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Christianity and Personal Problems: No. 1.

**SCIENCE AND
RELIGION
EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE**

BY

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

AND

SHERWOOD EDDY

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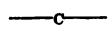
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SCIENCE AND RELIGION



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**SCIENCE AND RELIGION
EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE**

I: PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK¹

Ever since I read them, my imagination has been fascinated by the words with which the eleventh chapter of the Book of Genesis comes to its close: "Terah died in Haran." Now, Terah was the father of Abraham and he had no business to die in Haran. He should have died in the promised land of Canaan as Abraham did, a pioneer blazing the trail for the future Hebrew people. For Terah lived during that significant generation when the migrations began by which a portion of the Semitic race broke away from their ancestral heritage and, moving westward to Canaan, began to be the Hebrew people. All around Terah and his family was the stir of this migratory movement. It was the most significant movement of his generation and in Ur of the Chaldees he felt it, packed up his goods and joined it, came as far as Haran and stopped. It was not very far to come. Haran was still in the land of Mesopotamia. Still he was dominated there by the traditions and precedents in which he had been brought up and still he worshiped there his ancient racial gods. Year after year in Haran he stayed until at last he died there, and only after he was gone could Abraham gather up the family again and start westward on the great adventure to the promised land that made him forever rememberable as the Father of the Faithful.

When, therefore, we hear these words, "Terah died in Haran," they are not so commonplace as they seem. They are the record of a spiritual tragedy; they are the story of a man who died in the same country in which he was born, who refused to progress, who, when migra-

¹ A sermon preached at the First Presbyterian Church, New York, May 8, 1921.

tory movements were headed for the promised land, would not follow them. The epitaph which Scripture wrote for him still stands: "Terah died in Haran."

If we are to deal with the truth in this text we must talk of the peril of a belated life, which, when mankind has struck its tents and is on the march, settles down in its native ideas and attitudes and refuses to move. Some may be surprised at even the suggestion of this theme in the pulpit. Some may expect us to praise Terah because he would not leave Haran, because he would not break away from the sanctities of his ancient heritage. (Religion is to many people so exclusively a plea in behalf of the past, that we should *not* give up our childhood faith nor break with our ancestral inheritance, that many think this to be the only accent that religion possesses.) But never in our Hebrew-Christian faith do you run upon the great exemplars of religion without hearing two tones. On the one side they do look back to the past with unspeakable reverence. They sing:

"Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death."

On the other side they look to the future with adventurous enthusiasm. They sing:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before."

This is what the Master meant when he said that every wise disciple is like a householder who brings out of his treasure both old things and new: old things that are tried and true, and new things that grow up out of the old, are the fulfillment and development of the old, the suppression and denial of which would mean the death of the old.

A DYNAMIC UNIVERSE

At the beginning of our thought let us lay our hands on the principle upon the basis of which we must condemn Terah and all those who, like him, die in Haran, (This principle is that the universe is not static; it is dy-

namic. Movement is its very nature.) Therefore, to live a static life is to sin against the fundamental conditions of our existence. There are no areas, I think, where evidence for this does not await the seeing eye. Sit down some summer day, for example, beside the sea and meditate upon this strange creature, the clam, who has built his skeleton externally for his protection and digs himself into the ocean's ooze. Once, it may be, he was the highest type of life upon the planet. Once he was king of creatures and he was content. "Am I not first?" he said and, encasing himself in bone, he settled down as if this were a static world. But this was not a static world. It was tremendously dynamic. Life was everywhere in migration, moving up past him. See him now, a dumb, dull creature, a belated life, static in a dynamic world. One might apostrophize him as he lies upon the beach: "O Terah, you died in Haran."

If this is the essential nature of the universe in which we live, how plain is one type of familiar failure and the reason for it! There are many causes of failure in business—errors in judgment that bring disaster. But is not this the most familiar cause? A man picks out an admirable way of doing business, the best known in his day, and he uses it successfully, and twenty years afterward he is using the same method. But while he is static, the business world is not static; it is dynamic. It moves on past him. He wonders why arrangements that once worked so well work now no longer, and often you see him sitting there, wondering, until he dies in Haran.

So, too, the cultural world is dynamic. In the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee an admirable piece of missionary work is going on among the whites who for long generations have been marooned there. They are a back eddy untouched by the forward flowing of the human river. They have been called "our contemporary ancestors." The houses they live in are like the houses our forefathers built; the songs they sing are our forefathers' songs; and their primitive education is such as our forefathers had to be contented with. They are a static people in a changing world, belated now and left behind.

So, too, is the intellectual life of man always dynamic. In Boston, whose fecundity in the production of new religious sects is the eighth wonder of the world, there was at last accounts a people whose peculiar tenet was that the earth is flat. Busily they are publishing books and pamphlets to prove that the earth is flat. One hesitates to laugh at them. One remembers that David and Isaiah and Paul and all antiquity thought that the earth was flat. Only they would not think so now. They would have moved with the movement of men's minds. But see this static people in a dynamic world, left far behind!

TWO VIEWS

If wherever one takes seeing eyes one sees that growth is the law of life and movement is its innermost necessity, how can one suppose that religion can escape the urgency of this principle? All views of Christianity tend to group themselves under two heads. The first is this: that Christianity is a static system, finally formulated in creed and ritual and practice at some time in the past; a deposit to be accepted in toto if at all; not to be added to, not to be subtracted from, not to be changed, its i's all dotted and its t's all crossed. Take it or leave it, but there it is, a finished article. And the second head under which you can group all other conceptions of Christianity is this: that Christianity is not a finished article, a static system; it is a growing movement. It is like a tree whose roots are deep in the spirit of Jesus. Sometimes it puts forth misshapen branches that must be pruned. Sometimes old branches die and must be lopped away. Because it is a growing, living, vital thing, it never has been quite the same thing in any two generations. We do not see it as our fathers did; our children will not see it as we do: but so long as its roots are in the spirit of Jesus let it grow, for its leaves shall be for the healing of the nations.

As between these two ways of conceiving Christianity, how can any man hesitate to choose, if he really knows Jesus and believes that Jesus still is the master of the movement that bears his name? A static religion was the last thing he ever dreamed of or wanted. Was he

not reverent toward his people's past? No one more so! His thought, his speech, his spirit was saturated with the beauty of his race's heritage. Yet listen to him: "It was said unto you of old time . . . but *I* say unto you." Again and again that utterance fell from his lips. His truth was rooted in the past but it was not imprisoned in the past; it grew up out of the past, not destroying but fulfilling it, as he said. He had the spirit of the prophets in him, the prophets who once had spoken to his people in words of fire; but old forms that he thought had been outgrown he brushed aside. He would not have his gospel a patch on an old garment, he said, nor would he put it like new wine into old wine skins. Even when he bade farewell to his disciples he did not talk to them as if what he himself had said were a finished system: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth."

