

The Bible Student.

CONTINUING

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Creation versus Evolution. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." That is the first article of the baptismal creed of Western Christendom. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That is the first sentence in the Christian revelation. That God alone is the first and the last, who changes not; that all that exists in the work of His hands, and depends on His power for its existence and its continuance in being alike: this is the unvarying teaching of the whole Bible. It is part of the very essence of Christianity therefore that the explanation of the universe is found in God; and its fundamental word is accordingly "creation." Over against the Christian conception there has arisen in our day, however, a movement which has undertaken to explain the world and all that it contains without God, —without any reference to any unseen, supernatural, spiritual element. The watchword of this movement is "evolution." And its confession of faith runs: "I believe in an eternal flux, and the production of all things out of their precedent conditions, through the natural interworking of the forces intrinsic to the changing material."

Pfleiderer's Evolutionary Scheme.

Perhaps we may find as good a presentation of this evolutionary program as can easily be turned up, in OTTO PFLEIDERER'S discussion of "Evolution and Theology," which holds the first place in the volume of essays lately published by him under that title. The era of "scientific theology" is at last come, he tells us. And he explains "scientific theology" to mean a theology that has adopted "the scientific method." "This method," he proceeds, "is simply that of causal thinking, according to which every event is the necessary effect of causes whose operation is again determined by their connection with other causes, or by their place in a reciprocal action of forces according to law." Thus everything that comes into being, "is to be regarded as the effect of the causes lying in the preceding condition, these causes again serving as means for the purpose of the following condition." On the universality of the application of this principle he insists with the utmost emphasis. "There is only the one choice: either the evolutionary mode of thought is right, in which case it must be uniform in all fields of investigation, in history, then, as well in nature; or it

is wrong, in which case the views of nature acquired by means of it are not justified, and we have no right to prefer them to the traditions of faith." Accordingly the supernatural is excluded from every sphere of action—"not merely the nature-miracle," "but also just as much the spiritual-miracle, *i. e.*, the intervention of a foreign power in the human soul, whereby conditions are produced in it which do not result from the causal connection with antecedent conditions." The "cardinal proposition of the science of to-day" is "that we have to explain every condition as the causally determined development out of a preceding one," and "this excludes on principle the appearance of any condition, event, action, or possibility which is not explicable out of the factors of the preceding conditions and according to the laws of genesis in general." The intrusion of "causes which are outside the causal connection of finite forces" is to be sternly denied.

A God Not Necessarily Denied.

The evolutional program, when taken in its entirety, therefore, obviously involves the substitution of an eternal series for the Eternal God. Its account of the universe is that it is self-formed, by the interaction of its intrinsic forces. It is not always, however, taken in its entirety: perhaps not even generally. It is not always pressed for example to the denial of the existence of God: or even of a transcendent God: or even of a God who directs the course of evolution in a truly Providential government. PFLEIDERER himself speaks of the divine as "always everywhere" "lying at the basis of the total historical development." He makes, indeed, this fact the ground of his denial of the supernatural: for just because, God lies at the basis of everything, he re-

marks, "no single historical event is to be isolated as a supernatural effect or phenomenon and taken out of the connection of finite causes and effects." A God may be admitted; even a governing God may be acknowledged: provided only that He governs in, with and through natural causes only, so that all that comes to pass finds its entire account in the second causes operative in its production. It is "causal thinking" that is contended for. That is, what is asserted is that all that is is the product of the natural causes operative in the conditions out of which it emerges. God, if there be a God, produces nothing directly and immediately. He is not a productive cause. At the best He is but a directive cause. There may possibly be "Providence:" there cannot possibly be "Creation."

But Evolution And Creation Mutually Exclusive.

"Evolution," it thus appears, is the precise contradictory of "creation." This it is, indeed, *ex vi termini*. "Evolution" is *unrolling*; and the process of unrolling—say of a ball of twine—produces nothing: the unrolled twine is just what the rolled-up twine was, that and nothing more. The only difference is a difference of *state*: what was rolled up before is now unrolled. "Creation" on the contrary is definitely *origination*: creation produces a somewhat that was not before. When we say "evolution" we say thereby that there has been no origination; we say that there has been only *modification*—and "modification" in itself implies pre-existence, in the unmodified form. When we say "creation," we say on the other hand that there has been no modification: we say there has been *origination*,—and "origination" in itself implies previous non-existence and hence excludes modification.

