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Shaking The Foundation: Charles Darwin And The Theory Of Evolution



Synopsis

"I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of design." English naturalist Charles Darwin wrote this in 1860, a year after publishing his theory of evolution. His words show the personal struggle of a man forced by his own observations to answer the fundamental question Where do we come from? in a revolutionary new way. Darwin's internal battle reflects a broader public struggle the attempt to reconcile scientific fact with religious faith. *Shaking the Foundation: Charles Darwin and the Theory of Evolution* follows this battle, from the supporting theories of fellow scientists, to the opposing voices of clergymen, to twenty-first-century supporters of Intelligent Design. Through quotations from letters and other contemporary sources, you'll meet the personalities and ideas involved in the debate. You'll also examine some of the legal cases that brought evolution into the U.S. courtroom. These cases include the famous Scopes trial in 1925 and the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* case in 2005, which tested a school policy requiring the teaching of Intelligent Design. Through these and other debates, you'll learn more about the struggle over one of life's most profound questions.

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Customer Reviews

Gr 6-8-Darwin's original conclusions on natural selection/evolution were controversial from the start, with even Darwin initially finding his research at odds with the religious convictions of his youth. Controversy still remains, as Johnson notes in her lucid text, with the scientific world agreeing with Darwin and other scientists, and a good portion of the religious sector in adamant support of

intelligent design. Johnson takes on the "evolution" of Darwin's original theory and presents a history of the social and scientific uproar it has engendered over the years. Embellished with small information boxes (many containing brief biographical notes on other scientists or persons related to Darwin's work), graced with numerous quotations, and liberally sprinkled with black-and-white photos and illustrations, the text follows a historical procession to the present day, including the quarrels of creationists and evolutionists in regard to school curricula. The author's research is revealed in her source notes, and in a "selected" bibliography, as is a solid list of websites and further readings. Unfortunately the latter does not include Laurence Pringle's excellent *Billions of Years* (Boyds Mills, 2011). All in all, this is a clear, forthright look at the startling conclusions drawn from a scientist's research and the enormous ramifications of his conclusions. Well done, and well worth reading. -Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY

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Perhaps no other man of science has proven to be so socially and academically controversial in the modern era as Charles Darwin. This title is not about Darwin's specific scientific theories but rather his attempts to reconcile his notions about nature with his religious belief systems and those of the society in which he lived. Readers may be surprised to learn that Darwin was not the first scientist to fall out of line with official church teachings on topics such as the age of the earth, transmutation, and intelligent design, or that he has been tied to many thoughts that never existed during his own lifetime, like eugenics and social Darwinism. Johnson's clear text draws heavily on primary source material, including Darwin's own scientific works and autobiography, and the red-hued design, with plenty of black-and-white photos, is excellent. This book presents Darwin in the context of a scientific community and successfully clarifies his personal impact on a variety of philosophies and controversies now synonymous with his name. Grades 6-9.

--Erin Anderson

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