The great seers of the Christian life have never looked at it as a finished system, but always as a growing movement. When Paul came he dared an adventurous move that makes Abraham's journey to the promised land look like child's play. For Paul dared to lift the Christian churches out of the narrow, religious exclusiveness of the Hebrew synagogue. He dared to wage the battle for a new idea, that Christianity was not a Jewish sect but a universal religion. He withstood to the face Peter, still trammelled in the narrowness of his Jewish training, and he founded churches across the Roman Empire where was neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but all were one man in Christ Jesus. From the days of Jesus and Paul, the great seers of the Christian faith have seen it, not as a finished article, but as a growing movement.

Some time ago I took a walk over the fields with a young friend who had been brought up in the church which most insists that Christianity is static, which takes boys and girls in their early infancy and drills them in the acceptance of set ideas and practices, set routines of observance and ritual. But my young friend had graduated from college. In every other realm of life except

religion he looked out on a dynamic universe. He longed to have that same sense of vitality and movement in his religious experience. He said frankly that he really did not believe in the faith his church had taught him. I told him what the spirit of Jesus meant to me, leading out into area after area of new truth and into wider applications of the Gospel to the life of men. This was his answer: "You are lucky. I have been brought up in my church like a child in a yard with a fence all around. You are out on the open road headed over the hills toward sunrise. I would love to join you, but I am afraid to leave my yard for fear of being lost." God pity him! I am afraid he will die there in Haran.

My friends, we have our choice. Christianity can be to us a completed system, a pool that you can walk all around and measure and define and accept, or it can be that far nobler thing, a river, whose fountains are in the life of Jesus, whose flowing is the spirit of Jesus, an ever-growing, enlarging stream. But if we do accept that second of the alternatives we must face the consequences. We cannot be static disciples of an advancing Lord.

If thus we see with some clearness that Christianity is not a static system in a dynamic world but a dynamic movement in a dynamic world, let us bring this truth home to ourselves; let us see some of its particular applications to our lives; in two special regards let us observe how folk like ourselves are sometimes tempted still to die in Haran.

APPLICATION TO THE BIBLE

For one thing, there are some of us here this morning who were brought up in a system of Christian thinking in which, if we had remained, we would have been compelled either to give up our Christianity or else to commit deadly assault and battery on our growing intelligence. We are thanking God today that we moved out from that Haran into a freer land. To make this concrete, how many of us at one time thought that the inspiration of the Bible made it from beginning to end a book upon a common infallible level. From Genesis to Revelation it was to us a book of equal spiritual insight and of equal

authority. To be sure, even when we were boys we discovered to our anxiety that in the early manuscripts of the Bible God walks as a man in the garden in the cool of the day or that on a mountain top he hides Moses in a rock's cleft and puts his hand across the cleft so that Moses cannot see his face and yet can see his back, while in later manuscripts in the Bible we keep running across words like these: "No man hath seen God at any time." To be sure, even when we were boys we discovered to our discomfiture that in the early manuscripts of the Bible God gives directions for the slaughter of the Amalekites, men, women and children, without mercy; that directions are put on the lips of the Almighty for atrocities as horrible as disgraced this last war, while in the later manuscripts of the Bible we keep running on passages like this: "God is love;" "He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him;" "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." To be sure, in the early manuscripts, God travels in a box, a holy box they call the Ark, and when they have the Ark the presence of God is with them and when they lose the Ark they have lost the presence of God, and this Ark is so terrible a thing that when with all good will a man tries to steady it, as Uzzah did when the oxen stumbled, he is smitten dead upon the spot, while in the latter manuscripts God is in no box nor even on a mountain. "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father . . . God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." To be sure, we found that in early manuscripts there is a most scrupulous interest in clean and unclean food, as if man's standing before the face of God were dependent upon his scrupulous care in the observance of a kosher diet, while in the later manuscripts Jesus sweeps the whole question away: "There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man."

If about this matter, or others like it, some one should say: "Must we not keep the faith of our fathers?" the

answer is surely clear: "Of course we must keep the faith of our fathers, but what do you mean by *keeping* the faith?" This is Mother's Day. When you were born your mother wanted to keep you and she has kept you so that every year since you have loved her with a deeper understanding of her immeasurable grace. You are more deeply hers today than you were forty years ago, but she couldn't have kept you by keeping you a baby. If she had tried that she would have lost you. The only way to keep a living thing is to let it grow. We must keep the faith of our fathers, but the faith of our fathers is not dead; it is alive. It is like a tree, it must grow. It is like a river, it must flow. It is like Abraham, it must migrate. And the surest way to kill it is to make it stay in Haran.

A SOCIAL APPLICATION

Consider with me one other application of our morning truth. Some of us were brought up in an individualistic type of religion, where the major interest was the hope that one by one we should be landed safely in heaven. To be sure, the requirements for entrance into heaven involved the elements of right living on earth but, for all that, the outlook of the hymns we sang and the prayers we offered and the sermons that we heard was not what Jesus said: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on *earth* as it is in heaven," but rather this: "Let earth perish, so be it that one by one we shall come safe to heaven." Now, the ethical consequences of this excessive and exclusive other-worldliness have been disastrous, for they have led multitudes of Christians utterly to misunderstand what Jesus Christ wants of them on this earth. Some time ago in an Ohio town there was an elder of the church who for years had been making money selling impure milk. He was arrested and tried by the civil authorities. The church took no action then. But one day in the court he lost his temper and broke out with an oath. Then the church put him on trial. For what? For selling impure milk? Not in the least! What had religion to do with worldly affairs like that? They put him on trial because he swore. Some of us have been brought up in towns where just that thing could

happen. Can you not see the Man of Nazareth standing there in that church trial and in his voice of thunder saying again: "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy and faithfulness?"

One of the most amazing exhibitions of this same spirit has recently been given us in a letter published and signed by the Employers' Association of Pittsburgh. It was this same group of gentlemen who, a little while ago, attacked the Young Women's Christian Association because that beneficent organization desires, not simply to assure the young women of America a safe entrance into heaven, but to insure them decent conditions of living on earth before they get into heaven. And now this same group has attacked ferociously the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the organization that effects the co-operation of thirty great evangelical denominations in this country. Listen to this attack:

"The radical and bolshevik elements in the Churches seem to be co-operating through the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and many of our members are expressing themselves as determined to discontinue financial support of their respective Churches unless they withdraw all moral and financial support from the Federal Council."

There is no use wasting time answering a charge like that. You have in your hands today the "Social Ideals of the Churches"² of the Federal Council, a careful statement of some areas in our public life that need a fuller application of the principles of Jesus. Moreover, the president of the Federal Council is our own Dr. Robert E. Speer, and only a hopelessly hysterical mind can picture Bolshevik propaganda going on under his superintendence. But as this attack has been so widely published and so widely commented upon, it is necessary that the Christian pulpit should pay attention to it.

² Obtained from the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 105 East 22d Street, New York.

