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THE CONVERGENCE OF DARWINISM AND THE BIBLE CONCERNING
MAN AND THE SUPREME BEING.

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I.

It is in no sense part of my object to assert the truth of Darwinism or the Divine authority of the Bible.

It is my purpose to show that each taken independently of the other points, though in different degrees and by quite different methods, to ultimate agreement both as to man and as to the Supreme Being.

Nor is it my purpose to assume any teleological, metaphysical, or theological basis in the interpretation of Darwinism as a theory.

Even so, it is not my purpose to discuss the Christian Scriptures from a purely scientific standpoint.

The Darwinism here mentioned is that of Mr. Darwin himself, of Mr. Huxley, Mr. Spencer.

The Bible here referred to is the Bible of the Church of Christ.

Whether Darwinism is true or not, or whether the Canonical Scriptures are verily God's Word or not, are questions well worthy of separate discussion; but it is not intended to discuss them in this article.

It will be observed that I use the word Darwinism instead of the more general term evolution.

This also is for the sake of clearness. Evolution is too general a term for the point in view.

It may or may not include Darwinism. Darwinism is chosen because of all the various theories of evolution it is the only one that has a serious scientific standing.

As Haeckel says: "Darwinism is the only theory which *rationaly* explains the origin of the species." He means, of course, that of all the various theories of evolution, Darwinism alone in his estimation has a sufficient experimental basis.

The convergence of evolution and the Bible may mean the convergence of merely *a priori* or subjective speculations with the Bible. They would be worth no more than the metaphysical basis of the first of the two factors.

But the convergence of Darwinism and the Bible would be the convergence of an immense and extending school of modern science and of the yet more immense field covered by the Christian faith.

Nor is such a convergence, if it really exists, of slight importance to both the scientific and religious world.

We may decisively dismiss Darwinism on the ground that it makes the Word of God of no avail; or we may refuse to open the sacred writings of the early Christian era with any sense of reverence or faith, because they assert a basis of belief founded in the personal action of a supernatural power which Darwinism denies or ignores or contradicts. We may think that all who do not agree with us are either atheists or the dupes of superstition and credulity.

But there remains a vast number of thoughtful and earnest men who would find great comfort in the fact that perhaps one might be a Darwinist and yet not a contemner of Holy Writ, or a devout believer in the Bible and yet await contentedly or thankfully the further discussion in the scientific world of the validity of the Darwinian theory.

There have been and now are many Darwinians who accept Darwin's theory of the origin of the species, and yet hold to the Nicene symbol of the Christian faith, as, e.g., the late Professor Asa Gray, but it is probably true that such are in the minority.

It is certainly true that the great majority of those who hold to traditional theology have come, and on very substantial grounds,

some of his followers to mysticism, or the doctrine of any inner immediate influence of God upon the soul, resulting in direct or immediate communion with Him. It will probably scarcely be credited that such a doctrine should be questioned by responsible theologians, so accustomed are we to think of direct spiritual communion as of the very essence of religious experience. Yet there is no mistake about the matter. Ritschl has expressed himself with unmistakable distinctness on the subject;* and Hermann has written a treatise on the *Verkehr*, or intercourse of the Christian with God, with a view to make clear this very point. The object of this latter book—one of the best for getting a good idea of the system on this side—is directly to combat this idea of any mystical communion between God and the individual soul. The one way, according to Hermann, in which God has entered into converse with men is in the historical manifestation of His Son, Jesus Christ. *There*, in history, you will meet God; will hear Him speak to you; may learn to trust His love and grace; may be strengthened by Him to overcome the world. But of any coming of God to your soul *now*—of any spiritual communion with Him otherwise than through these objective historical transactions of 1900 years ago—it is not allowable to speak. Direct access of God to your soul is precluded, at least in any conscious or recognizable way. What people take to be such is illusion and phantasy. One wonders, then, how revelation ever began; how, in the case of Christ Himself, converse with God was maintained. For He had no earlier Christ to fall back upon to mediate communion with the Father. And what of the Old Testament revelation, or the inspiration of the prophets? This is historical positivism carried to an extreme which threatens the very existence of religion.

