

# THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## I.

### EVOLUTION IN RELATION TO SPECIES.

**I** PROPOSE, in this brief article, to submit some objections, of a strictly scientific or logical character, against the now fashionable hypothesis of evolution as an explanation of the origin and mystery of species in organic nature. I shall take occasion also to criticise the logic of its advocates. But I shall lay no stress upon its supposed sceptical tendencies for several reasons.

One of these reasons is, that, although infidels with their keen instinct everywhere welcome and defend extreme views on this subject as unanswerable arguments against the truth of the Holy Scriptures, yet all evolutionists are not sceptics. Some of them are firm believers in the Word of God, and declare that, as they understand it, they find nothing in it opposed to evolution. Some are clear and strong Theists, whether believers in revelation or not, strenuously maintaining that the forces of nature by which the processes of evolution are supposed to be carried on, are not in any sense the properties of matter, but the uniform action or energy of the Divine will. Others, whilst claiming that these forces are truly the properties of matter, escape the gulf of scepticism by holding also that God, by an original and personal act, endowed matter with these properties. Others still exclude the human soul entirely from the hypothesis, and claim that for its existence a creative act of God must be supposed. In

were tried by a Polish commission, sent at popular request. The trial was unfair and hasty. The verdict was known from the start. Funck and his companions fell victims to popular rage. His fate was surely too severe. He was by no means the miscreant he was regarded. But his ambition had led him astray, and in his hour of need he had no friends.

These facts are brought clearly out, and yet the conviction remains that in spite of Dr. Hase's industry and ample learning, he has failed to present a graphic history. We think that out of this play of conflicting passions there might be evolved a drama of tragic interest. As it is, we seem to be in a valley of dry bones, and catch no whisper of the spirit that will make them live !

S. M. J.

### III.—SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By JOHN CAIRD, D.D. Macmillan & Co. 1880.

It is a very difficult task to give a just estimate of a work so thoughtful and profound as Dr. Caird's "Philosophy of Religion," within limits necessarily so narrow as these notices impose. Both the matter and the form evince that the author has thoroughly possessed himself of his theme, subtle and wide as it is. The influence of certain thinkers, especially Hegel, is very apparent, yet the materials are completely fused, and the treatise wears the look and makes the impression of original and spontaneous power.

The position of the author is, that there is no contradiction, but a perfect harmony between philosophy and religion. If truth is actually reached in the former, it will agree with truth in the latter. By religion, Dr. Caird means evangelical Christianity, and throughout the volume his best energy is devoted to the demonstration of the intrinsic rationality, not of deism or any inadequate form of religion, but of the common Christian faith. The aim of the book is lofty, and the general spirit excellent, judged from both the ethical and the theological point of view. We say this in the outset, because we shall be led, in our criticism, to direct attention to some features of the work which we think are not in harmony with the design of the author, or with the ethical and theological position which we suppose him actually to hold.

In demonstrating his position, Dr. Caird begins with answering objections to the oneness of philosophy and religion, that, in his view, arise from three sources. 1. The alleged relativity of human knowledge. 2. The alleged immediate or intuitive nature of religious knowledge. 3. The authoritative nature of religious doctrine. The objector either asserts that religious knowledge is so subjective and individual, that it has no universality, and of course no absolute and scientific quality; or that religious truth is known merely by feeling and faith, and hence has no rationality at all; or, lastly, that it is given by an external revelation, to be passively received without examination.

In replying to the first objection, the author gives a critique of the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge which is as destructively thorough as anything that has yet been done within the same limits. There is no more valuable chapter in the book than this one; and if the author had done nothing else, he would deserve the thanks of all sound thinkers.

In replying to the second objection, Dr. Caird makes statements, and introduces views which, in our judgment, injure the value of the treatise as a whole. It is to the matter under this head, and to that which grows out of it in other parts of the volume, that we shall direct attention.