For one thing, the persons who have launched this attack apparently propose to settle the matter of the social application of the principles of Jesus by money. "Determined to discontinue financial support" is their proposition. "We will buy you," they say to the churches and, in particular, to the ministers of the churches—"If you will do as we say, money; if not, no money." May I be permitted to suggest that these gentlemen have somewhat seriously misapprehended the temper of the Christian ministry of America? I am speaking for multitudes of my brethren when I say, "*Before high God, not for sale!*" Indeed, I suspect that there has been a crop of sermons on the social question preached throughout this country that would not have been preached if it had not been for this public attack, so that those of us who are interested in having such sermons preached might almost thank these gentlemen for their unintentional assistance. There would have been, I suppose, no Luther if there had been no Tetzl, and if there had been no George the Third there would have been no George Washington. Action and reaction are generally equal, and if anyone wants to make sure that the social teaching of Jesus shall be the centrally absorbing subject of the Christian pulpit in the next year or so, the easiest way is to offer to buy our silence for money.

Far deeper, however, and more important is this serious matter: no thoughtful man can regard without anxiety the disruptive elements that are abroad in our social life today. That phrase "social revolution" occurs with alarming frequency and carries with it ominous significance. Said one of our leading orators recently in New York City: "The day of social evolution has passed and the day of social revolution has arrived." Well, God pity us, if that be so! For "social revolution" now has a very clear and definite significance. It means that a minority group in the commonwealth, through organization controlling the indispensable necessities of human life, can by concerted action force their will on the majority, break down the fundamental principles and institutions of representative government, by violence seize the power of the state and use it as they will. That thing has already

been done in Russia, and upon the witness of a man like Bertrand Russell, a communist himself, has been attended by such incidental circumstances as loss of all free speech, all free assembly, all free publication, all free representation, all free transportation. Again and again, in Britain, with every great strike, the pendulum swings more dangerously near that fateful hour. But here in America we yet have the best chance left on earth to achieve, as the social creed of the Federal Council says, "by orderly and progressive social reconstruction instead of revolution by violence" the ends we seek. Everybody who really cares for the institutions of America must pray for that. Every responsible organization from the Federation of Labor to the Chambers of Commerce really wants that. My friends, social revolution is too costly a way to get progress. For while it sometimes does mean the demolition of old evils, it means the demolition of old gains, too, that take long generations to build back again.

Just because this is the case, one looks with fear upon an announcement like this from Pittsburgh, for this letter indicates the surest and swiftest way to land this country in violent social revolution. Repress the endeavor to apply the principles of Jesus to the social order; repress the Young Women's Christian Associations in their interest concerning the life and labor of the young women of America; repress agencies that seek the amelioration of human relations in industry; try to keep the economic situation static in a dynamic world: and when you have long enough repressed the possibilities of orderly social progress you will get the inevitable consequence, disorderly social revolution. You cannot keep anything static in a dynamic world, and when we forward-looking, liberal Christians pray and work for the application of Jesus' ideals to our social, economic and international life, we are not disruptive; we are salutary. The application in a thoroughgoing fashion of these social ideals of the Federal Council of American life today would be the best insurance we could have against social revolution.

Of you, as individuals, I beg: do not die in Haran. If you were brought up in a narrowly individualistic type of religion, migrate. Do not play Terah. Be Abraham.

Catch the vision of a promised land—the whole world brought beneath the mastery of the ideals of Jesus.

Such, then, with many more applications that you can imagine, is the morning truth. Does it seem disrespectful to our fathers to plead for a forward movement out of the old lands where they have lived? On the contrary, as another put it, "If we are to be as good as our fathers, we must be better than our fathers, for they were better than theirs." Upon Morningside Heights there is the beginning of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Suppose that all the Episcopalians of New York City should cry: "Our fathers built it so, and so we will keep it." Would they honor their fathers? No! If this present generation of Episcopalians would honor their fathers, they must say, "Our fathers began a great enterprise and by God's help we will finish it." That was the spirit of Abraham, for as he moved out from Haran, after Terah died, he did carry with him all the abiding sanctities of his ancient heritage. But he *carried* them—he carried them on toward a culmination that Terah never dreamed.

II: SCIENCE AND RELIGION

SHERWOOD EDDY¹

There can be no conflict between true religion and true science, if they are parts of one common reality. The only clash can be between an unbelieving science and an unscientific belief. There may be a conflict between our imperfect developing conceptions of science and theology, but true science and true religion as such can have no conflict. For illustration, here are two railway trains approaching at top speed, apparently doomed to collision and the total wreck of both. But they pass by unharmed, for they are on parallel tracks. This is true of the parallel planes of science and religion. Supposing we understand evolution as simply the gradual method of development observable in all spheres of natural man experience; that it is only the way of God. How, then, would it impair our faith to believe normally works by evolution rather than by that he works rationally, slowly and surely, suddenly and arbitrarily? Instead of losing would not religion immensely gain from this conception?

X Evolution implies descent with modification, that all life has been evolved from certain primordial germs.² In other words, it is simply the development from simple to complex forms of life by adaptation. Such a theory of development is in no way necessarily materialistic, automatic or self-sufficient. If any adequate explanation is

¹Selections from "Facing the Crisis," Chapter VII.

²LeConte in his "Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought" describes it as "continuous progressive change according to certain laws and by means of resident forces." Schiller in his "Riddles of the Sphinx" defines evolution as "the universal law of the becoming of things; a progressive development of the individual in combination with other individuals in which the individual passes from the atom to the moral person."

to be given of this wonderful plan of development observable throughout the universe, it requires God not only for its origin but also in the whole process from start to finish.

Let us beware, at the outset, of prejudice. Let us frankly admit that almost every radical advance in science involving a change from traditional theological views has been opposed in the supposed interests of religion.³ Augustine, the great writer of the fourth century, held that if we assert that men live on the other side of the earth we would give the lie to the Holy Spirit and to the scriptures which give no such view of a round world. Columbus was vigorously opposed by the church leaders of his day who refuted his theories from scripture, which implied a flat earth and the four corners thereof. When Magellan's fleet circumnavigated the globe the discovery that the world was round was fiercely opposed in the interests of orthodoxy. Galileo was forced by the church to recant upon his knees and renounce his dangerous doctrine, but the earth moved just the same and a mistaken medieval theology could not change it. When Copernicus discovered in 1543 that the sun was the center of our system it was in contradiction to the whole cosmological system of the day, and Calvin and Luther vigorously opposed his discovery. John Wesley in the eighteenth century, in the controversy over the burning of witches, maintained that if witchcraft were not true the whole Bible fell to the ground. The publication of the "Origin of Species" by Darwin in 1859 brought forth a new array of defenders of the faith to attack the discoveries of modern science, just as fresh discoveries had been opposed for fifteen centuries before that time in the face of every radical advance of thought. President

³ Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," writes: "Every new truth which has ever been propounded has, for a time, caused mischief; it has produced discomfort and often unhappiness, sometimes by disturbing social and religious arrangements, and sometimes merely by the disruption of old and cherished associations of thoughts. . . . At length the truth causes nothing but good. . . . Men are made uneasy; they flinch; they cannot bear the sudden light . . . old interests and old beliefs have been destroyed before new ones have been created. . . . These symptoms . . . have preceded all great changes through which the world has passed." In the present time, is not the same process being repeated?

