, Ky.*)

Prizes are awarded for the following definitions:

1 Evolution means gradual growth, which may be explained in the following manner: ox wagon, Ford, Rolls-Royce; William J. Bryan, Eighteenth Amendment, Al Smith; the Holy Bible, Joseph McCabe, H. L. Mencken; the law of the old West, mob law, Chicago. (*Brice O. Taylor, Sulphur Springs, Tex.*)

2 Evolution — a cosmological theory that attributes the origin of the universe to natural development instead of special creation. (*Goldia Cooksey, Norman, Okla.*)

3 Evolution —  $(a+b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$  is an algebraic illustration of every possible use of the word, for  $a^2 + 2ab + b^2$  is a development of every latent characteristic of  $(a+b)^2$ . If  $(a+b)^2$  should be said to develop into  $a^2 + 3ab + b^2$ , then we have an instance, not of evolution only, but of accretion also. Something actually new has been added. The whole battle over organic Evolution is, fundamentally, a battle over the legitimacy of supposing that nature can add as well as multiply. (*Winthrop Parkhurst, New York City.*)

4 Evolution — comprehensively stated, it is that changing process which continuously unfolds, link by link, the progressive chain of cause and effect. (*Yutaka Minakuchi, Glover, Vt.*)

5 Evolution — the theory that all forms of life have a common origin in the dim and distant past. In that the theory supposes a kinship of all living things, it brings harmony to the world in which we live. In that it reasons out fallacies of the static world in which we were taught to believe, it brings disillusionment and shock; hence, in a society organized to perpetuate truth imperfectly perceived and doctrines thereby formulated, it meets resentment. At best, the theory is man's search for truth in a changing world. (*L. Alma Lupo, Columbia, S. C.*)

*Next word to be defined: — EDUCATION. Definitions, typewritten and not exceeding 100 words, must reach the Editor by July 25. Prizes of \$5.00, or any book mentioned or advertised in THE FORUM (value not exceeding \$5.00), for each winning definition.*



ALFRED E. SMITH  
GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK

# OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES — SELECTED BY FORUM READERS

*Cartoons by Oscar Cesare*

*THIS month brings forth the best Democratic papers submitted in THE FORUM's Presidential Contest, following the best Republican papers published last month.*

## PRIZE AWARD

*IN judging this contest the Editor has assumed the rôle of a citizen from Mars who, disregarding the realities and probabilities of American politics, is asked to choose Our Next President solely on the evidence submitted. Upon this basis the Editor is pleased to award the prize of one hundred dollars to Mr. John P. Bruton, whose paper, published in this issue, gives the most cogent reasons why Senator Walsh ought to be Our Next President — this in spite of the fact that he has withdrawn from the contest.*

## I — ALFRED E. SMITH

NORMAN HAPGOOD

**T**HE man with the highest individual chance of becoming our next President is Alfred E. Smith, four times Governor of New York. There is nobody in either party except Smith who is almost sure of the nomination. I think the big campaign money scandals are helping Hoover toward nomination, but his chance of getting it is much less than half that of Smith. If both are nominated, the odds on Hoover will be small.

No one has the audacity even to assert that any other Democrat has a reasonable prospect of shaking the grip of the Republicans. Why is it that Smith actually has a prospect? As many a hard-boiled Republican believes Smith is likely to win, there must be reasons.

People to-day vote mainly on business prospects. The farmer, the storekeeper, the investor, and the magnate have been brought up to believe that the prosperity of this virgin and mechanical continent is based on the wisdom of Mellon, Coolidge, and the combination of politics and big business. If unemployment is still evident when the voter goes into a booth with his God next November, it will not be quite easy to persuade him to select a President merely because he wears the label "Re-

publican," provided his alternative is the ablest business executive in the political history of New York.

Smith is not a theorist. He has fought many a good fight for liberalism, but his fighting has not been in the air. The few voters who care for freedom as it was visioned by Jefferson will remember what Smith did for sanity in such cases as Jim Larkin, Gitlow, and the Socialist Assemblymen. The few will think of the fact that his appointments to the Supreme Court will be made in the light of his agreement with Holmes and Brandeis in social outlook. Besides those who are philosophically for liberalism, there may be also the ranks of labor taking an interest in this outlook, as it sees the abuse of the injunction putting an unfair weapon into the hands of some of the most brutal capitalists. There is a good deal of talk nowadays about the help Smith receives from studious persons especially interested in social reform. It may be well not to forget that those groups, now his followers, went over to him thirteen years ago on his social and labor record already established in Albany.

I grow weary of hearing about what a good politician he is. In mere shrewdness