These outlines, brief as they are, will suffice, perhaps, to show that while the enthusiasm which Ritschlianism on its first appearance has awakened is explicable, and in a measure justified, there is considerable force in many of the strictures of its opponents; and that, when the glow of ethical fervour with which it is set forth is stripped off, it is a singularly meagre and inadequate type of Christianity that remains. I do not think that as a system it will admit to be brought to the test of Scripture—or, if the Apostolic writings are set aside as non-authoritative, of Christ's own teachings and claims. I cannot accept its non-mysti-

cal view of religion; I cannot accept its divorce of faith and reason; I cannot accept its restriction of religious truths to value-judgments; I cannot accept its agnostic denial of the right of natural theology; I cannot accept Ritschl's practically humanitarian Christology; I cannot accept its denial of hereditary or original sin—for this is another tenet of the Ritschlian faith; I cannot accept its view of the Divine righteousness, which with Ritschl is only another name for God's consistency in carrying out His ends, and does not denote anything judicial; I cannot accept as adequate its doctrine of reconciliation; I cannot accept its ignoring of Christ's heavenly reign, and living action by His Spirit in the souls of men. The elements of value which I recognize in it are its fresh, full insistence on the self-evidencing nature and exhaustless spiritual potency of the revelation of God in Christ; its recognition of the uniqueness of Christ's person and work as the one in whom God's purpose has come fully to light, and through whom it has obtained historical realisation; the prominence it gives to the great Gospel idea of the Kingdom of God; and, together with these merits, the protest it maintains against a one-sided intellectualism, and its constant reversion to the fact of a positive revelation. It may be granted to Ritschlianism that while theology and metaphysics cannot be so entirely kept apart as it thinks, there is need and room for a theology built up from purely Christian foundations, which shall give as adequate an expression as possible to the simple facts and truths of the Christian revelation set forth in their order and connections; and so far as Ritschlianism has helped by its protests to purge theology of scholastic and metaphysical conceptions really foreign to its essence, it deserves our cordial thanks.

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN AMERICA.

From *The Review of the Churches* (London), July, 1892.

I.—BY PROF. C. A. BRIGGS—(PRESBYTERIAN).

RELIGION in America is a reproduction of religion in Europe. The United States of America differ from the several countries of Europe in that they contain in their population representatives of all these countries. They constitute therefore a new Europe rather than a new England, a new France, or a new Germany. These children of Europe do not live apart in different nationalities in America as they do in

* Cf., e.g., *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, iii., 20, 21, and *die Geschichte des Pietismus*, passim.

Europe, but they intermingle in the same states and cities and villages; they intermarry and become Americanized, constituting an American resultant to which the chief nations of Europe have contributed in various proportions.

The Americans are, however, more conservative in religion than in social or political relations. The different religions which have crossed the ocean have been modified more or less, and have been adapted to the new circumstances of the American people; but they still retain their original types, and remain each in its separate organisation perpetuating in many cases traditions which have become obsolete in the mother countries. The religious organisations of America are for the most part more conservative than the religious organisations of Europe. The Roman Catholic Church is probably more decidedly papal in America than in any country of Europe. The old Lutherans of America outnumber greatly those of all Germany. The American Presbyterians are nearer the type of Ulster than of Scotland. The Dutch Reformed Church prides itself upon its adherence to the canons of the Synod of Dort, while the mother Church of Holland has once for all and forever laid these canons upon the shelf. The more radical types of Scottish Presbyterianism which are well nigh extinct in Scotland still flourish in Western Pennsylvania and in South Carolina. The American Episcopal Church still has a strong Low Church party. The American Congregationalists at the London Council were regarded by their British brethren as rather antiquated in their notions—just as the Scottish Presbyterians at the Philadelphia meeting of the Presbyterian and Reformed Alliance looked upon their American brethren as obscurantists. The American Baptists are so rigid in their Calvinism as well as in their insistence upon believers' baptism, immersion and close communion as to make a British Baptist feel rather uncomfortable among them. The American Methodists are stricter in their adherence to Wesley's rules and doctrines than the Wesleyans of England. The Quakers are more faithful to their original principles, and more aggressive than their brethren in Great Britain. The Jews are stricter in their adherence to rabbinical traditions than those of any country of Western Europe.

Any one familiar with religion on both sides of the ocean will at once recognise that religion in America is a generation behind religion in Europe, and that there is a very tenacious adherence to ecclesiastical traditions in the religious organisations of

America which surprises those who are familiar with the rapid religious development in Great Britain during the past twenty-five years.