Andrew D. White, in his "Warfare of Science with Theology," shows that "interference with science in the supposed interests of religion has resulted in the direst evils, and untrammelled investigation in the highest good of religion and science. . . . God's truth must agree whether discovered in the soul or within the world. . . . They must at last come together, for truth is one."

There are a number of earnest Christians today who look askance at the doctrine of evolution as calculated to overthrow faith. We are forced, however, to take our choice between the modern view of the world on the one hand, and the ancient or medieval view on the other. Many Christians still retain the old-world view in whole or in part. According to this earlier view the earth was the center of a comfortable little universe. The sun revolved around the earth and the "firmament" was a solid dome from which the stars were hung. The earth was flat with its "four corners;" heaven was just above and hell below us. The elect had the direction of a verbally inspired inerrant seat of authority and for outsiders there was the "proof" of Natural Religion in the argument from design, based on the scientific doctrine of the day of the fixity of species, as special creations in a world made in six days, and ruled by absolute divine decrees.

A NEW WORLD

But this old-world view was shattered for students of modern science. First came astronomy which showed our little earth as one of the least of the planets, revolving around our sun as one of the smallest of the stars in a boundless universe. Then geology and the kindred sciences pushed back the six days of creation to a record of more than six hundred million years of evolving life upon our planet. Biology then traced the development of man as part of a vast evolution of life from simple to complex forms. Next Historical Criticism subjected the Bible to the same scientific scrutiny as all other books and showed its progressive historical development, comparing with it similar stories of creation, the flood, etc., found among the nations surrounding the Hebrews. Then the study of Comparative Religions discovered vast

ranges of parallel truth in other faiths of mankind and the question was asked if this truth was all "from the devil." Next came the rise of democracy and "the revolt of the modern conscience" against supposedly divine decrees condemning to eternal punishment multitudes of men even before their birth, together with the great bulk of mankind who had never had the opportunity of hearing the Christian message. Finally the World War broke down many of the old traditions and beliefs and forced men who dared to do so to rethink their position.

A Christian today must take his choice between the medieval and the modern view of the world. Fortunately his personal religious experience can be real and deep whether his view of science be medieval or modern, but it is indeed a privilege to have a joyous, vital, Christian experience coupled with a rational faith in harmony with science, for one who must live his life in the full current of the modern world. A recent pronouncement of Dr. Dowie's followers indicates how one may retain the medieval view today and suggests the probability that many of us have some of the grave clothes of the old view still clinging to us in the present. We should have very real sympathy for those whose view of truth seems threatened if it is changed in a single detail. It is not easy to make the transition from the old to the modern view, and there may be a dark valley of doubt between, but the high sunlit tableland of truth lies beyond and the solid Rock of Ages will be beneath your feet.

Upon whichever side of the great divide we may be, let us at least endeavor to understand one another and

'Wilbur Voliva, overseer of Zion and head of the Christian Apostolic Church, has completed the fixing of the dimensions of the flat world, the existence of which is now taught in the Zion schools. The sky is a vast dome of solid material from which the sun, moon and stars are hung like chandeliers from a ceiling. The edges of the dome, he explained to the congregation at Shiloh Tabernacle, rest on the wall which surrounds the flat world. "That is the plain teaching of the whole word of God," Mr. Voliva said. "The firmament above our heads is a solid structure and the stars are points of light, that is all. They are not worlds, they are not suns. So-called science is a lot of silly rot, and so is so-called medical science and all the rest of their so-called sciences. The sun is a small body about forty miles in diameter and located only 3,000 miles from the earth," that is, about as far as New York is from San Francisco.—Zion, Illinois, Feb. 1, 1922.

speak the truth in a love that is "never glad when others go wrong . . . always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient." Let us not call one another "atheists," "agnostics" or "infidels" because we differ in some point, however important it may be.

If I may speak for myself, thirty-three years ago I began to make this transition to the modern viewpoint. All the deepest spiritual experiences of my life have come to me in connection with this view. It is not some new departure. It has been the foundation for all my missionary life and evangelistic work. For myself I have found the gladness of a rational and joyous faith, a loving God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a divine and risen Saviour, an inspired Word of God, a spiritual experience that has quenched the thirst of my soul these many years, and a message of evangelism that is really saving men in the Orient and Occident alike.

While scientists differ as to the theory which will best account for the facts, and may reject in part the particular views of Darwin, Herbert Spencer and others, evolution as a principle is now accepted in practically all departments of knowledge. We see the process of development actually going on today all about us and new forms both of plants and animals are being produced before our eyes; by Burbank and others in plants and flowers, and by the followers of DeVries in the animal kingdom.⁵

To anyone who will examine the case for evolution impartially, it seems convincing and unanswerable. If we take the converging lines of evidence from comparative anatomy, from embryology, where the unborn infant in its earlier stages recapitulates lower forms, the evidence from paleontology in the age-long record of the rocks, the evidence from geographical distribution, and finally from experimental investigation, the chain of evidence seems convincing.

⁵ As Prof. James Harvey Robinson points out, "The most stalwart and eloquent opponent of evolution was, a few decades ago, a single cell less than one-hundredth of an inch in diameter. . . . Each of us has actually recapitulated the history of life in a marvelous series of personal metamorphoses."

Take, for instance, the development of the horse. In the museum of Natural History in New York, at Yale, and elsewhere, you will note that it begins with a little animal eleven inches in height, smaller than a sheep, with five long toes, fitted for running in the deep marsh grass. As the dry land and short grass emerge the horse becomes adapted to the changing environment. One by one the toes disappear until we have left the fleet hoof as the nail of one toe and the large swift horse of today. Again, if you take the embryo of the shark, the chicken and the man, at an early stage of development long before birth, all have gills for breathing under water, a long tail and the system of the circulation of the blood peculiar to the fish. Finally these disappear in the human embryo and the new and higher life evolves adapted to the present environment. The one hundred or more vestigial structures like the human appendix which were once functional, performing a needed service in a lower form of life but which are now left as rudimentary, give further evidence.

The gains to all departments of life made by this great discovery of evolution are almost incalculable. It has brought increased emphasis on the immanence of God. God is not some far-off deistic maker of a self-running machine, nor is he merely appearing and reappearing in certain gaps of special manifestations, but immanent in the whole process from beginning to end. Evolution has also given us a larger view of the method, plan and aim of God. It has revealed a greater universe and a greater God than our fathers ever conceived. Every atom of matter is a miraculous microcosm of whirling electrons. From the infinitesimal to the infinite all is part of one marvelous plan. Moreover, it gives a wider unity and sweep to all life and a deeper harmony between the natural and the spiritual.

"A sacred kinship I would not forego
Binds me to all that breathes."

This progressive view also leads us to a larger spiritual hope and greater patience as we see that all progress is gradual, not cataclysmic by sudden, arbitrary jerks and

starts. The present roots in the past, and the future in the present, as we share "the power of an endless life."