Dr. Caird maintains that intuitive and immediate knowledge is not the highest form of knowledge. It is an inferior mode of cognition characteristic of the common un-

scientific mind. It is only the faith and feeling of the ordinary believer, and cannot be regarded as philosophic intelligence. Philosophy must transmute this simple direct intuition into a higher cognition, by scientific thought. Up to this point, we should have no dispute with the author. As Dr. Caird acknowledges that there is an element of truth in the doctrine of immediate knowledge (p. 41), so the defender of intuitive perception will concede an element of truth in his view. The immediate intuition of God, of the soul, of right and wrong, or whatever the object may be, must be analyzed and formulated. The contents of Christian faith and feeling must be reflected upon, and stated in logical propositions, if there is to be any science of religion, and any systematic theology. The dictum of Anselm, which the author selects as the motto of his treatise, is the dictum of the intuitional philosopher: "It is culpable neglect of duty, if, after we are confirmed in the faith, we do not endeavor to understand our faith."

But *how* is this to be done? In answering this question, Dr. Caird leaves, we think, the main current of Christian speculation, and parts company with the majority of Christian philosophers and theologians. He adopts the Hegelian construction of consciousness, according to which, the first step is the direct and immediate union, in unanalyzed consciousness, between the subject and object; then, secondly, a separation of the subject from the object by an act of reflection upon the datum given in the first step; and then, thirdly, a final reunion of the subject and object in the higher form of philosophic cognition. In this dialectic process we think that a *speculative* element is introduced that is heterogeneous, and conflicts with the intuitive element, and vitiates it. It certainly places the author in a polemic attitude toward intuitions. After remarking that, according to the theory of intuitive perception, religious truth "is cognizable only by an organ other than reason, or self-conscious intelligence" (p. 39)—a position that would not be granted by the advocate of the view—he says that "the theory of immediate knowledge implies the positing of a finite conceived of as distinguished from, and opposed to, the Infinite; and as in order to the attainment of a relation between the two terms, there must be a third term by which they are mediated, it follows that immediate knowledge must virtually include a process of thought; that is, must include all that is objected to in mediate or rational knowledge" (p. 52).

We agree that the common intuitional consciousness must be subjected to the scrutiny of thought, but we deny that any "third term" is thereby introduced, if the process of reflection is rightly conducted. Take an example. The finite mind is immediately conscious (say) of God. Here, there is a finite subject, the human mind, in immediate mental union and communion with an infinite object, the Eternal Mind. This is the consciousness of simple faith and feeling, as Dr. Caird would allow. When, now, this form of consciousness is itself, subsequently, made the matter of rational reflection, and the endeavor is made to analyze it into its constituent elements, and to formulate its implication in logical propositions, no *new* matter, no "third term" is introduced. The rational and philosophic knowledge of God which is reached by this act of reflection upon the data of intuition is made up wholly of *intuitive* elements, and is *immediate* knowledge still, in its nature and texture. Only the form of the cognition is altered; the matter is unchanged. Analysis has, of course, converted the original synthesis into another mode; if it did not, it would not be an analysis. But new form does not mean new matter.

Dr. Caird, under the influence of this theory of consciousness, disparages the immediate perceptions of the human mind, and overestimates ratiocination and speculative methods generally. He endeavors to prove that intuitions are not of an absolute and philosophic nature, by citing popular assumptions that often prove to be popular errors (p. 57), and denies that there is a *consensus gentium* for the doctrine of the divine existence (pp. 60, 82). In so doing he is in conflict with himself, as we think; for everywhere he *assumes* the intrinsic rationality of man, and affirms very

strongly the universal nature of reason. He is led to these extreme positions, as it appears to us, by the desire to make out the insufficiency of intuition, so that the necessity may appear for that higher form of cognition which is to be mediated by speculation, instead of deduced by simple analysis. In this same connection he is led to dispute the common statement that revelation is not contrary to reason, though it is above it. He asserts that if religious truth is above reason, it is in reality contrary to it; and goes so far as to say that there is not only no qualitative, but no quantitative difference between finite and infinite reason, because "reason or thought is in itself essentially one" (pp. 72-75). On pages 88, 93, 240, the author combats the doctrine of a creator or designer as "dualistic" and "anthropomorphic," because "betwixt two things thus heterogeneous the category of causation establishes no necessary bond." On p. 220, he objects to the common explanation of the unity of a material or of a mental object, by the notion of a substance in which properties inhere. "To say that the different properties of extension, impenetrability, weight, etc., cohering in one substance, unite to make one thing, is not to explain or give a rational idea of their unity, but merely to reassert that they are one; is only to tie them together with a string, and that, too, a fictitious string." He asserts the same of the category of substance when applied to mind, either the infinite or the finite (p. 222).

