William Jennings Bryan (seated at left) is interrogated by Clarence Darrow, during the trial of the State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*, July 20, 1925. Because of the extreme heat, Judge Raulston moved court proceedings outdoors. The session was held on a platform that had been erected at the front of the Rhea County Courthouse to accommodate ministers who wanted to preach during the time of the trial.*

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Darrow asked if Bryan believed that God created the earth in only six days, as claimed in the Book of Genesis. "Not six days of twenty-four hours," Bryan responded, seemingly conceding that the infallible truth of the Bible sometimes strained literal interpretation.

In frustration and exhaustion, Bryan thundered that the diabolical agnostic Darrow wished to "cast ridicule on everybody who believes in the Bible."[274] Darrow responded that Bryan "insult[ed] every man of science and learning in the world because he does not believe in your fool religion."[275] The press and subsequent historians characterized Darrow's interrogation as an abject humiliation of Bryan that exposed the rigidity of his thinking and his ignorance of science. The Great Commoner's flustered performance was widely mocked, and he left the witness box a diminished man. Darrow stood triumphant. Five days later, while still in Dayton, Bryan died in his sleep.

The operatic course of these events has tended to obscure some crucial legal facts of the case. For one, Darrow lost. After all the hullabaloo surrounding the trial, the jury deliberated for a mere nine minutes before finding Scopes guilty; he was ordered to pay a $100 fine. The Supreme Court of Tennessee upheld the Butler Act's constitutionality in 1927, and the law remained on the books for another forty years.[276] While the momentum of the fundamentalist movement was stalled by the trial and the loss of its beloved standard bearer, the underlying conflict between secular modernists and religious traditionalists persisted as a major force within American society, even up to the present-day.

Aimee Semple McPherson

The ability of fundamentalists to adapt and thrive in the 1920s was dramatically illustrated in the meteoric rise of **Aimee Semple McPherson**. "Sister Aimee," as she was known to her legion of followers, was one of the most successful evangelists of the era. The daughter of a Methodist minister, McPherson embraced Pentecostalism as a teenager after attending a revival. Pentecostalism, which emerged in the early twentieth century, was a branch of the holiness movement known for its ecstatic form of worship in which congregants overcome with the Holy Spirit jumped, writhed on the ground, sang, shouted, and even spoke in tongues.[277] Pentecostals also practiced faith healing by the "laying of hands" and believed in the power of prophecy.

In 1923, thirty-three-year-old McPherson left the revival circuit and settled in Los Angeles, where she opened the grand Angelus Temple, which cost $1.5 million to build. One visitor aptly described the impressive concrete domed building as "half Roman Coliseum, half Parisian opera house."[278] McPherson intended the five-thousand-seat temple to serve as a hub for evangelism as well as the home church of her "**Four Square Gospel**," which derived from its emphasis on salvation through Christ, the literal interpretation of the Bible, faith healing, and the imminent return of Christ.[279] Although McPherson held fast to tenets of "old time religion" and was a staunch anti-evolutionist, her methods were thoroughly modern.

The highlight of McPherson's services at the stadium-sized Angelus Temple was lavishly produced spectacles that interpreted biblical stories and featured elaborate sets, lighting, a full brass band, and professional actors. In these "illustrated sermons," the immaculately dressed Sister Aimee unfailingly played the starring role.[280] *Harper's* magazine hailed McPherson for "staging month after month, even year after year, the most perennially successful show in the United States."[281] Another journalist described a Sunday visit to Angelus Temple as "a sensuous debauch served up in the name of religion."[282] In addition to her flare for Hollywood showmanship, McPherson was also an early adopter of radio. She equipped the Angelus Temple with twin antennae