GENESIS AND SCIENCE

How, then, can we reconcile the first chapter of Genesis with modern science and evolution? We simply do not try to reconcile them. A moment's thought will convince us that there were, as we have seen, two possible methods open if there was to be a divine revelation to man. One would be a perfect, final, infallible compendium of universal knowledge let down from heaven in a finished and perfect book. But supposing such a book were written in terms of modern science, about electrons, relativity, radium, the nebular hypothesis, etc. Of what possible moral and spiritual use would it have been to men during the last five thousand years, or in any age? It would have been incomprehensible and impractical. Even if it were written in terms of modern twentieth century science it would be out of date in a few years, not necessarily because it would be untrue, but inadequate.

If, on the other hand, man must learn by gradual progress in education and discipline, the only other alternative to the above would seem to be that of a *gradual, progressive revelation* on the principle "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." If we turn to the first chapter of the Bible we read: "In the beginning—God!" More than thirty times in this chapter God is referred to as the author of all. Here is the divinely inspired spiritual truth that it is God's world and that in it he has a purpose of good. Then we read on through that opening poem containing a beautiful picture of a world described as created in six days, each with its evening and morning. As we contrast this statement with those of certain other sacred books describing the world as hatched out of a golden egg, in seven round continents and seven concentric seas of milk, melted butter, etc., we see the simple grandeur of the Biblical narrative. But in no sense is it scientific and by no conceivable stretch of the imagination can it truly be made so. The Bible is a marvelous book of poetry, prose, history, geography, cosmogony and a hundred other

things, but for none of these things was it written. Its one central purpose was that believing, we might have *life*; to so reveal God to man in a revelation culminating in Jesus Christ, that we might have life in him. To force it to do duty as science, history, geography, astronomy, geology, etc., is to repeat the catastrophe of those who have opposed science by scripture from the days of Augustine to the present.

Let us therefore gladly receive the revelation of God's truth equally in his word and in his world, in religion and in science. We shall find one vast, mighty, majestic process culminating in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the Kingdom of God as a new social order. Thus through all the ages one increasing purpose runs, and love is found creation's final law. Thus like the author of the Hebrews, "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken," we accept God's truth through the gradual, developing, evolutionary revelation of himself in religion and science alike.

III: EVOLUTION AND MR. BRYAN

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

The editor of *The Times*¹ has asked me to reply to Mr. Bryan's statement on "God and Evolution." I do so, if only to voice the sentiments of a large number of Christian people who in the name of religion are quite as shocked as any scientist could be in the name of science at Mr. Bryan's sincere but appalling obscurantism.

Today, the evolutionary hypothesis, after many years of pitiless attack and searching investigation, is, as a whole, the most adequate explanation of the facts with regard to the origin of species that we have yet attained, and it was never so solidly grounded as it is today. Dr. Osborne is making, surely, a safe statement when he says that no living naturalist, so far as he knows, "differs as to the immutable truth of evolution in the sense of the continuous fitness of plants and animals to their environment and the ascent of all the extinct and existing forms of life, including man, from an original and single cellular state."

THE REAL SITUATION

When, therefore, Mr. Bryan says, "Neither Darwin nor his supporters have been able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis," it would be difficult to imagine a statement more obviously and demonstrably mistaken. The real situation is that every fact on which investigation has been able to lay its hands helps to confirm the hypothesis of evolution. There is no known fact which stands out against it. Each newly discovered fact fits into an appropriate place in it. So far as the general outlines of it are concerned, the Copernican astronomy itself is hardly established more solidly.

¹This article appeared in *New York Times*, Sunday, March 12.

My reply, however, is particularly concerned with the theological aspects of Mr. Bryan's statement. There seems to be no doubt about what his position is. He proposes to take his science from the Bible. He proposes, certainly, to take no science that is contradicted by the Bible. He says, "Is it not strange that a Christian will accept Darwinism as a substitute for the Bible when the Bible not only does not support Darwin's hypothesis, but directly and expressly contradicts it?" What other interpretation of such a statement is possible except this: that the Bible is for Mr. Bryan an authoritative textbook in biology—and if in biology, why not in astronomy, cosmogony, chemistry, or any other science, art, concern of man whatever? One who is acquainted with the history of theological thought gasps as he reads this. At the close of the sixteenth century a Protestant theologian set down the importance of the book of Genesis as he understood it. He said that the text of Genesis "must be received strictly;" that "it contains all knowledge, human and divine;" that "twenty-eight articles of the Augsburg Confession are to be found in it;" that "it is an arsenal of arguments against all sects and sorts of atheists, pagans, Jews, Turks, Tartars, Papists, Calvinists, Socinians, and Baptists;" that it is "the source of all science and arts, including law, medicine, philosophy, and rhetoric," "the source and essence of all histories and of all professions, trades, and works," "an exhibition of all virtues and vices," and "the origin of all consolation."

LUTHER AND BRYAN

One has supposed that the days when such wild anachronisms could pass muster as good theology were past, but Mr. Bryan is regalanizing into life that same outmoded idea of what the Bible is, and proposes in the twentieth century that we shall use Genesis, which reflects the prescientific view of the Hebrew people centuries before Christ, as an authoritative textbook in science, beyond whose conclusions we dare not go.

Why, then, should Mr. Bryan complain because his attitude toward evolution is compared repeatedly, as he says it is, with the attitude of the theological opponents

of Copernicus and Galileo? On his own statement, the parallelism is complete. Martin Luther attacked Copernicus with the same appeal which Mr. Bryan uses. He appealed to the Bible. He said: "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is, of course, the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth."

Nor was Martin Luther wrong if the Bible is indeed an authoritative textbook in science. The denial of the Copernican astronomy with its moving earth can unquestionably be found in the Bible if one starts out to use the Bible that way—"The world also is established, that it cannot be moved" (Psalm 93:1); "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved forever" (Psalm 104:5). Moreover, in those bygone days, the people who were then using Mr. Bryan's method of argument did quote these passages as proof, and Father Inchofer felt so confident that he cried, "The opinion of the earth's motion is of all heresies the most abominable, the most pernicious, the most scandalous; the immovability of the earth is thrice sacred; argument against the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, and the incarnation should be tolerated sooner than an argument to prove that the earth moves."

THE HEBREW UNIVERSE

Indeed, as everybody knows who has seriously studied the Bible, that book represents in its cosmology and its cosmogony the view of the physical universe which everywhere obtained in the ancient Semitic world. The earth was flat and was founded on an underlying sea (Psalm 136:6; Psalm 24:1-2; Genesis 7:11); it was stationary; the heavens, like an upturned bowl, "strong as a molten mirror" (Job 37:18; Genesis 1:6-8; Isaiah 40:22; Psalm 104:2), rested on the earth beneath (Amos 9:6; Job 26:11); the sun, moon, and stars moved within this firmament of special purpose to illumine man (Gen-

esis 1:14-19); there was a sea above the sky, "the waters which were above the firmament" (Genesis 1:7; Psalm 148:4) and through "the windows of heaven" the rain came down (Genesis 7:11; Psalm 78:23); beneath the earth was mysterious Sheol where dwelt the shadowy dead (Isaiah 14:9-11); and all this had been made in six days, each of which had had a morning and an evening, a short and measurable time before (Genesis 1).

