

THEOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

Why should the theologian discuss evolution? It is essentially a scientific subject, and what relation has science to religious doctrine? The theologian deals with evolution because it thrusts itself into the sphere of theology and assumes the right to modify, control, or destroy theological systems. A sound philosophy is built on a sound science, and theology is in a large measure philosophical, since it involves and includes a theory of the universe, its origin, control, final cause, and destiny. Whatever, therefore, has bearing on the whence, why, what and whither of the universe cannot be overlooked by theology.

That the scientist and the theologian should sometimes cross swords is not remarkable, although their agreements are a hundred to one against their disagreements, and a true science and a true theology will always agree. The scientist and the theologian arrive at truth on somewhat different roads: the former by observation and formulation of the laws regarding the natural universe; the latter by applying methods of induction and deduction to a wider field than the physical and by using the revelation of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the most important source of our knowledge of divine things. There are points along the path where either may lose his way, and differences arise. There are laws and evidences open to the theologian as valid as those that rule in the laboratory. If the laboratory asserts what contravenes logic and consciousness there will be disagreement. When the laboratory reduces psychology to physiology, and the soul of man to a string of physical sensations the theologian will assuredly protest the findings.

The theologian is not antagonistic to science. He only asks that the dicta of scientists shall not contradict known truth. The theologian is naturally conservative. He declines to accept the claim of "assured results" till they have been tested by all the accepted standards—at least sufficiently to make them assured. What were "assured results" fifty years ago are

in the scrap-heap today. The theologian asks for a true science as against a false science. He asks that the output of the physical laboratory shall harmonize with that of the other departments of human knowledge. Herbert Spencer has given us a voluminous philosophy of the universe based on evolution. But Spencer had the convenient faculty of overlooking everything that contradicted his theory. He simply stepped over it with his seven-league boots, and strode on to the conclusion he had set for himself. That is an easy way to make a philosophy; but will it stand the test of time? That which lies beyond human knowledge, that which man doesn't know, that, according to Spencer, is the realm of the theological, the realm of God—the Unknown and the Unknowable. But the theologian is convinced that the so-called Unknowable has revealed Himself and that that revelation is the most important part of all our knowledge.

The debate which has long been going on between scientist and theologian over the question of evolution shows that the theory of evolution is not without its religious significance. The conflict cannot be described simply as Science versus Religion, or Christianity versus Evolution. For the term evolution has not distinguished sharply between the Christian and the non-Christian. Christians on either side of the debate agree that a *true* science and a *true* theology cannot conflict. But the strenuous controversy which has waged over this subject indicates clearly that the truth or falsity of evolution has a vital bearing on Christian faith. The purpose of this article is to show how evolution has entered the sphere of theology and influenced the discussion of the great theological themes.

I. *Evolution and God.*

Recent years have witnessed new discussions of the doctrine of God.

1. Pantheism is an evolutionary system throughout. And the menace of pantheism in theological thinking did not cease with Spinoza, nor with the aftermath of Kant's transcendent-

alism in the philosophies of the Absolute of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Pantheism, or a pantheizing philosophy, is a present danger; and perhaps always will be to the man who speculates on the nature of God. The late John Burroughs, a distinguished naturalist, was an out-and-out pantheist, and definitely ascribed all evidence of design and purpose in the world to a "cosmical intelligence." The doctrine of the divine immanence, so prominent in such discussions, is open to statements that blend the Deity in the universe. The doctrine has been expressed in a way that looks towards pantheism; and this bias marks much current discussion. All this obscures the personality of God. Against such a view the Christian theologian lifts a warning voice; for whatever obscures God's personality impairs human responsibility.

2. Another view traceable to evolutionary sources is that God himself is but an imperfect, finite, and developing deity. It is hard to see what is to be gained, in a logical consideration of the case, by such a contention. It is evident that a finite being cannot be eternal. Infinity of attribute is essential to infinity of being. If God is a developing deity each preceding age must necessarily place its circumscriptions about his being. This would soon land us in logical absurdities. Either we have a God that recedes in the abysmal past to the infinitesimal, to a virtual nonentity, or we have a demigod or a demiurge under some infinite, eternal, self-existent super-intelligence. And what have we gained? How quickly the logic of the case discards the developing deity for the eternal God.