And yet there have been great changes in religion in all departments, due to the irresistible currents of our age and to the external constraints of the new circumstances of a new country. In all the religious bodies of America the civil government of the country has influenced the ecclesiastical government to irresistible assimilation, not by acts of violence, but by pervasive influence. The ecclesiastical organisations have therefore approached more closely together than they have in Europe. Congregationalism has introduced not a few features of Presbyterianism in its councils—provincial, state, and national; and in the general state-superintendents of missions it has the form of bishops without the name or authority. Presbyterianism has adopted from Congregationalism the covenant of the congregation, asserts the independence of the congregation in its private affairs, and in the choice of its elders and ministers, and maintains the representative theory of church government to an extent that would astonish a Westminster Presbyterian. The Episcopal Church by its introduction of conventions, diocesan and national, with their clerical and lay deputies, has so far become Presbyterian as to satisfy certainly the ideal of average Presbyterians of the seventeenth century. The American bishops are limited monarchs, and can do nothing unless their conventions and their congregations are behind their back. Even the Roman Catholic organisation, although there are abundant examples of despotism in the management of some of the dioceses, on the whole is pervaded by the American spirit which recognises the rights of the Christian people and the representative position of the clergy. All this assimilation in ecclesiastical organisation which is in progress slowly, but surely and irresistibly, will eventually result in such external resemblance of organisation that consolidation will be easy.

In worship also a very remarkable change has taken place in most denominations. The conflict between liturgical worship, ceremonial worship, and simple worship has become chiefly a matter of traditional usage, of individual preference, and of æsthetic taste. The rights of the congregation and the freedom of the minister have resulted in a great variety and complexity of worship in most denominations. All uniformity has disappeared. The writer cannot speak for the Roman Catholic Church, but certainly the mode of worship in Congrega-

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tional, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches is exceedingly varied. And in the Episcopal Church there are very great differences, within the limits of the liturgy, in the conduct of the service when one passes from the Anglo-catholic to the old High churchman, and from the Low churchman to the Broad churchman.

There is an irresistible tendency on the one hand towards a limited liturgy for common prayer, and on the other there is an imperative demand for variety in the services and freedom of adaptation to special occasions and circumstances.

In matters of doctrine the American churches are most conservative, and yet one may see a strong movement in all bodies away from systems of dogmatic faith towards simple expressions of practical faith. The old battle between Calvinism and Arminianism is so far behind us that the dogmatic statements which stereotype the differences are disagreeable and offensive to most earnest Christians. The movement towards a short and simple creed will eventually either result in the reaffirmation of the Apostles' creed, or in the construction of a new one after its model.

The American churches have been obliged to devote themselves chiefly to practical and evangelistic work. Those denominations which have been agitated by doctrinal and ecclesiastical controversies, such as the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Lutherans and the Episcopalians have been least successful in America as to their numerical gains, while those denominations which have kept themselves free from such complications, like the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Roman Catholics, have had most remarkable success, and have become the great religious bodies of the American Republic. They have enormous numerical strength, while those bodies that have carried on the internal conflicts about doctrine, worship, and polity have retained intellectual pre-eminence in the land.

There are three great forces now at work in American Christianity—the irenic force, the polemic force, and the practical force. The irenic force at present has its basis in the four propositions of the House of Bishops of the American Episcopal Church, subsequently endorsed by the Lambeth Conference. It was my privilege to be one of the first (if I mistake not the first in the Presbyterian Church) to say that these four propositions if they had no latent or implicit meaning were entirely satisfactory as a basis. The chief difficulty was as to the Historic Episcopate. We might accept the Episcopate as an historical institution,

adapting it to the circumstances of our times, incorporating it with what is essential in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, and gaining a resultant which would not be very different from what one now sees in the American Episcopal Church. But we could not accept it if it meant to bind us to any special theory of the Episcopate, or involved any reproach upon our Puritan ancestors, or any invalidation of our present ministry. We might all hold our own opinions as to the past and the present, and make an agreement for the future, which would involve some sacrifice on all sides; but only such sacrifices as every cross-bearer ought to be willing to undertake for Jesus Christ and for Holy Church. But so soon as the question was put, "What does Historic Episcopate mean?" and we received responses from different members of the House of Bishops, it became clear that they did not agree in their own interpretation. We are obliged therefore to wait until we are officially informed whether Historic Episcopate means simply the historic institution which we could accept as a basis of Church unity, or whether it will be necessary to accept something more than this, namely, the Anglo-Catholic theory of the Episcopate and all that it involves, or even the old High Church theory and all that that theory has involved in the history of British Christianity. If the House of Bishops could stand by the surface meaning of their proposition as it has been explained by some of the American Bishops, we see no reason why American Christianity might not be reconstructed so as to include all that is best in the three rival ecclesiastical organizations which have developed in Great Britain and her colonies. We agree with Richard Baxter and the Worcester Association of 1653, that "to select out of all three the best part, and leave the worst, was the most desirable (and ancient) form of government."