Are we to understand that this is Mr. Bryan's science, that we must teach this science in our schools, that we are stopped by divine revelation from ever going beyond this science? Yet this is exactly what Mr. Bryan would force us to if with intellectual consistency he should carry out the implications of his appeal to the Bible against the scientific hypothesis of evolution in biology.

THE BIBLE'S PRECIOUS TRUTHS

One who is a teacher and preacher of religion raises his protest against all this just because it does such gross injustice to the Bible. There is no book to compare with it. The world never needed more its fundamental principles of life, its fully developed views of God and man, its finest faiths and hopes and loves. When one reads an article like Mr. Bryan's one feels, not that the Bible is being defended, but that it is being attacked. Is a 'cello defended when instead of being used for music it is advertised as a good dinner table? Mr. Bryan does a similar disservice to the Bible when, instead of using it for what it is, the most noble, useful, inspiring and inspired book of spiritual life which we have, the record of God's progressive unfolding of his character and will from early primitive beginnings to the high noon in Christ, he sets it up for what it is not and never was meant to be—a procrustean bed to whose infallible measurements all human thought must be forever trimmed.

ORIGINS AND VALUES

The fundamental interest which leads Mr. Bryan and others of his school to hate evolution is the fear that it will depreciate the dignity of man. Just what do they mean? Even in the Book of Genesis God made man out

of the dust of the earth. Surely, that is low enough to start, and evolution starts no lower. So long as God is the Creative Power, what difference does it make whether out of the dust by sudden fiat or out of the dust by gradual process God brought man into being. Here man is and what he is he is. Were it decided that God had dropped him from the sky, he still would be the man he is. If it is decided that God brought him up by slow gradations out of lower forms of life, he still is the man he is.

The fact is that the process by which man came to be upon the planet is a very important scientific problem, but it is not a crucially important religious problem. Origins prove nothing in the realm of values. To all folk of spiritual insight man, no matter by what process he at first arrived, is the child of God, made in his image, destined for his character. If one could appeal directly to Mr. Bryan he would wish to say: let the scientists thrash out the problems of man's biological origin but in the meantime do not teach men that if God did not make us by fiat then we have nothing but a bestial heritage. That is a lie which once believed will have a terrific harvest. It is regrettable business that a prominent Christian should be teaching that.

DANGER OF MATERIALISTIC TEACHING

One writes this with warm sympathy for the cause which gives Mr. Bryan such anxious concern. He is fearful that the youth of the new generation, taught the doctrine of a materialistic science, may lose that religious faith in God and in the realities of the spiritual life on which alone an abiding civilization can be founded. His fear is well grounded, as every one closely associated with the students of our colleges and universities knows. Many of them are sadly confused, mentally in chaos, and, so far as any guiding principles of religious faith are concerned, are often without chart, compass, or anchor.

There are types of teaching in our universities which are hostile to any confidence in the creative reality of the spiritual life—dreary philosophies which reduce everything to predetermined mechanical activity. Some class-

rooms doubtless are, as Mr. Bryan thinks, antagonistic, in the effect which they produce, alike to sustained integrity of character, buoyancy, and hopefulness of life and progress in society. But Mr. Bryan's association of this pessimistic and materialistic teaching with the biological theory of evolution is only drawing a red herring across the trail. The distinction between inspiring, spiritually minded teachers and deadening, irreligious teachers is not at the point of belief in evolution at all. Our greatest teachers, as well as our poorest, those who are profoundly religious as well as those who are scornfully irreligious, believe in evolution. The new biology has no more to do with the difference between them than the new astronomy or the new chemistry. If the hypothesis of evolution were smashed tomorrow, there would be no more religiously minded scientists and no fewer irreligious ones.

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

The real crux of the problem in university circles is whether we are going to think of creative reality in physical or in spiritual terms, and that question cannot be met in the lines that Mr. Bryan has laid down. Indeed, the real enemies of the Christian faith, so far as our students are concerned, are not the evolutionary biologists, but folk like Mr. Bryan who insist on setting up artificial adhesion between Christianity and outgrown scientific opinions, and who proclaim that we cannot have one without the other. The pity is that so many students will believe him and, finding it impossible to retain the outgrown scientific opinions, will give up Christianity in accordance with Mr. Bryan's insistence that they must.

Quite as amazing as his views of the Bible is Mr. Bryan's view of the effect of evolution upon man's thought of God. If ever a topsy-turvy statement was made about any matter capable of definitive information, Mr. Bryan's statement deserves that description, for it turns the truth upside down. He says: "The theistic evolutionist puts God so far away that he ceases to be a present influence in the life . . . Why should we want to imprison God in an impenetrable past? His

is a living world. Why not a living God upon the throne? Why not allow him to work now?" But the effect of evolution upon man's thought of God, as every serious student of theology knows, has been directly the opposite of what Mr. Bryan supposes. It was in the eighteenth century that men thought of God as the vague, dim figure over the crest of the first hill who gave this universal toboggan its primeval shove and has been watching it sliding ever since. It was in the eighteenth century that God was thought of as the absentee landlord who had built the house and left it—as the shipwright who had built the ship and then turned it over to the master mariners, his natural laws. Such ideas of God are associated with eighteenth century Deism, but the nineteenth century's most characteristic thought of God was in terms of immanence—God here in this world, the life of all that lives, the sustaining energy of all that lives, as our spirits are in our bodies, permeating, vitalizing, directing all.

GOD IS NOT A CARPENTER

The idea of evolution was one of the great factors in this most profitable change. In a world nailed together like a box, God, the creator, had been thought of as a carpenter who created the universe long ago; now in a world growing like a tree, ever more putting out new roots and branches, God has more and more been seen as the indwelling spiritual life. Consider that bright light of nineteenth century Christianity, Henry Drummond, the companion of D. L. Moody in his evangelistic tours. He believed in evolution. What did it do to his thought of God? Just what it has done to the thought of multitudes. Said Drummond: "If God appears periodically, he disappears periodically. If he comes upon the scene at special crises, he is absent from the scene in the intervals. Whether is all-God or occasional-God the nobler theory? Positively the idea of an immanent God, which is the God of evolution, is infinitely grander than the occasional wonder-worker who is the God of an-old theology."

IV: EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE

SHERWOOD EDDY¹

What is the purpose of the Bible?

The Bible is a collected library of sixty-six books, written during long periods of time covering more than a thousand years of Jewish history. Its various writings are grouped in two Testaments or Covenants, the Old, based upon the Jewish Law of Sinai; the New, upon the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. The Bible contains a vast literature of prose and poetry, history and law, prophecy and wisdom, early cosmogony and embryonic science, folklore and geography, psalms and proverbs.