3. Further we have the doctrine of pluralism, of which the late Professor James of Harvard was an advocate. This looks too much like a retreat toward the dualism of the old Persians, or even to the polytheism of the pagans. The view is philosophic rather than scientific; and its relation to evolutionary doctrine does not at first appear. The prodigality of forms in nature, the immense variety in types of life, the progress of the world as the resultant of innumerable conflicting

forces, are alleged as suggesting an analogy in the unseen world if not a variety of causes for, and controls of, this one. But this argument for pluralism is offset by the evidence for the scientific unity of the world and its processes, the rigid conformity to type, the immensity of plan in the universe embracing all things from the highest to the lowest. The mind that intently considers these things will be duly impressed with the wisdom of the Scriptural injunction: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

4. Again, there are those who tell us that universal thought is God. This amounts to the denial of God. Man is then his own God. He possesses within himself all the powers that are needful and available for human activities. The supreme thing in life is the development or evolution of the inborn potentialities. The discovery of these resident forces is the supreme revelation. After this a man's destiny is in his own hands. It sums itself up in the denial of God and the deification of man.

5. There are those who call themselves theistic evolutionists. Their evolutionary views may or may not have modified their conception of God. There are all grades of evolutionists. There are many to whose doctrine of God *per se* no exception could be taken. There are however two tendencies to which many yield. Either they lose God in nature and tend to pantheism, or put God so far back and so far off as to simulate deism. Either tangent is disastrous. The personality of God is obscured, or secondary causes infringe on the immediacy of God's being and power. The theistic evolutionist congratulates himself that he occupies a more strategic position than the materialistic. And this is true from the standpoint of religion and philosophy. But it is not true from the scientific standpoint. All the scientific objections to evolution, and they are many, bear against the theistic type as forcibly as against the materialistic. All the difficulties from paleontology, sterility of hybrids, Mendelism, and a score of scientific fields, are applicable to theistic evolution as well

as to any other form of the theory. If men think that they can lightly surmount all obstacles by describing themselves as theistic evolutionists they can be easily undeceived. The theory of evolution has its difficulties even when the doctrine of God is conceded. This has not been sufficiently recognized by writers on the subject.

II. *Evolution and Creation.*

Haeckel said: "With one stroke Darwin has annihilated the dogma of creation." Perhaps that is more than Darwin himself would have said, at least in his earlier years. However it shows the attitude of a large group of evolutionists toward creation. If there was no creation, the eternity of matter follows inevitably. That conclusion has its evident weaknesses. We will not discuss them here. That the present order is eternal is indefensible. That change takes place is undeniable. That every effect must have a cause is incontrovertible. But what causes evolution? Is evolution itself creator or created? Does evolution supersede or displace creation? Is evolution a method of creation as Lyman Abbott used to say? Or must creation be a fact before evolution can begin? Must not evolution itself be caused or, in a sense, created? If evolution is orderly change what changes? Must there be a substance in which the change takes place; and whence did it come? Can evolution account for itself not to say the whole universe? Even as to its secondary cause, if there be such, we get a variety of answers none of which is satisfactory to the scientists of the present day.

Lamarck, the father of modern evolution, said this cause, the underlying principle, was heredity transmitting accumulated changes. Investigators soon discovered the weakness of this position and demolished it. Increasingly scientists have ranged themselves against it, and Mendelism seems to have said the last word. Heredity has been eliminated as a basis of evolution because heredity accounts only for sameness and not for differentiation, and evolution can proceed only by differentiation.

Darwin based evolution on natural selection and the survival of the fittest. What a furore it made! Fifty years ago if a man did not assent to the dogma of Darwin he was written down an obscurantist. But what has happened? Who now believes in natural selection as a basis of evolution? There is scarcely a second rate scientist so poor as to do it reverence. It left too much to chance; and this world is anything but a world of chance. Besides, if intelligent selection, tried out by Mendel and scores of others, cannot produce a new species, what probability remains that accidental selection could do so? At any rate natural selection belongs to the buried shades. This is not the declaration of the church, nor of a few conservative ministers, but of the leaders of scientific thought. Professor Bateson frankly admits it, but hopes that some other cause may be discovered, and says: "We walk by faith and not by sight."