When we say "evolution" therefore we definitely deny "creation," and when we say "creation" we definitely deny "evolution;" whatever comes by the one process by that very fact does not come by the other. Whatever comes by "evolution" is not "created;" whatever is "created" is not "evolved."

Anti-Supernaturalism Of Evolutionists.

This mutually exclusive relation of evolution and creation is of course recognized by all consistently thoughtful adherents of "evolution," and indeed constitutes often the very reason of their adherence to evolution. "It is clear," says Prof. JAMES SULLY, for example, "that the doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of creation. Just as the biological doctrine of the transmutation of species is opposed to that of special creations, so the idea of evolution, as applied to the formation of the world as a whole, is opposed to that of a direct creative volition. *It substitutes within the ground which it covers the idea of a natural and necessary process for that of an arbitrary volitional process.*" Again: "The theory of evolution, by assuming an intelligible and adequate principle of change, *simply eliminates the notion of creation from those regions of existence to which it is applied.*" The attraction of evolution for its adherents often seems indeed to reside just in its assumed capacity to explain the origin of things without the assumption of creation. It will be remembered that CHARLES DARWIN asserted that he would cease to care for "evolution" if it did not supercede the necessity for assuming even a directing activity of God. And the same zeal for the exclusion of all supernaturalism is apparent in such a remark as the following from WIEDERSHEIM'S *Structure of Man* (p. 2): "Blood relationship and not some

unknown plan of creation unites organisms in various degrees of similarity, and in this great family man must find his place: he forms but a link in the chain and has no right to consider himself an exception." Why is the negative clause, "and not some unknown plan of creation" inserted into this sentence? It is not a true disjunctive to the positive proposition—for it may be true that blood relationship does unite organisms, and yet this may be in accordance with the plan of creation. It is gratuitously inserted for no other purpose than to reject the idea of a plan of creation; and so betrays WIEDERSHEIM'S primary interest in the doctrine of evolution, viz: that it enables him to do without a plan of creation. He is, in a word, as an evolutionist, polemically anti-supernaturalistic.

Can the Evolutionist Get Along Without Creation?

We are not saying that the evolutionist can get along without a doctrine of creation. We are only saying these two things. First, that "evolution" and "creation" are contradictory processes: and that whatever comes by the one process does not come by the other: so that in so far as the one is affirmed the other is denied. And secondly, that the idea of "evolution" is frequently utilized nowadays, just in order to exclude "creation," and that men, when they affirm "evolution," commonly mean nothing more emphatically than so far to deny "creation." It is easy to point out, to be sure, that "evolution" does not provide a satisfactory substitute for "creation." At the best, it offers, of course, only an infinite series, as its account of the origin of things. Break up this series into a series of cycles if you will—it is still but an infinite series of cycles; and an infinite series of cycles is not less unthinkable than an infinite series of

events in a straight line. There is obviously a *present*. We have attained at this present moment a particular stage of evolution. Whether this particular stage of evolution is given a place in a cycle or in a straight line of development, the very fact that it is a particular stage of evolution implies that the series in which it finds a place had a *beginning*. And the question presses: "In the beginning"—what? We cannot hang the chain upon *nothing*: and the longer we project it into the past the less can we hang it on nothing. Let the links be particular events or cycles of events—it is all one: we must have something to hang it on—"in the beginning." Account for all you see, then, as mere "modifications" of what has gone before, if you choose: you cannot push this series of modifications into eternity: you must posit a beginning and with it a Beginner. To obtain the evolutionary stuff with all its potentialities, as exhibited in the process of its evolution, you must therefore posit a "creation." But the positing of this "creation," it is obvious, is so far the denial of "evolution." It is posited just because a need is found for which "evolution" will not provide: and it is called in to do what "evolution" cannot do. So far as "creation" is operative, "evolution" is inoperative: only when "creation" is complete does "evolution" begin. The one furnishes the stuff: the other can be called in only to account at most for the various forms this created stuff has taken in its successive subsequent modifications.