The polemic force that is now at work in controversies respecting dogma is also pushing mightily in the direction of Church unity. It is a revision of the principles of the Reformation. It is another effort to determine those questions which were left unsettled at the Reformation. The question as to authority in religion will never cease forcing itself upon us so long as Roman Catholic, Anglo Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical and Rationalist are all discordant in their answers. The doctrine of the Church must be re-examined in the light of Scripture, of History, and of Christian experience. Holy Scripture is now searched through and through by the micro-

scopic method of scientific Biblical criticism. Those who are resisting this criticism of the Church and the Bible are resisting the only method by which the Church and the Bible can regain their authority over the scholarship of our age, and remove the disastrous discord of Christendom. This polemic force will eventually destroy many, if not all the obstacles, barriers and stumbling-blocks which are in the way of the progress of Christ's Church, and which fence off Christians from one another and range them in hostile array. There never can be any reconciliation of Lutheran and Reformed until we go deeper into the doctrine of the Sacraments. The Calvinist and the Arminian can be reconciled only in some higher unity yet to be discovered in the wonderful reaches of the grace of God. The Roman Catholic and the Protestant can be united only when the Protestant makes more of holy love and excels in good works, and when he has something to tell about the Middle State between death and the Dies iræ, which is more consoling than Purgatory and brighter with Christian hope than sanctification by penitential discipline. The full measure of the nations will enter the kingdom of heaven only when we cease imposing upon the Oriental and African world the peculiar type of occidental, Anglo-Saxon Christianity; and rise to the conception that the Messiah was the Saviour of the world. The Jew will not accept Jesus as his Messiah until we cease trying to force him to accept the crucified, and show him that the cross was the true gateway to the throne, and that the enthroned Messiah, the Judge of the second advent, in His comprehensive work, fulfils the Messianic ideal of the Old Testament prophets. Christian polemic, if conducted in the Christlike spirit of brotherly love, is an essential part of the work of the true peacemaker who would advance the cause of the unity and concord of the Church.

It seems likely that after all the most important factor for determining the future of religion in America is Christian activity and good works. We are learning to heed the word of James: "Faith without works is dead." We are beginning to understand the Master Himself when He said: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." There is a marvellous unfolding of Christian activity in America, not so much in ecclesiastical forms as in unecclesiastical forms. The great Christian activities in America are without the Church, and independent of the Church as a visible organization: such

as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Society of Christian Endeavour, numberless organizations for conflict with vice in its varied forms, and for the distribution of Christian charity. This strange development of active Christianity outside the Church, so characteristic of our times, sometimes seems to threaten the very existence of the Church. These organizations often put the Churches to shame for their slothfulness and inefficiency. One of the most important organisations of recent years is the Salvation Army. I have had great confidence in it from the beginning. Its career has not been without mistakes. What movement of man ever has been perfect, ever can be faultless? In the main it has done a work for Christ which transcends every expectation. And yet its effect upon the visible Church has been and can only be injurious. It can never do what the Church was divinely instituted to do. If it interpose as a substitute for the Church, whatever good it may do in other directions, it can only do harm in that direction. But all these movements in Great Britain and America outside of the visible Church may, after all, be productive of much good. It has thus far been impracticable to unite the different denominations in common aggressive work for Christ. It has been necessary therefore to constitute these united efforts outside the Church. They are putting the visible Church to shame. They will go on doing this more and more, until possibly Christians will eventually be so united in well-doing outside the visible Church, that they will compel the Churches to combine, or will abandon them as effete organisms in order to constitute a new organization of Christianity for real, living Christian men and women.

It seems altogether probable that the various forces now at work within the Church and without the Church will combine to produce the same result—the gradual consolidation of kindred ecclesiastical organizations, the federation of larger bodies, and the ultimate reunion of Christendom in some comprehensive organization which no man can yet discern; but which will eventually come forth as the ripe fruit of all the previous trials and struggles, triumphs and attainments of Christianity.

II.—BY DR. A. H. BRADFORD—(CONGREGATIONALIST).

ANY survey of the religious outlook in a country as large as ours must necessarily be limited, and relative to the point of view of the observer. Distances are so great, and