"Resident forces" is a term being used by many, but what is that but another appeal to heredity? The same objection arises, namely, the difficulty of accounting for transmutation by a process of heredity, which gives sameness, not difference. Resident forces require a cause and intelligent direction, so that the materialistic evolutionist at least can find no comfort in this plea. Moreover resident forces have already established a law of uniformity in the matter of reproduction according to the Biblical phrase "after its kind." Every field of grain, every garden is standing evidence that second causes rigidly adhere to conformity to type. All speculative arguments need the support of observed historical instances, or of empirical tests, and these seem to be lacking in this case. Not longer than a year ago Julian Huxley complained of the evolutionist's bias to speculation and his neglect of experimental proof. The "laws of nature" which were recently supposed to account for the universe, are now known to explain nothing in themselves; so "resident forces" is a term the vagueness of which covers a multitude of assumptions.

But what shall the scientist put in place of heredity and

natural selection? We might modestly suggest, the immanent God. It would at least be as good a postulate as any of the former. But would that be scientific? Yes, unless an intelligent and immanent personality is inferior to an intangible and impersonal law. If this seems like creation, it is, for the present, the only alternative. A *present* God as against an absentee God has been the demand of some modern writers not altogether conservative.

The ablest paleontologists testify that species arrive with no known antecedents in the lineal descent, by a sort of *per saltem* arrival. If this is so, then such an arrival demands a sufficient cause, and such a cause as the present theory of evolution does not supply. If writers on evolution would assume that each species has developed from its own primordial germ, which germ was the creation of God, there could be little objection to such a theory. That this view receives so little attention from writers on evolution is somewhat remarkable unless, indeed, it does not lend itself sufficiently to the materialistic proclivities of this age. For this, as is readily seen, points toward creation. But when all is said, creation is the fact from which the mind of man, with all its meanderings, cannot escape. But it is needful to remark that second causes are not the refutation of a First Cause; and whether evolution is true or not, a Creator is a logical necessity to a rational explanation of the universe.

III. *Evolution and Man.*

Theology considers man as to his origin, longevity, physical and moral relation to his progenitors, racial unity or solidarity, and affiliated subjects. Evolution assumes to say something on all these topics and thus enlarge the field of discussion.

1. The Scriptures tell us that God created man. God is the cause or author of man's being. The Christian theologian therefore draws the line sharply against materialistic evolution. The Scriptures do not say *how* God created man,

whether instantaneously by fiat, or by a process of slow development. Interpreters therefore have some liberty where nothing definite is revealed. However it is certain that creation must precede development, and the creation of a germ which may have developed into a man is still creation by fiat and doubtless as instantaneous as the most conservative could wish. There is little to be gained therefore by ridiculing *fiat* creation. Further the record reads that man was formed from the dust of the ground, a fact of which chemical analysis furnishes sufficient witness. Some may say that this may be interpreted as brute dust instead of inanimate dust; which might be allowed to pass provided evolution be established beyond a doubt from other considerations. The man who approaches the Scriptures from the standpoint of evolution will readily accept such a view, a fact which shows how much depends upon "the approach," and whether that approach is valid. But that is the question which first must be settled.

2. Evolution also comes into the discussion of the original state of man. What was man when he came to be man? Was he a developed animal, or a *de novo* creation of God? Did human nature begin where animality left off? Did man "arrive" at the moment when, in the process of evolution, the animal came to self-consciousness? Are self-consciousness, reason, and the moral nature but the development of animal propensities? Herbert Spencer would say, yes. Dr. James McCosh, a much more careful thinker, would say, no.

There is no axiom better established in all thinking than *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Each thing reproduces *after its kind*. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"—is the law of nature and the law of God. Is there sufficient basis in animal nature to account for man's personal, rational, and moral endowments? On which side of the question do the Scriptures give their testimony if they give any? Here is where discussion is joined. And the importance of the discussion lies, not in the decision of a merely academic question, but in the bearing that this question has on man's freedom and responsibility

as a moral being accountable to his God and Creator. What moral demands can be made on the human race depends on what that race was as it came from the hands of God. Has the Bible put the case fairly? And has evolution helped the matter or involved it in difficulty? This will meet with further consideration under the next general head.

3. As to the antiquity of the race the Christian theologian is careful to maintain the trustworthiness of the sacred writings while at the same time seeking to avoid making dogmatic assertions where there is room for legitimate differences of opinion, and also to avoid extravagant conclusions. While evolutionists differ among themselves by hundreds of millions of years the theologian may possess his soul in patience.