Theistic Evolution.

It has become quite common accordingly to distribute the account of the universe between the two processes in this manner. "Creation" it is said supplies the original material: "Evolution" accounts for all its

subsequent modifications. And this is called "Theistic Evolution." It may well be that. It is another question whether it may be fitly called also "Christian Evolution." For observe: it confines the creative operations of God to the origination of the primal world-stuff. Everything subsequent to that is withdrawn from the sphere of "creation," *i. e.*, is explained as a mere modification of the primal world-stuff, wrought by means of its intrinsic forces. The Providential guidance of God need not be excluded, to be sure: the Theist will readily allow that God directs the "evolution." But all *origination*, all production of what is really *new*, throughout the whole process of "evolution," is necessarily excluded. And this is the definite exclusion of all "creation." This result is, indeed, not always explicitly recognized. On the contrary it is quite common to speak of "evolution" as only God's "method of creation." It is quite common, indeed, to put it forward as only the process of a "mediate creation." We find even Prof. COPE defining the doctrine of evolution as "the teaching that holds that *creation has been and is accomplished by the agency of the energies which are intrinsic in the evolving matter.*" Little wonder that the unscientific drop into the same self-contradictory mode of speech. "What is the doctrine of Evolution?" asks Dr. HILLIS. And he replies: "Fundamentally it is the doctrine of creation by gradualism rather than by instantaneous fiat." "Almost no one," remarks Dr. R. S. McARTHUR, "doubts that 'creation has a history.' It is certain, that as it has been pursued in time, so also it has been pursued by method. As HARTSHORNE has shown, Prof. ASA GRAY, Doctor McCOSH, BADEN POWELL, the Duke of ARGYLE, and others, all teach the view of orderly creation by law, under the im-

mediate action of divine power working by natural causes or forces. This power, as he says, has been rightly described as a theory, not of supernatural or miraculous interference, but rather of *creative evolution*." If "evolution" and "creation" are mutually exclusive, however, to talk of "creation" as accomplished by evolution, of "evolution" as "creation by gradualism," of "creative evolution," is certainly misleading. You cannot modify by originating; you cannot originate by modifying.

**What is
"Mediate
Creation?"**

Are we forgetting, then, the old doctrine of "mediate creation?" Certainly not. The name may not be exact: but the thing is very real: and it is just in order to assert its reality and to defend the importance of its recognition that we are resisting the current effort to confuse it with "evolution." All the old writers recognize the distinction between "absolute" or "immediate" creation and the so-called "mediate" creation; and so define creation as to leave room for both varieties. But they so define it as to preserve this "mediate creation" from confusion with "evolution." The matter may be found fully discussed, for example in TURRETINE (*Locus* iv., Q. 1, § 6). We may quote here in preference, however, the brief definitions which WOLLEBIUS gives in his remarkable little compend. "Creation," he says, "is that act by which God, for the manifestation of the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness, has produced the world and all that is in it,"—we relapse now into his Latin—"*partim ex nihilo, partim ex materia naturaliter inhabili*,"—that is to say, in part, out of nothing, and in part out of pre-existing material indeed, but material not itself capable of producing this effect. Again: "to create is not only to

make something out of nothing but also *ex materia inhabili supra naturae vires aliquid producere*,"—to produce something out of this inapt material, above what the powers intrinsic in it are capable of producing. The mark of creation thus, viz., the production of something *new*, for the production of which there is nothing in the precedent conditions to account, which transcends all that is present in the antecedent conditions, is preserved in this definition. And it is only because this is preserved that the process described can be called "creative" at all. Now it is to be observed that "evolution" by its very definition, and by its inherent nature, is the antipodes of this. The primary fact concerning anything that is "evolved" is that it was already present in the precedent conditions and needed only to be deduced from them; that its evolution is accomplished by the resident forces; that there is no production of anything truly new,—no real *origination*, but only a *modification*. By this very fact it is then no creation at all, whether immediate or mediate, but merely an unrolling, a development.