The New Testament embraces biography and letters, history and apocalypse. But the primary object of the Bible is none of these. Its unique purpose is not as literature, though it is the grandest single volume of literature in any language. Its aim is not to teach grammar or geography, history or science, law or poetry. It is not intended as a storehouse of authoritative proof-texts or pious mottoes, not as a shibboleth, or a fetish or mystic book to be read for merit. It is not an end in itself, to be worshiped, nor a mechanical, external authority to be blindly obeyed. It has one clear purpose. *It is a means of life.* It is a means, not an end. It shows how we may realize the life of God in the soul of men. It tells us of a new type of life lived on earth by Jesus of Nazareth, how he shared it with his disciples, and how we also may possess it. We find here a new beginning, a new epoch, a new humanity. Growing out of the short life and tragic death of Jesus, there had been an overwhelming experience of this new life. Men came together to ask what had happened. Peter stood up to explain it, and

¹ Selections from "Facing the Crisis," Chapter VI.

the four Gospels and the New Testament are but the expansion of the explanation then begun. The Bible records the gradual education of the Jewish people through inspired prophets, culminating in Jesus Christ as their fulfillment. It is thus the record of an experience and the vehicle for transmitting it to succeeding generations.

The Bible is, then, of priceless value for two reasons: it is the outstanding moral and religious book of antiquity, containing the record of the world's greatest religious race, and it is our one source of knowledge of the historic Jesus. Second, it is the one great means of communicating this experience so that it may be reverified and relived by men in each succeeding age. Ours is not a book religion like Islam. It is a way of life, and centers in a person.

The Bible is the most human book in the world, yet it is the most divine. Its authority is in its self-evidencing power, the appeal of its inherent truth, its ability to transform life, and to reproduce the experience which it records. It has found men because, as Emerson says, "it came out of profounder depths than any other book." Thus Heine's statement is typical of multitudes of men. "I owe my enlightenment quite simply to the reading of a book . . . *the book, the Bible.* . . . He who has lost his God may find him again in this volume, and he who has never known him will there be met by the breath of the divine Word."²

Is the Bible a finished or a progressive revelation?

Let us recognize that God's object seems to have been not to get an infallible book, but to educate men. The Bible nowhere claims to be infallible. Never was man promised a church, or book, or visible guide that was to be inerrant, but God's own Spirit was to guide him. Conceivably, there are two possible ways that a revela-

² Coleridge says, "In every generation and wherever the light of revelation has shown, men of all ranks, conditions and states of mind have found in this volume a correspondent for every movement toward the better felt in their own heart. The needy soul has found supply; the feeble a help; the sorrowful a comfort."

tion of God might be given. It might be, as it were, let down from heaven, in finished, perfected form as an encyclopedic revelation of truth—religious, scientific, historical, philosophical, omniscient. Such a scientific revelation would be meaningless to men in the childhood of the race. Such a perfect revelation would be equally incomprehensible to them religiously.

The other alternative would be a *gradual, progressive revelation* as they were able to receive it, corresponding to the slow education of the race. Which of these two methods God used is not a question of theory but of fact. Let us examine and see whether in its history, science, morality and theology the Bible is infallible, and whether it is equally inspired throughout. To be infallible it would have to be free from all error and disagreements; accurate in every statement, recording the exact words dictated by God or spoken by Jesus Christ; and communicating the perfect thought and will of God. Does the Bible do this, or does it disclose a developing conception of truth, the slow dawning of light in the midst of the darkness and ignorance and sin of man?

In the imprecatory Psalms, the Psalmist prays for vengeance upon his enemies. "When he shall be judged, let him come forth guilty; and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. . . . Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children. . . . Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out."³ But Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Which is the higher of these conceptions? Are they equally inspired? If so, why is the Bible of the most devout much used and worn thin on these passages of Jesus, and the pages white and almost untouched in the imprecatory Psalms and parts of the Old Testament? Did the enemy in the war ever go beyond the cruelty of some of the imprecatory Psalms? Are they equally inspired with the twenty-

³ Psalm 109:9-15.

third Psalm, and the Sermon on the Mount? Are they morally infallible; if so, why do we not follow them today?

Do we discern no moral progress in the Bible? Abraham and Solomon had their wives and concubines; but if the Apostle Paul had done so, could he be a spiritual authority for us? David commits adultery and is responsible for the murder of Uriah. Would Peter have done so? Jehu's massacre of the descendants of Ahab is approved by the writer of the Kings as "zeal for the Lord." But later it is condemned by Hosea, as a sin for which the Lord will destroy the house of Israel.⁴ Is there contradiction here or progress?

We must remember that Jesus Christ is the touchstone and test of the whole. By his standard all parts of the Bible must be judged. Jesus himself criticizes the Old Testament and is our authority for judging its moral teaching in the light of his own. Thus, to Moses were ascribed certain laws concerning divorce; but Jesus says, they are "on account of the hardness of your hearts," that is, the low moral standard of the time.

Many claim that the Bible is inerrant and perfect in its science, its history, and its very words. A controversialist in India, who believed in infallible, verbal inspiration, came to the writer and asked, "Some people say there are more than two thousand mistakes in the Bible; is that true?" We asked him, "What was the inscription written on the cross of Christ?" He replied, "'This is the King of the Jews.'" We said, "A paraphrase will not do; give us the very words." "Well," he answered, "look in the Bible." We replied, "Supposing we do, will we find there the exact words that were on the cross, infallibly recorded?" "Yes," he said, "absolutely the exact words." "Well," we said, "to which Gospel shall we turn, since it is given in four different ways in the four Gospels, and no two of them exactly agree? Which one shall we take as the one that is infallible and verbally inspired? If no two of them precisely agree, is this a mistake or not?" He thought for a moment and replied, "No, it is not a mistake, they agree in substance;

⁴ II Kings 10:30; Hosea 1:4.

they give the essential truth; the words do not matter." Was he not right? "The letter killeth; the Spirit giveth life." It is the substance that matters. If you cannot find a single parable or miracle or *a single saying of Christ of three lines in extent, that is recorded in exactly the same words* in the four Gospels, in any three Gospels, or in any two Gospels; if no two exactly agree, *which account shall we take as verbally inspired and infallible?* It is when we come to the Bible to fulfill its great divine purpose that we find it *a means of life*, the record of God's revelation to man that leads us to the very heart of God.

There will be found over a hundred thousand variations in the readings of the oldest and best manuscripts of the New Testament. Nowhere does the Bible make the claim of infallibility nor was this claim ever made for it until the fourth century. Luther and many other equally devout and intelligent men never held this view of inerrancy. Some may say, "The New Testament at least is infallible." But to take one of many instances, turn to Matthew 27:9, where the writer says, "Then the word spoken by the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled." We find, however, that the writer, quoting from memory, does not give the passage accurately, as is the case of many of the quotations from the Old Testament.⁵ In fact, the passage is not found at all in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah 11:13. Some would say, "You must believe all, or reject all." Would you reject the priceless teaching of Jesus because Matthew or some other writer, quoting from memory, gives the wrong name of a book?

Take the analogy of our human parents. As children, we believed them to be infallible; we believed in Santa Claus and fairies, but we were later disillusioned. We do not need infallible but loving human parents; nor an inerrant, inhuman, mechanical book let down from heaven, but a means of life.

