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I. SPURIOUS RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS.

It is believed all thoughtful Christians are alive to the fact that religious excitements, which consist of temporary movements of the emotions devoid of any saving operation of the Truth on the reason and conscience, are equally frequent and mischievous in America. This judgment not seldom expresses itself in very queer and inaccurate forms. Thus: good brethren write to the religious journals grateful accounts of a work of grace in their charges, and tell the Editor that "they are happy to say, the work has been purely rational and quiet, and attended by not the slightest excitement." They forget that the efficacious (not possibly, tempestuous) movement of the feelings is just as essential a part of a true religious experience, as the illumination of the intellect by divine truth; for indeed, there is no such thing as the implantation of practical principle, or the right decisions of the will, without feeling. In estimating a work of divine grace as genuine, we should rather ask ourselves whether the right feelings are excited; and excited by divine cause. If so, we need not fear the most intense excitement. This misconception is parallel to the one uttered by public speakers, when they assure hearers that, desiring to show them the respect due to rational beings, and to use the honesty suitable to true patriots, "they shall make no appeal to their feelings, but address themselves only to their understandings." This is virtually impossi-

of the Hebrews, as finally established by Moses, and that shown on the monuments of Amenophis IV." (*Kellogg's lectures*, pp. 60, 61.)

(5) In our day, when all this portion of sacred history, under the operation of the Higher Criticism, seems, in the estimation of some at least, to be losing its substantial character of matter-of-fact story, and becoming little better than airy myth, when a Harvard Professor of the Hebrew Language and Literature can write: "We may probably look upon it as an historical fact that the Israelitish tribes at a certain time (perhaps about B. C. 1330) left the frontiers of Egypt, and made their way towards Canaan, but we know little of the particulars of the movement. The story of Exodus (Chapters II-XIV) tells us of the event as pious Israelites long afterwards thought of it, but we cannot be sure that their recollections were correct. Many of the particulars given in the narrative are improbable. . . There are many reasons why we cannot think that this narrative gives a veritable history of the events," (*Dr. Toy's History of the Religion of Israel*, pp. 18, 19,) it is re-assuring to old-fashioned believers in the Scriptures as "the Word of God," to have the very store-cities built by the Israelites during the oppression, partly of bricks without straw, disintombed by the hand of the explorer, to recover a manuscript history of the disastrous consequences to Egypt of the Hebrew exodus, written by a royal Egyptian scribe, and to have the old mummied Pharaohs, whose very existence has been questioned, to rise from their graves, and "rebuke the madness of" the Critics.

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CREATION OR EVOLUTION.

"CREATION OR EVOLUTION?" A Philosophical Inquiry, *by George Ticknor Curtis*. D. Appleton & Co., N. Y., 1887.

The name of George Ticknor Curtis has long been familiar to American readers. His works, especially his "History of the Constitution of the United States," and his "Life of Daniel Webster," have won for him, deservedly, a place among the foremost writers and jurists of the day. In undertaking a philosophical inquiry into the claims to acceptance of the competing theories of creation and evolution, he may be thought to be stepping out of the ordinary course of thought and study of men of his calling. Yet his course in so doing is not without precedent, and not without reason. The Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone, late Premier of Great Britain, has recently taken part in a discussion of the cosmogony of Moses; and two of the standard works in the department of Christian apologetics, works which form a part of every complete theological library, were written by lawyers, and owe much of their peculiar excellence to the legal training of their authors, and to their application of the principles and rules of judgment established in our courts, to the decision of the cases discussed: I refer to "Lyttleton on

the Conversion of St. Paul," and "West on the Resurrection of Christ." In the work before us, Mr. Curtis tells us, he approaches the subject discussed as a lawyer, and in the examination of the case presented, he has endeavored to apply fairly the principles and laws of evidence universally admitted in our courts of justice, with which his long practice in those courts has rendered him familiar.

On this subject he writes—and I think his remarks will command assent on the part of the ingenuous reader—"The doctrine of evolution addresses itself not only to the scientific naturalist, but to the whole intelligent part of mankind. How is one who does not belong to this class of investigators"—*i. e.* professional scientists—"to regulate his belief in the theory they propound? Is he to take it upon their authority? or, is he, while he accords to their statements of facts all the assent which, as witnesses, they are entitled to expect from him, to apply to their deduction the same principles of belief that he applies to everything else which challenges belief, and to assent or dissent accordingly? No one, I presume, will question that the latter is the only way in which any new matter of belief should be approached. I have not supposed that any scientist questions this; but I have referred to the constant iteration that the doctrine of evolution is now generally admitted by men of science, that the assertion, supposing it to be true, may pass for just what it is worth. It is worth this and no more; that candid, truthful and competent witnesses, when they speak of facts that they have observed, are entitled to be believed as to the existence of those facts. When they assume facts which they do not prove, but which are essential links in the chain of evidence, or when the facts which they do prove do not rationally exclude every other hypothesis excepting their own, the authority of even the whole body of such persons is of no more account than that of any other class of intelligent and cultivated men. In the ages when ecclesiastical authority exercised great power over the beliefs of men upon questions of physical science, the superiority was accorded to the authority which claimed it, and the scientist who propounded a new physical theory that did not suit the theologian was overborne"—as illustrated in the case of Galileo, so often referred to. "It seems to me that it is a tendency of the present age to substitute the authority of scientific experts in the place of the ecclesiastical authority of former periods, by demanding that something more than the office of witnesses of facts should be accorded to them. . . . Sometimes this is carried so far as to imply presumption in those who do not yield assent to their theory . . . and those of us who are not professors of the particular science are charged with ignorance or incapacity if we do not join in the current of scientific opinion. But, after all, the new theory challenges our belief. If we examine it at all, we must judge of it, not by the numbers of those who propound or accept it, or by any amount of mere authority, but by the soundness of the reasoning by which its professors support it." Pp. 22, 23.