4. As to the unity of the human race evolution ranges itself on the side of the Biblical account. Since evolution asserts the unity of all animate being, of all degrees and forms, it will certainly not dispute the unity of the human contingent. The trend of science, also the effort of some philosophies, has been toward unity; perhaps too much so in some respects. But here at least we see the evident approach of science to the position of the Biblical declaration. And this is by no means an isolated example.

IV. *Evolution and Sin.*

Evolution has raised much discussion in the department of hamartology.

1. Was there a fall? What was the nature of the fall? What if any were the effects of the fall? What is sin? What makes sin to be sin? Has it relation to an objective law? Is it only negative, a defect, a limitation, or is it a positive virile principle? Is it con-natural, belonging to our nature as such, or is it an intrusion, the work of an enemy, the tares among the wheat? Is it a matter of responsibility, a matter of free choice, or the necessary concomitant of a condition of undevelopment? Is it a primitive trait which man will gradually

outgrow in the process of further evolution, or does it mark man as degenerate, fallen from a high and sinless state?

These questions indicate the nature of the current discussion. The thorough-going evolutionist says there was no fall, only a "stumbling upward"; that the misfortune of man is not that he fell from a lofty estate but that he has not yet arrived; that he was not created in pristine holiness rivaling the angels, but that such is the goal to which evolution leads. Sin is defined by some evolutionists as the "remains of the animal nature." It is a brutish residuum which man has not yet outgrown, but which is in process of elimination by evolution. Sin is therefore to be referred to our original make-up. It has not come into the race by deliberate choice, but is an inheritance fastened on us by the nature of the case. It is not hard to see how this affects man's responsibility. If sin is con-natural, if it belongs to our nature as that nature was constituted by God, then responsibility and freedom become meaningless terms, and God as the author of our nature is the author of all that belongs to it, including sin. If there was no fall then the record of the sacred writings is clearly wrong, and no man can be bound by their authority in this regard or in any other.

The doctrines of man's original righteousness, fall, and consequent sinfulness at least vindicate God's nature and account for man's depravity and responsibility. The orthodox view has the merit of consistency, not only in its various parts, but in its harmony with observed facts and conditions in the world. The evolutionary view further fails in this, that it does not account for sin in angels where no basis of animal nature can be assumed and yet there is sin. It therefore does not meet the case.

2. But there are evolutionists and evolutionists. Some less radical would say that subsequent to the point where the animal became man, possessed of self-consciousness, reason, responsibility, and moral nature, the choice of evil was deliberate; and so man fell from this point at which he had arrived

to the condition of fallen and sinful humanity. This view has the merit of preserving the main features of the record as to man's fall, and basing man's guilt on his choice. It is always a matter of satisfaction to the Christian theologian when the theories of men conform to the Biblical account. Whether therefore we believe in the theory of evolution or not, we believe in the fact of a fall and in the veracity of the Biblical record. We accept the verdict of this kind of evolutionist this far, on these two points; or rather, we should say, he accepts the verdict of the Scriptures which we also do.

The point of difference, therefore, between this kind of evolutionist and the anti-evolutionist concerns the truth-or-falsity of evolution *per se*. As that is not the subject of this article it would take us too far afield to enter on that discussion. It has been our purpose to show how evolution has invaded theology and what part it has played in doctrinal discussion. We are not reluctant however to observe that in some points evolution has come around to the Biblical viewpoint. It only remains to be said that men who approach the Scriptures from the standpoint of evolution will doubtless acquiesce in this account of the fall. Again a matter of "approach." And since the evolutionist holds to the development of man's mental and moral nature from the animal, it decidedly strains the interpretation of the record that God made man in his own image, to assume that the image of God is a development from the brute.

V. *Evolution and the Scriptures.*

1. The Christian theologian builds his case and stakes his cause on the Scriptures. To him they are the word of God, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." What they say is of supreme authority because it is the word of God. Hundreds of times the Scriptures say: "Thus saith the Lord"; "The Lord said" thus and so; "The word of the Lord came" &c. The Scriptures represent themselves as being the word of

