

# The Princeton Theological Review

OCTOBER, 1922

---

## YET ANOTHER CRITICISM OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Such criticisms are called for and are even demanded by the general and the lively interest in the subject. The questions as to the truth and as to the significance of evolution are no longer merely academic ones. Persons of all classes and in almost all places are thinking and even talking of it. They ought, therefore, to receive the guidance which they need and want. To give it, consequently, is the duty of all capable teachers, whether scientific or philosophical or theological. Sincere inquiry must be aided along all possible lines. Specially is this so when the matter of interest is bound to exert a mighty practical influence, and particularly if it create an atmosphere which affects even those not conscious of breathing it. Now it is thus with the "theory of evolution." Its world-view, because of its monism, is both at first so attractive and afterwards so compelling that, if yielded to, it must at last revolutionize civilization. The most serious aspect of all this is that the influence of evolution, whether for good or for ill, is strongest in the most important of all spheres, that of religion. It is bound to determine our conception of God and of man and of duty and of sin and of destiny. There are many who say that its establishment as fact means the collapse of Christianity and even of religion in general. There are others who declare that such establishment, while destructive of Christianity, will redound to the perfection of true religion. Under these conditions no honest criticism of the theory of evolution can be superfluous. The deepening interest in it, the practical significance of it, its influence on religion, and above all on Christianity, confirm this judgment.

have been some modicum of this world which presses so hard upon us all, even upon Scottish preachers and theologians.

Aside from this very serious defect, the book is admirable and all who love biography will rejoice in it. Ministers especially will find much that is profitable and suggestive in these accounts of the celebrated personages of the British Churches. In the sketch of Professor Flint, for example, it will be stimulating for ministers to read a sentence like this: "It was their extraordinary learning that singled out Flint and Fairbairn from their contemporaries. Both had manifold gifts of speech, of intellectual energy, of religious devotion. But it was their supremacy in knowledge that impressed men's minds. They spent long hours and lonely hours of study in comparative obscurity, but once they had accomplished their tasks and displayed their resources the most jealously locked doors fell open."

One of the most interesting accounts is that of Cardinal Vaughan. His mother never asked a temporal blessing for any of her children, but prayed that they might all be devoted to the Church. Of her eight sons six became priests and her five daughters entered convents. "It is strange and painful to read that during his last years he wore on his left arm an iron bracelet, with spikes on the inside, which were pressed into the flesh. It was made out of steel wire, and the points were sharp. When it was made to his satisfaction, he told a friend to bring a pair of pliers and to fasten it on the arm so that it could never come off. When that was done, the Cardinal brought his right hand down heavily on the iron circlet and so drove it home. It was cut off his arm after death." However much we may disapprove of this mortification of the flesh, this driving in of a not God-given thorn, the Protestant Church would do well to emphasize the truth of which that spiked bracelet was but the symbol, namely, that the prizes of the Christian life must be won with a struggle, that we must make war on the flesh, that we must strive, literally, agonize, to enter in at the strait gate. In the words of Froude in his life of Bunyan, "We live in days of progress and enlightenment; nature on a hundred sides has unlocked her storehouses of knowledge. But she has furnished no 'open sesame' to bid the mountain gate fly wide which leads to conquest of self. There is still no passage there for 'body and soul and sin.'"

*Philadelphia, Pa.*

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY.

*Lord, Teach Us to Pray.* Sermons on Prayer by the late REV. PRINCIPAL ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D., LL.D. George H. Doran Company, New York.

This is a great book on a great subject written by a prophet, who knows from his own experience what prayer means. Many of the devotional books of our time are compilations, whose authorship reveals a wide and industrious gleaning. As such they are interesting and informing, but they fatally lack the element of inspiration. Principal Whyte has read as few men have the classical literature on the ministry of intercession, and his sermons abound with apt and illuminating

quotations, but the deep spiritual meaning of prayer he has verified in a long and rich religious experience, and he gives to us the ripe teaching of a saint who has himself learned how to pray. Principal Whyte is not only a man of prayer, but his preaching on this great theme is specifically Christian. Some of our prayer manuals are so vague and general, and so lacking in evangelical fervor that a Hebrew, a Mohammedan or a Hindoo might use them without any offence to his non-Christian convictions. These sermons on prayer are saturated with the redemptive passion of the Christian Gospel. They do not contemplate man as a highly developed organism in process of spiritual evolution, needing enlightenment and encouragement, and who derives a large amount of subjective profit from the psychological discipline of prayer. No,—man is a fallen creature conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, prone to evil as the sparks are to fly upward, who needs a Saviour,

"He, who for men their Surety stood,  
And poured on earth His precious blood,"

who needs the ever living intercession of a great High Priest, and who receives spiritual comfort, strength and guidance from the throne of grace, not only for himself, but for all who are included in his intercession. Principal Whyte's preaching on prayer is Biblical, evangelical, experimental, and it gives to prayer its preeminent place in the Christian ministry. These twenty-three selected sermons are only a few of those preached in the pulpit of Free St. Georges in the later years of Dr. Whyte's ministry on a single text, "Luke eleven one." They exhibit his favorite theme, and indicate his conviction as to the essential qualification for effective preaching. Like the disciples themselves, he approached the Master, not with the request for gifts of persuasion, for ability to perform wonders, but for power in prayer. This testimony by one of the greatest preachers of our day as to the place of prayer in the Christian life and in the work of the ministry is a timely message from which the laity as well as the clergy will derive large spiritual profit.

*Princeton.*

J. ROSS STEVENSON.

- The Psychology of Adolescence.* By FREDERICK TRACY, Ph.D. New York The Macmillan Co. 1920. Pp. x, 246. \$3.00.
- The New Program of Religious Education.* By GEORGE HERBERT BETTS. The Abingdon Press. New York. 1921. Pp. 107. \$.75 net.
- The Meaning of Education.* By JAMES H. SNOWDEN. The Abingdon Press. New York. 1921. Pp. 122. \$.75 net.
- The Bible in Graded Story.* By EDNA DEAN BAKER AND CLARA BELLE BAKER. The Abingdon Press. New York. 1921. Volume One. The Good Shepherd. Pp. 83. \$.75 net. Volume Two. The Good Neighbor. Pp. 136. \$1.00 net.
- The Mother Teacher of Religion.* By ANNA FREELove BETTS. The Abingdon Press. New York. 1922. Pp. 290. \$2.00 net.