Approaching, in such a spirit as is above indicated, the argument for evolution, Darwin gives us in his words: "In North America the black bear was seen by Hearne swimming for hours with widely opened mouth, thus catching, like a whale, insects in the water. Even in so extreme a case as this, if the supply of insects were constant, and if better adapted competitors did not already exist in the country, I can see no difficulty in a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale." (*Origin of Species* p. 165.) What ought I to do with it? I admit the truth of Hearne's statement as to matter of fact, that he did see a "black bear swimming for hours with open mouth, catching insects in the water; I have no reason to question his competency or credibility as a witness in this case—but when, on the strength of this fact, Darwin says—"I can see no difficulty in a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale," I must demur. I can see difficulties in the way of such an evolution,—difficulties so many and so great that I cannot believe it, unless some better proof than the admitted fact in the case furnished be presented me.

Mr. Curtis writes—"The principles of belief which we apply in the ordinary affairs of life are those which should be applied to scientific or philosophical theories, and inasmuch as the judicial method of reasoning upon facts is at once the most satisfactory and the most in accordance with common sense, I have here"—*i. e.*, in the volume before us—"undertaken to apply it to the evidence which is supposed to establish the hypothesis of animal evolution, in contrast with that of special creation," p. IX. As a consequence of his pursuing this course, I am not surprised to hear him say, "The result of my study of the hypothesis of evolution is, that it is an ingenious but delusive mode of accounting for the existence of either the body or the mind of man; and that it employs a kind of reasoning which no person of sound judgment would apply to anything that might affect his welfare, his happiness, his estate, or his conduct in the practical affairs of life." p. X.

In his discussion of "Creation or Evolution," Mr. Curtis covers a wider range of topics, all, however pertinent to the matter under consideration, than is common with scientists who have written on the subject. To me, one of the most interesting chapters in the book is the one bearing the title of "The Platonic Kosmos compared with the Darwinian theory of evolution." After setting forth in detail, the Platonic theory of the origin of our Kosmos, Mr. Curtis writes, "I know not how it may appear to others, but to me the parallelism between the Platonic and Darwinian theory is very striking. Both speculators assume the existence of a Supreme Intelligence and Power, presiding

over the creation of animals which are to inhabit the earth. Behind the celestial or primitive gods the Greek philosopher places the Demiurgus, to whom the gods stand in the relation of ministers and servants to execute his will. The modern naturalist assumes the existence of the Omnipotent God; and although he does not directly personify the laws of natural and sexual selection which the Omnipotent power has made to operate in nature, they perform an office in the transitional gradations through which the animals are successively developed, that very closely resembles the office performed by the gods of Plato's system in providing the modifications of structure which the animals undergo. In the two processes the one is the reversed complement of the other. Plato begins with the formation of an animal of a very exalted type, and by successive degradations, induced by the failure of the animal to live up to the high standard of its rational existence, he supposes a descent into lower, and still lower forms, the gods all the while providing a new structure for each successive lower form, until we reach the shell-fish fixed on the earth beneath the water. Darwin begins with the lowest form of animated organization, and by successive gradations induced by the struggle of the animal to maintain its existence, he supposes an ascent into higher and still higher forms, the laws of natural and sexual selection operating to develop a new structure for each successive higher form, until we reach man, "the wonder and glory of the universe," an animal whose immediate ancestor was the same as the monkey's, and whose remote progenitor was an aquatic creature breathing by gills and floating by a swim-bladder," pp. 72, 73. After discussing, at some length, the arguments by which Plato and Darwin have supported their respective theories, Mr. Curtis reaches the conclusion, "If Plato had known as much about the animal kingdom as is now known, he could have arrayed the same facts in support of his theory, by an argument as powerful as that which now supports the doctrine of evolution." P. 74.

In this necessarily brief review of "Creation or Evolution?" I have not sought to give the reader even the briefest summary of the argument it contains—for this I must refer him to the book itself—but simply to indicate the general character of the work, and to give the reader an idea of what he may expect in its perusal. After a careful reading of the book, I must say, that whilst on one or two points I could wish the author had what I believe to be my "better faith," on the whole, it is one of the fullest, and fairest, and most interesting discussions of the subject which has been given to the public, and will fully sustain the already high reputation of its author.

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