**Dr. Zahm's
Definition of
Evolution.**

Examples are thick about us, however, of the care which the evolutionists take not to distinguish "evolution" from "mediate creation," but rather to confuse it with "mediate creation." We select an instructive instance from the Roman Catholic writer, Dr. J. A. ZAHM. "Another reason for the prevalent confusion of thought regarding the relation of theology to evolution," writes Dr. ZAHM, "arises from the erroneous notions entertained by so many respecting the true significance of creation and evolution. They fail to distinguish between absolute creation *ex nihilo*, and derivative creation. Absolute creation embraces only spiritual intelligences and the mate-

rial elements of which the universe is composed. Derivative creation on the contrary means only the formation of something from pre-existent material, and includes all organic and inorganic compounds, all form of vegetable and animal life, for all these have been produced from those elementary bodies which constitute alike the earth and all the orbs of the firmament. Only absolute creation therefore is creation properly so-called. Derivative creation, however, is nothing more than development under the action of the laws of nature imposed by God on the elements in the beginning. It is evolution from lower to higher forms under the action of what St. Thomas calls the Divine Administration, and in consequence of the action of what St. Augustine terms seminal reasons,—*rationes seminales*. Absolute creation is direct, immediate, supernatural; derivative creation is indirect, and is effected by the Almighty through the agency of secondary causes. In the beginning God created the elements once for all, but on these simple elements he conferred the power of evolving into all the countless forms of beauty, which now characterize the organic and inorganic worlds. What, then, the older theologians called secondary or potential creation or formation—development under the guidance of God's Providence,—we may now call, and with the utmost precision of language, evolution. For God, as St. Augustine observes, did not create animals and plants directly, but potentially and causally *in fieri, in causa, potentialiter atque causaliter*. This, however, is theistic evolution, not agnostic evolution, which relegates God to the region of the unknowable; nor atheistic evolution, which finds in the chance interaction of eternal force and eternal matter an adequate explanation of all the problems of the

existing universe. For, let me insist, evolution does not and cannot account for the origin of things. The best it can do is to throw some light on their historic development; and this for the simple reason that it does not and cannot deal with the origin of things but only with the *modus creandi*, or rather with the *modus formandi*, employed by Omnipotence, after the universe had been called into existence by the Divine *Fiat*. 'Evolution then,' as I have elsewhere shown (*Evolution and Dogma*, pp. 431-432), 'postulates creation as an intellectual necessity,' for if there had not been a creation there would have been nothing to evolve, and evolution would therefore have been an impossibility."

**What Does
Dr. Zahn Do
With "Mediate
Creation?"**

The confusions of this passage are typical. They may be not only matched, in the treatment of the subject by the whole mass of "theistic evolutionists," but ordinarily much more than matched. For Dr. ZAHN after all has some glimmering of the fact that his "derivative creation" is no "creation" at all, but just providential guidance. The passage is very fairly illustrative, nevertheless, of what we are seeking to illustrate. This to wit: that even the writers who frankly allow that "evolution" has no account to give of the origination of the stuff evolving, yet seek to make "evolution" take the place of "creation" in the sphere of "mediate creation." Dr. ZAHN tells us that the primal act of "absolute creation" brought into being only the chemical elements of the material universe and "spiritual intelligences." And he tells us that everything else that exists has been brought into existence "through the agency of secondary causes." which he himself explains as nothing more than "development under the

guidance of God's providence." In the course of this development nothing absolutely new is produced. There is only the evolution into new forms of what was from the beginning included in the primally created stuff. What is meant by ascribing to the production by absolute creation not only "the material elements of which the universe is composed" but also "spiritual intelligences" is not, to be sure, perfectly clear,—beyond Dr. ZAHM'S obvious intention to divide the universe into the two disparate substances of "matter" and "spirit." If it is meant that at the formation of Adam there was an act of absolute creation, producing the immortal spirit, which accompanied the derivative creation by virtue of which his body was formed (not created) from the lower animals: or that at the birth of every human being there is an act of absolute creation of the soul, accompanying the act of "derivative creation" by which the body is derived from its parents,—Dr. ZAHM is really allowing here for the category of "mediate creation" of the old divines without being aware of it, a category standing between his "absolute creation" by which an origin is given to the world and his "derivative creation" by means of which God's providence leads second causes to the production of effects level to their power indeed but wrought only in accord with His will.