⁵ See Charles R. Brown, "The Main Points," p. 77. "Criticism has demolished alike the Catholic assumption of an infallible Church and the Protestant assumption of an infallible Book." Gwatkin, "The Knowledge of God," Vol. II, p. 289.

We must also distinguish between the eternal truth contained in the Bible and the traditions about it which men have held from time to time. For illustration, the writer stood some years ago on the battlefield of Waterloo. At a certain strategic point on the right of Wellington's line there was a stone wall held throughout the day of the battle. There was a hedge fence in advance of this stone wall that might have been defended during the early morning hours of the battle; but upon inquiry we found that Wellington never attempted to hold this doubtful line. He could not there have withstood the full force of the enemy. His forces might have been unable to regain and hold even the stone wall in the haste and rout of retreat. Now, the stone wall represents the truth of the Bible, and the hedge fence the tradition men have held about it, or various theories of its origin, authorship, inspiration, infallibility, or inerrancy. For ourselves, we feel that we must hold to the stone wall of truth, and not endeavor to defend all the lines of tradition or theory that men have held about the Bible.

We must not forget that almost every evil has in turn been justified by proof texts from the Bible, whether of witchcraft, slavery, the inquisition, or other evils and superstitions. And it is equally true that almost every radical advance in science has been opposed by those who held traditional theories about the Bible. Perhaps this was natural and almost inevitable, but had the Church stood from first to last for truth, for scientific observation, and sound historical criticism, for social justice and human right, it would not find itself in the situation it does today throughout the world.

It may be said, that even if some of these things are undeniably true it is unwise to teach them. But students of modern science and philosophy, the men returned from the war, even the man in the street who has caught the spirit of the times, can no longer receive, upon mere outward authority, views which cannot bear the test of thorough investigation. Many have already drifted away from organized religion. If men are not ready to be told the truth today, when will they be? What kind of a

faith is it that cannot bear the light of the full glare of day, or cannot face the indisputable facts of science? We believe that just because we have failed to teach the truth, the whole truth as far as we know it, and nothing but the truth, that incalculable damage has already been done, and that many a man has lost his faith altogether and abandoned in retreat the stone wall of truth, who would today be a true Christian if a rational view of the Bible had been presented to him in full harmony with modern science. Surely we need not be afraid nor try to steady the ark of truth. Are we to repeat the mistakes of the last three hundred years and continue this opposition to the results of modern science?

The Bible remains the unique possession of the human race. It is the divinely inspired, human record of the progressive revelation of God's perfect truth to imperfect, developing men. Its inspiration is vital, not mechanical. It is the most honest, ingenuous, frank, self-evidencing book in the world. It establishes its own authority. It is a very fountain of living waters, a means of life, a channel of the most priceless experience in human history.

How may we realize the practical purpose of the Bible, and why should we study it?

The three great spiritual needs of the individual would seem to be, to come into vital fellowship with God, to enter into helpful relation to his fellowmen in service, and to form a Christian character in overcoming temptation. These three needs the Bible supplies as no other book, or all others combined. How does it do this?

We need to read the Bible for the same reason that we need physical food. M. Bergson, in his "Creative Evolution," shows that we need food for the body for three reasons: to repair waste, to furnish heat for the system, and to supply energy or explosive power for work. For the same three corresponding spiritual reasons, we need to study the Scriptures. Herbert Spencer says, "Whatever amount of power an organism expends is the equivalent of the power that was taken into it from without."

We cannot give out what we do not receive. Life is a correspondence of receiving and giving, inflow and overflow. Prayer, and the study of the Bible, are perhaps the two chief means of inflow to the spiritual life.

When a King of England is crowned, he is presented with the Bible in the coronation service with these words, "We present you with this Book, the greatest thing this world affords. There is truth; this is wisdom: these are the living oracles of God." We, too, are presented with this priceless possession of the race. Shall we eagerly study it or neglect it? Look down the centuries at the men of spiritual power. As they have been men of prayer, so have they been men who lived upon the truth of God's Word—men like Bunyan, Luther, and Wesley. Hear Samuel Rutherford in Scotland say, "A river of God's unseen joys has flowed from bank to brae over my soul. I urge upon you communion with Christ, a growing communion. . . . Therefore dig deep, and sweat, and labor, and take pains for him. Set by as much time in the day for him as you can. *He will be won with labor.*" Listen to McCheyne, "I ought to spend the first hours of every day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner." Hear George Müller, writing at the age of ninety-two, answering a question as to the secret of his spiritual power, "I have been a lover of God's Word."⁶

Jesus himself "lived and had his being in the sacred Scriptures." If you look through the Gospel of Matthew, you will find that he quotes fifty-eight times from seven-

⁶ Woodrow Wilson says, "I am sorry for the men who do not read the Bible every day. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and pleasure. I should be afraid to go forward if I did not believe there lay at the foundation of all our schooling and all our thought this incomparable and unimpeachable Word of God." Dr. R. F. Horton says, "No difficulties in the Bible are worth considering compared with the difficulties of those who cease to read it. Out of their lives has gone not only a great intellectual discipline, a touchstone of literary taste, a handbook of ethics and conduct, but the master instrument for holding the soul in communion with God. Read the Book. Consider that here you have the greatest book in the world, the fountain head of modern literature; remember the past, the souls that have been fed and strengthened on this spiritual food, the deeds that have been done, the lives that have been led by its inspiration." "My Belief," p. 132.

teen different books in the Old Testament; some fifteen times from Isaiah, eleven from the Psalms, ten from Deuteronomy, six from Jeremiah, etc. These were the springs from which he drank. Tischendorf tells of his discovery of the great manuscript in the monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai, when his hand shook with excitement at the priceless possession, worth millions, the value of which was unrecognized by the simple monks. Is it not true that the supreme value of this Book is often equally unrecognized by the modern student today? In a life filled with feverish activity, how little time we have for God. We say we have no time; no time for what? No time for God, no time for power, no time for character? Are there not twelve hours in the day, and are we not here in touch with one of the sources and secrets of the very Life that changed human history?

How, then, shall we study this book? If we are beginners, supposing we start with the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Let us study it paragraph by paragraph. Let us ask at each verse or section, first, what does it mean, and second, what does it teach me today about life? First we must get its truth into the outer court of the mind, but second, into the inner court of the heart, that it may change our lives. Let us study it regularly, rationally, systematically, practically, prayerfully. Let us study it at least as thoroughly as we would any other book.

Can the student not set apart at least a few minutes for this purpose at such time as he may find best and most profitable? For most of us that will probably be the first and freshest time in the early morning. Just as the soldier puts on his armor before the battle rather than after, as the musician tunes his instrument before the concert begins rather than after it is over, so we need strength and harmony for each new day before it is lived. Let us also heed the word of Hudson Taylor, who had led a thousand missionaries into the heart of China, when he said to the students of America, "Make the devotional study of the Word of God the first thing in your life, absolutely."

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