In attempting to provide a substitute for the important idea of substance, it seems to us that the author adopts a monism that would carry him to consequences from which he would recoil. He proposes the doctrine of an "organic unity" between the Infinite and Finite, and explains as follows: "It is a false presupposition that Nature and Mind, the world without and the world within, constitute two fixed independent realities, each by itself complete in its own self-included being. Beginning with two isolated existences separated by the impassable gulf of rigid self-identity, no theory can ever force them into rational union or coherence. But when we begin to see in Nature and Mind not two independent things, but two members of one organic whole, having indeed each a being of its own, but a being which implies and finds itself in living relation to the other—then, and then only, can we bring the two factors into that union which any real knowledge of nature implies. The principle that solves the difference between nature and finite mind is, that their isolated reality and exclusiveness is a figment, and that the organic life of reason is the truth or reality of both" (pp. 237-240). "This same principle," he continues, p. 241, "applies to the solution of the higher problems of religion, or the relation of the finite mind to God. Here, too, it will be seen that the understanding, which clings to the hard independent identity of either side, inasmuch as it starts from essentially dualistic conditions, renders any true solution impossible. A true solution can be reached only by apprehending the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, as the moments, or members, of an *organic whole*, in which both exist at once in their distinction and their unity." This position is repeated again on pp. 243, 251. "The true infinite is not the mere negation of the finite, but that which is the *organic unity* of the infinite and finite."

Dr. Caird here deserts the dualism of Des Cartes and Kant, and adopts the monism of Hegel. The infinite and finite, instead of constituting two different spheres, are reduced to one. They are an organic unity. In reacting from the extreme of deism, which sets the two spheres outside of each other, instead of resting the one in and upon the other as Christian theism does, Dr. Caird goes to the other extreme of obliterating the difference itself. He objects to the doctrine of duality of being and substance. He makes God and the universe one sum and system of being. The Deity is regarded as a part of a general system. But God is not such. The universe is a creation from nothing, and of a different substance from the divine essence. It cannot, therefore, be put into a sum-total along with God, and constitute one common form of being. Once the universe was not. But God always was. The universe is contingent being; God is necessary. To combine under the notion of



an organic whole, such totally different objects as God and the world, is irrational. But this is attempted. "We are required to show," says the author, pp. 243, 251, "first, that finite spirit presupposes, or is intelligible only in the light of, the idea of the Infinite Spirit; and secondly, that the Infinite Spirit contains, in the very idea of its nature, *organic* relations to the finite." Here, the difference in kind between the infinite and finite is overlooked. It is true, that man supposes God, and is inexplicable without Him. But the converse is not true. God does not suppose man; and man's existence does not explain that of God. It is true, that we cannot think of man independently of God; but we can and must think of God independently of man. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." The infinite cannot, therefore, be brought under the same category with the finite. Nature may be an organic unity. Man may be an organic unity. And God may be an unity; not *organic*, however. But nature and God together cannot be an organic unity, and neither can man and God be one. Two such diverse existences as God and nature, or as God and man, cannot constitute one organic system. In an organism, one part is as old as another. Organs are contemporaneous, having the same origin, and developing simultaneously. This, of course, cannot be true of the infinite and the finite mind, and still less of the infinite mind and matter.

That Dr. Caird is in error at this point, and shows a tendency to monism, is still further evinced by his opposition to "such notions as 'First Cause,' or 'Creator and Governor of the World,'" as inadequate to solve the problem. "For," he says, "by the act of creation, the creator calls into existence something external to himself, something absolutely new, and which is, so to speak, an addition to his infinitude, and then neither before nor after the creating act can he be called infinite" (p. 244).

The reply to this objection is, that the addition to the real infinite of a quantity of being which is only the unlimited and not the infinite, is precisely like the addition of a vast finite number to mathematical infinity. It does not affect the infinite in one way or the other. To add imperfect and contingent being, however great the sum or quantity of it may be, to absolutely perfect and necessary being, is no increment to absolutely perfect and necessary being, and to subtract it is no diminution. God plus the universe is no greater and no better than God minus the universe.