**The Real
Meaning of
"Mediate
Creation."**

Perhaps, though, it is too much to suppose that this was Dr. ZAHM'S intention. The noting of it as possibly lying in his words, however, will enable us to point out more clearly and exactly what "mediate creation" is and precisely what the issue is that is raised by the attempt to substitute "evolution" for it. By "mediate creation" is really meant the

truly creative acts of God occurring in the course of His providential government, by virtue of which something absolutely new is inserted into the complex of nature—something to the production of which all that was previously existent in nature is inadequate, however wisely and powerfully the course taken may be led and governed—something for the production of which there is requisite the immediate "flash of the will that can." By the recognition of this mode of production, a third category is erected, alongside of the products of creation pure and simple and of providence pure and simple,—viz: products of creation and providence working together, and each contributing something to the effect: mixed products of the immediate and of the mediate activity of God. As WOLLEBRUS expresses it, it is creation not *ex nihilo*, but *ex materia inhabili, supra naturae vires*. Now the issue raised by the so-called theistic evolutionists in their attempt to make evolution do all the work subsequent to the primal act of creation is just whether such a category as "mediate evolution" exists,—whether there are any products of the divine power which are inserted into the course of providence by an immediate operation of God, and emerge as something new, to the production of which the second causes operative in the case are inadequate.

**The Question of
The Direct
Supernatural
Involved.**

It will be seen at once that this issue is just the issue of the direct supernatural. The question raised is whether God has acted immediately only once, namely, in the original production of the primal world-stuff, or whether He has acted immediately also subsequently to this original act of creation,—whenever, to wit, the purposes He was executing require ' the production of

somewhat to the production of which the powers operative in nature are inadequate. Let it be carefully observed that there is no tendency in the affirmation of this mode of activity to deny or disregard or minimize God's Providential activity. This is affirmed with all the emphasis which theistic evolution can possibly throw upon it. It is only insisted that God's Providential activity—evolution, if you choose to call it such,—does not comprise in itself the totality of God's activities since the primal act of creation, and that it cannot fitly bear the name of creation because it is in its very nature diverse from the thing. There is a mode of action of God midway between "creation" pure and simple and "providence" pure and simple—because a mixed mode of action: and it is to this mixed mode of action that, historically, the name of "mediate creation" has been attached. This mode of action is that within the limits of which "miracles" fall and everything else which, like "miracles," occurs in the complex of natural causes and yet not by means of the forces operative in the natural causes. Whenever and wherever during the course of God's providential government anything comes into being for the production of which natural causes are inadequate, *that* is an act of "mediate creation." But it is not an act of "evolution," just because it is not a product of the forces intrinsic in the evolving stuff—just because it is not a mere unrolling of what was present before in a rolled-up state.

**The Christian's
Attitude
Toward
Evolution.**

What, then, is to be the attitude of the Christian man toward the modern doctrine of "evolution?" He is certainly to deny with all the energy given to him that the

conception of "evolution" can take the place of that of "creation" as an account of the origin of the universe. "Evolution" offers no solution of the question of origins. For its operation it presupposes not only a somewhat already existent which can unroll into fresh forms, but a somewhat within which all that is subsequently evolved already potentially exists. And he is to deny with equal strenuousness that the conception of "evolution" can take the place of that of "mediate creation," as an account of the origination of new somethings in the course of the divine government of the world. Things have come into being since the first origin of the world which did not lie potentially within the primal world-stuff, needing only to be educed from it. If nothing else, the GOD-MAN has come into being: and that not as the product of precedent conditions in the world, but as an intrusion from without and above. And with him, the whole series of events that constitute the supernatural order of the Kingdom of God. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the same intrusion of purely creative force, productive of something absolutely new, may have occurred also in the natural order of the first creation—say at the origination of self-conscious, immortal beings in the complex of nature. On the other hand, the Christian man has as such no quarrel with "evolution" when confined to its own sphere as a suggested account of the method of the Divine Providence. What he needs to insist on is merely that Providence cannot do the work of creation and is not to be permitted to intrude itself into the sphere of creation, much less to crowd creation out of the recognition of man, merely because it puts itself forward under the new name of "evolution."

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