God. If we cannot believe their testimony about themselves, we cannot believe them on any other subject. If they are trustworthy witnesses, of which there is abundant proof, then we must believe what they say of themselves. That is the only logical conclusion. If the Scriptures are not true we have no Christianity, no Christ, no Saviour, and no salvation. Christianity cannot survive without the record and message of the Scriptures. Christianity and the Scriptures will stand or fall together. There is an effort in some high quarters to "free" Christianity from its historical facts and records. It is logical and moral suicide. Whoever or whatever makes the Scriptures false, or faulty, or even doubtful, destroys the saving faith of man and dims his hope as he faces death and eternity. I have never seen beyond the veil. No voice has spoken to me from beyond the tomb. No messenger has come back from "that mysterious bourne from which no traveler returns" to tell me what lies behind the darkness of death and the grave. If there be no word of an eternal and omnipotent God, no strong assurance resting on a "thus saith the Lord" as I stand on the brink of the grave, then to me, as to Thomas Hobbes, death is but a leap in the dark. Only the infallible word of the infallible God is sufficient. That is what the Scriptures mean to me. That is what they ought to mean to every man as he stands in the face of earthly dissolution.

How does evolution affect belief in the veracity and finality of the Scriptures, and the consequent hope of living and dying man? Not every evolutionist discredits the Scriptures. Indeed many regard them as a revelation of the divine will under some theory of inspiration. Others accord them a *pro tanto* acceptance. But others again, perhaps the large majority, surely all the Haeckel type, repudiate them *in toto*. Even the most conservative evolutionists we know, take the Scriptures with a few "grains of salt." So that, when all is said, after the fairest estimate, the actual result of the evolutionary propaganda is a decidedly lessened estimate of the importance and authority of the Scriptures. Rightly or

wrongly, consistently or inconsistently, justifiably or otherwise, this is the indisputable fact.

2. Can Evolution and the Scriptures be harmonized?

As far as materialistic or naturalistic evolution is concerned the answer must be a decided no. In behalf of theistic evolution the attempt has frequently been made; but it cannot be said with entire success. But it must not be assumed that, even if such a harmony could be established, this would prove evolution to be true. The proof of evolution must rest on positive grounds. It is not a mere choice between a naturalistic uniformitarianism and a supernaturalistic uniformitarianism; but whether even the latter is true. As long as evolution defines itself as "development," "history," or "orderly change"—as long as evolution confines itself to the limits of species, one need hardly enter the lists. But when evolution transgresses these limits, and affirms the transmutation of species, deriving all sentient being, the race of man, body and soul included, from a primordial germ, then discussion arises and opposition ensues. Transmutation is of the essence of evolution,—is really what evolution means. There may be room for difference of opinion as to the limits of species, some more, some less, inclusive, as the case may be; but that there are such limits the sterility of hybrids and the laws of Mendelism conclusively show. The laws of nature show a very decided respect for the limits of species, and to this the first chapter of Genesis bears its witness: "And God said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit *after its kind* whose seed is in itself. . . . And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself after its kind" (Gen. i, 11, 12); "And God created every living creature that moveth—after its kind, and every winged fowl after its kind" (vs. 21); "And God said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind. . . . And God made the beast of the earth after its

kind and cattle after their kind and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind" (vss. 24, 25). How careful the Scripture is to stress the words *after its kind*. These are statements for the Christian and the scientist to ponder. And there are many who hold that the physical law of the inviolability of species and these express statements of Scripture are cogent and conclusive evidence that transmutational evolution is in harmony neither with the Scriptures nor with the laws of nature.

3. Is Evolution conducive to the study of the Scriptures? Whatever lessens regard for the authority of the Bible lessens interest in its study. It is not hard to account for Schleiermacher's disregard for the Scriptures when we remember the character of his teaching. He sought to cure the rationalism of his day by substituting subjectivism; but the cure was worse than the disease. Ritschl recognized the Scriptures as a source of historical data but played fast and loose with them to such an extent as to empty them of most of their value.

Modernism is essentially an evolutionary product. It has many varieties and phases; but a fair estimate of what modernism is may be gathered from Professor George Burman Foster's book, *Christianity in its Modern Expression*. If modernism is true some things will go into the scrap-heap. And one of these things is the science of exegesis. If Biblical exegesis gives us the mind of the Spirit speaking through the Word for the present spiritual guidance of mankind, it is vastly important; but if it is only the decipherment of the obscurities of human expression in a long distant past, it is hardly worth the time and effort devoted to it. If the Scriptures are only the passing opinion of some men who lived two or three thousand years ago why waste time on them? We can think and write for ourselves, and our opinion is as good as theirs; and if evolution be true it should be considerably better. If this theory be true the acquired erudition of men who delved deeply into linguistic usages was largely a