The author represents the universe as necessary to God in respect to His self-consciousness and blessedness. He objects to conceiving of the Supreme Being "as a self-identical Infinite, complete and self-contained in His own being." He asserts that "the nature of God would be imperfect, if it did not contain in it relation to a finite world," and assigns as the reason, that without the finite world, "God would lack one of the most essential elements of a spiritual nature—the element of love," p. 252. Unless there were in existence a world to love, God must be destitute of the emotion. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the answer to this objection. The divine self-contemplation and self-communion, according to the trinity of Scripture, is not mediated, as it is in the Hegelian trinity, by the world, but by God himself. God distinguishes Himself from *Himself*, and not from that which is other than self. The trinitarian distinctions are within the Divine Essence. Prior to the existence of the universe, and when there is nothing but the infinite essence, there is self-contemplation, self-communion, blessedness, and all the elements of self-consciousness in the Godhead. The Father knows and loves the Son, his *alter ego*, from everlasting to everlasting. God no more needs the universe as an object from which to distinguish Himself, and thereby to acquire consciousness, than He needs the universe in order to be omniscient or omnipotent. The self-sufficiency and internal completeness of God holds true in reference to His personality as well as to any of His attributes. Were the divine self-knowledge and blessedness dependent upon the existence of a contrasted universe, then that universe must either be co-eternal with the deity, or else the deity would remain destitute of self-knowledge and blessedness until the universe came to be.

The influence of this monism is seen even in those parts of the treatise where the author is clear and pronounced in his theism. While he is positive in reference to materialism and the mechanical physics, he yet concedes more than we should expect from the general tenor of his reasoning upon such points. One would think that so determined an advocate of the power of reason, and of the value of purely rational processes, would be unwilling even to allow the supposition that "the rational may have slowly emerged out of the animal nature," or to concede that "mind or intelligence in man would be the same thing, whether we think of him as made out of nothing, or out of the dust of the earth, or developed by infinitesimal transitions out of the anthropoid ape" (p. 343). The nature of a thing is so related to its origin that the former cannot logically be held in disconnection with the latter. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, by reason of its birth; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit, for the same reason. It is difficult to maintain the doctrine of a difference in kind between mind and matter, if both originate in the same material base.

We have in this very brief, and to ourselves very unsatisfactory manner, seized upon some objectionable points in this significant volume. We regret that we have neither the time nor the space to point out the excellencies, of which there are many. We agree heartily with Dr. Caird that religion is rational, that faith and reason are in harmony, and philosophy and theology are one at bottom. But we should attempt to prove this position by a different method. We prefer Kant to Hegel; dualism to monism. We do not believe that the conception of Identity, though veiled and guarded under the notion of "organic unity," will serve the purpose, but will involve the theologian in insuperable difficulties. The infinite and finite are two substances and not one, and they cannot be either a substantial or an organic unity. Each has its own intrinsic qualities that differentiate it from the other. We believe that the old dualism between mind and matter, between God and the universe, must be acknowledged and accepted by both the philosopher and the theologian, in order to the correct solution of the problems with which both are occupied.

W. G. T. S.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF RELIGION AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPT. By P. LEPAGE RENOUF. [The Hibbert Lectures for 1879.] 12mo. pp. ix. 270. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1880.

Few religious systems have ever been more completely misapprehended than the religion of Egypt was by the old Greeks and Romans. And the early Christian writers were hardly more correct in their estimates. It was only hieroglyphic interpretation that brought out the real facts in this, as in so many other departments of the life of the people. Mr. Renouf very properly devotes the first two lectures of his course to the discussion of the sources of information now available to scholars, and the exhibition of some of the general characteristics of the Egyptian civilization. With reference to the question, whether this ancient system so polytheistic, and in its later stages so pantheistic in appearance and interpretation, was ever really monotheistic, he gives but a qualified assent to M. Rougé's judgment: "One idea predominates, that of a single and primeval God; everywhere and always it is one substance, self-existent, and an unapproachable God" (p. 93). He adds (p. 96): "Throughout the whole range of Egyptian literature, no facts appear to be more certainly proved than these: (1). That the doctrine of one God and that of many gods were taught by the same men; (2). That no inconsistency between the two doctrines was thought of." The radical conception suggested by the word *nutar*, he argues to be "Power, which is also the meaning of the Hebrew *El*" (p. 102). The word was, however, "applied indifferently to each of the powers which the Egyptian imagination conceived as active in the universe, and to the Power from which all powers proceed. The pantheistic conception finally prevailed. "Till then the Egyptian religion may be considered as susceptible either of a Theistic or of a Pantheistic interpretation" (p. 108).