worthless acquisition. All the painstaking labor of men who spent their lives on the sacred text was illspent and unprofitable. Meyer and Delitzsch, Eadie and Ellicott, Westcott and Hort—how they misused their lives, if modernism be true! What matters it about case endings, moods, tenses, idioms, protasis and apodosis, aorist and subjunctive if the Scriptures are no more *divinely* authoritative than any other records of human experience? Modernism is the foe of exegesis. If the one lives, the other dies. The triumph of modernism means that there will be much waste paper on the market. But if the science of exegesis survives it will be because we have a revelation from the living God, divinely given though expressed in human language, and profoundly important for the salvation and spiritual guidance of men. Evolution and all its by-products have, and must have, a very marked effect upon the study of the Scriptures if men are consistent enough to carry out their premises to their logical results.

VI. *Evolution and Christ.*

Christian theology and Christ are inseparable. Whether the system is Christocentric, Bibliocentric or Theocentric, Christology is a theme of supreme importance.

I. Christ's messiahship, incarnation, nature, teaching, work, death, resurrection, and sovereign rule are one and all important topics in theology. It is a noteworthy fact that evolutionary schools have much to say on these topics, and put upon them their own particular interpretation, largely, it must be said, of a minimizing or destructive nature. Professor Foster is vitriolic in his opposition to the messianic conception of Christ although it stands on the face of the Scriptures as plainly as the mountains on the face of Pennsylvania. It is by evolutionary schools especially that the virgin birth is either denied or its vital relation to the incarnation repudiated or minimized. Jesus Christ is regarded as the product of a process of evolution rather than as the incarnation of Deity, though with men of pantheistic tinge these things are not entirely distinct. The divine nature which

is assumed to be in every man is intensified in Jesus Christ till He is without peer in human history. This method of His coming into the world seems to the conservative theologian to compromise His sinlessness; but with the liberal this scarcely awakens concern. Here we are dealing not merely with the question of evolution; but with the still more fundamental question as to the real nature of man. For at the basis of this evolutionary interpretation must lie the assumption that man is an emanation from the Divine Being which means that Christ differs from us only in degree, not in kind; otherwise, since *ex nihilo nihil fit*, the divinity of Christ, even in this "humanized" sense becomes impossible. In other words we are here concerned with one of the fundamental postulates of Theism, the essential distinctness of God and man.

2. The evolutionary theory also has its peculiar point of emphasis in the matter of Christ's teaching, life, work, and death. It is often said: "Christ does not save us by his death but by his life." Though perhaps few would go so far as to deny to Christ's death a great moral effect upon the world, yet His life and teachings are given pre-eminence over his death. What God has done for us and what He has done in us are two sides of His work of redemption. Evolutionary schools are disposed to stress the latter. The fault lies not in insisting on a subjective reformation, but in obscuring the objective facts on which all reconciliation and reformation rest. "Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree" cannot be omitted from the plan of salvation as taught in the Scriptures. The Christian minister dare not expunge from his Bible the well worn text: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," but will keep on preaching it, and proclaiming it as the only hope of a perishing world. Christ's death is more than a mere martyrdom. If it were no more than that, then any other martyrdom might serve as well, and the incarnation and the martyrdom might be looked upon as unnecessary. Not all evolutionists, but

evolution as a whole has diverted attention from the sacrificial, expiatory, vicarious nature of Christ's death. The Scriptures make much of Christ's death. The Gospels give more space to His crucifixion than to any other subject. The Epistles represent the death of Christ as the great and important feature of His work on earth. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). "Being justified by His blood we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. v. 9). "So also Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28). No theology is a true system that puts less emphasis on the death of Christ than do the Scriptures themselves.

3. The discussion proceeds to the department of Eschatology, and involves the second coming of Christ, and especially the question whether that coming will be personal. The Scriptures are particular to say: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." "And every eye shall see him." That this teaches a visible and personal coming scarcely admits of question. The differences of "Pre" and "Post" are not involved, for both believe in the personal coming. But the discussion which some evolutionists raise is whether there will be any personal coming, or whether all this is to be interpreted in an entirely different way. Dr. Fosdick pronounces for himself and his school as follows:

Side by side with those to whom the second coming is a literal expectation, another group exists in the evangelical churches. They too say: "Christ is coming." They say it with all their hearts; but they are not thinking of an external arrival in the clouds. They have assimilated as part of the divine revelation the exhilarating insight which these recent generations have given to us, that development is God's way of working out his will. They see that the most desirable elements in human life have come through the method of development. Man's music has developed.—Man's painting has developed.—Man's architecture has developed.—Development does seem to be the way in which God works. And these Christians, when they say that Christ is coming, mean that, slowly it may be, but surely, his will and principles will be worked out by God's grace in human life and institutions, until he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

This is a fair statement of the evolutionary position; but is it a sane interpretation of what the Scriptures say? It shows how men play fast and loose with the plain statements of God's word. Shall we take the Scriptures for what they say or put on them any sort of an explanation that suits our philosophy? It reminds us of Professor Machen's parallel that we might as reasonably interpret history to the effect "that the Declaration of Independence was signed in San Francisco." The manner of Christ's coming is a matter not of speculation but of revelation; and if there be any revelation we are bound to ask: what does it say?

VII. *Evolution and Salvation.*

The salvation of man from the practice and penalty of sin is a matter of such solemn import as to awaken all our solicitude. If man's eternal state depends on his salvation from sin what can be more serious and vital? Any doctrine therefore that affects the method of man's salvation is a matter of grave concern. This is why Christian Science and kindred cults and all denials of the atonement are of such serious nature. How does evolution affect the question of man's salvation? Evolution invades this domain as it does others. As it forces its way into psychology, and philosophy, and ethics, and revelation, and Christology, so it offers its solution in the department of Soteriology. It is often said that "man is not saved by revolution but by evolution." Growth in grace is a recognised orthodox doctrine. No one will care to dispute that. But it must be recognised that for any evolution there must be something to evolve. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The evolution of a sinful nature is more sin. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean"? Hence Jesus said "Ye must be born again;" and, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Evangelical Christianity therefore stresses regeneration and conversion. Evolutionary teachers and preachers put the emphasis on education and reformation. The two are

not at all points antithetical; but they use different methods and they place the emphasis differently. On the one hand we find one branch of the church producing great evangelists like Mr. Moody, and engaging in great campaigns of evangelism; and on the other hand we find the note of social service dominant.

But another and deeper difference may, and often does, emerge. It lies in the question: what is the fundamental postulate of human salvation? What is the ground of my justification and acquittal at the bar of a righteous tribunal? How can a man be just with God? Not by the perfection of human character attained by earthly evolution. If my salvation depends on what I am and what I have done, it is not a very reassuring basis on which to rest. My worth is but a broken reed that pierces the hand that leans upon it. "Being justified by faith we have peace." But my own attainment is not the ground of that peace. "Behold I am vile." Only a ground of assurance that is perfect, eternal, and unimpeachable can be a sufficient basis for a soul's peace in face of death, judgment, and eternity. This evolution cannot give. The Christian has reason to be profoundly thankful that Christ could say to the dying thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." The thief did not attain paradise by virtue of an evolved character perfected through years of development; and other dying sinners can find hope even in the last hour. There is no discount on character, no lessened sense of its importance, but God's method of working may, and often must, transcend the slow processes of evolution. God's sovereignty cannot be surrendered to merely natural processes. The sovereignty of the Creator can never be limited. He must be allowed to save a dying thief as well as one sanctified from the womb. If it be true that, "Ye must be born again," we are not concerned to limit the development that ensues. But something must be posited before evolution can begin. We object to putting evolution in the place of creation in either the natural or the spiritual world. And He

who was sovereign in creation must still be recognized as sovereign in the bestowal of His spirit and His grace.

Whatever questions have been raised on these topics must be settled by the word of God, which no theologian, Christian, or scientist can afford to ignore. Men talk glibly about "the approach" to the Scriptures as if the Scriptures must ever be subject to the assumed dicta of a faulty science and philosophy. It is quite as legitimate and logical to approach science and philosophy from the standpoint of the Scriptures. Many eminent men of science have been devout believers and have not found science to conflict with the Bible nor scholarship with faith in God. The scientist, as much as the thief on the cross, may feel the need of forgiveness, and salvation from the practice and penalty of sin. What he needs is not natural evolution but a supernatural Saviour, not one who merely illustrates salvation but one who effects it. What can evolution do for a man in his last hour? If there is no supernatural Saviour, absolutely sovereign in the bestowal of his grace, all hope is at an end. Whatever other sphere evolution may claim it is absolutely useless in the salvation of a dying sinner. Evolution has no answer to the most important of all questions: "What must I do to be saved"?

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