**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 4; CHAPTER 7. EVOLUTIONISM IN THE PULPIT**

BY AN OCCUPANT OF THE PEW

(From "Herald and Presbyter," November 22, 1911, Cincinnati, Ohio. - We reprint this excellent paper as the remarkable utterance of a Christian layman on a most important subject. - Ed.)

Perhaps the most remarkable movement in philosophic thought that has occurred in any age was the rise and general acceptance by scientific circles of the evolutionary theory as propounded by Darwin, Huxley and Spencer. It was remarkable that men of science, whose peculiar boast it is that they deal only with established facts, should have so readily departed from this rule and accepted a system based upon hypothesis only, and which was, and is still after the lapse of forty years, without a single known fact to support it. Even when allowance is made for the well-known eagerness of many scientists to do away with all dualism, which was Mr. Darwin's aim, it was still remarkable that men of trained intellect should have so promptly accepted at face value his two principal works, in which the expression, "we may well suppose," occurs over eight hundred times, as a basis for the argument. Pure supposition may answer as a foundation for fanciful sketches like those of Jules Verne's; but as ground upon which to base a sober scientific argument it appears to the average man as little less than farcical. Why it did not so appear to the scientific mind, the scientific mind may perhaps be able to explain. We frankly confess our inability to do so.

Still more remarkable was the fact that so many theologians and Christian ministers adopted the new philosophy and were so ready to give up large portions of Holy Scripture because they could not be reconciled with it; inventing, as a salve to conscience the doctrine that "the Bible was not intended to teach science", one of those half-truths that are more misleading than a downright untruth.

In this way the story of creation as given in Genesis was set aside, and the whole book discredited. As Christ could not by any logical possibility be made a product of evolution without an absolute denial of His supernatural birth and His Divine claims, and the new birth, or creation, for man in Him was open to the same objection, these truths were either obscured, minimized, or totally neglected and even denied. To such lengths were some of the sworn "defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints" ready to go in order to avoid being considered as hopelessly "unscientific" and "behind the times in scholarship." That was twenty years ago or more.

But strangest of all is the fact that a few of these ministers are still clinging to the "gospel of dirt," as Carlyle aptly styled it, and are referring to it in a way that indicates a belief on their part that such reference is still evidence of Up-to-date scholarship.

As early as 1889 Professor Virchow, of Berlin, admittedly the ablest anthropologist of modern times, when summing up the results of investigations of this subject by himself and other leading scientists, covering a period of twenty years, declared: "In vain have the links which should bind man to the monkey been sought; not a single one is there to show. The so-called proanthropos, who should exhibit this link, has not been found. No really learned man asserts that he has seen him. ... Perhaps someone may have seen him in a dream, but when awake he will never be able to say that he has approached him. Even the hope of soon discovering him has departed: it is hardly spoken of." Shortly before his death, some ten years later, in an address before the International Medical Society, he spoke to the same effect, and with even a greater degree of positiveness, asserting that "the attempts to find the transition from animal to man have ended in total failure. The middle link has not been found and never will be."

That the Darwinian theory of descent has in the realms of nature not a single fact to confirm it is the unequivocal testimony of men as distinguished in their respective departments of scientific research, as Dr. N. S. Shaler of Harvard University; Dr. Etheridge, fossiologist of the British Museum; Prof. L. S. Beale, of King's College, London; Prof. Fleischmann, of Erlangen, and others.

Says Dr. Etheridge: "Nine-tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation and wholly unsupported by fact. This museum is full of proofs, of the utter falsity of their views." Professor Beale asserts: "There is no evidence that man has descended from, or is, or was, in any way specially related to, any other organism in nature through evolution or by any other process. In support of all naturalistic conjectures concerning man's origin, there is not at this time a shadow of scientific evidence."

Professor Fleischmann sums up his estimate of the Darwinian theory of the descent of man by affirming that "it has in the realms of nature not a single fact to confirm it. It is not the result of scientific research, but purely the product of the imagination."

Even Professor Haeckel admits in his old age that he, among all his contemporaries, stands alone. "Most modern investigators," he confesses, "have come to the conclusion that the doctrine of evolution, and particularly Darwinianism, is an error and cannot be maintained." Touching his last re-affirmation of his naturalistic views, Dr. A. C. Dixon tells us that a scholarly man in Geneva said to him at the time that it was "the note of the dying swan," and Haeckel the "only scientific man of eminence in Germany today who believes in Darwinian evolution."

Several notable books bearing on this subject have appeared during the last two years. One by George Paulin, published by Scribners, entitled, "No Struggle for Existence; No Natural Selection," presents an array of facts in support of the two assertions made in this title, and against evolution, which must carry conviction to any unprejudiced mind. Another to the same effect is by Prof. L. T. Townsend, entitled, "Collapse of Evolution." Still another, and we believe an epoch-marking book, is from the pen of Prof. E. Dennert, Ph. D., recently published in Germany, and entitled, "At the Death Bed of Darwinism." A perusal of this book "leaves no room for doubt," as asserted in the preface of the American edition, "about the decadence of the Darwinian theory in the highest scientific circles of Germany. And outside of Germany the same sentiment is shared generally by the leaders of scientific thought."

Thus we see that, on the testimony of the great majority of the ablest of its one-time leading advocates, the evolutionary theory is in articnlo mortis. Nay, more, it is already dead, since the spirit (the theory of natural selection) has long since departed. Some of its friends may sit about the remains intently watching for some signs of renewed life, but they watch in vain.

And yet there are ministers of the Gospel who, discrediting the Bible narrative of creation, are still basing arguments upon the Darwinian theory of the origin of species; glibly referring to the time "when our ancestors were dwellers in trees," and to their own "descent from monkeys, tadpoles and fish," "a much higher conception of man's origin," according to their refined taste, than is that given in Genesis. At, or a little before, the beginning of the decade just ended this might have passed for learned talk about the "settled results of science"; but today, among those who are really abreast of the movement of scientific thought, it is regarded as merely echoing in this generation the always unproved and now properly rejected speculations of a dead and gone generation of infidel philosophers."

That among those who mourn the passing of evolution there are some naturalists and others who cling to it, as said by Dr. Goette, the eminent Strasburg zoologist, "simply because it seems to furnish a much-desired mechanical explanation of purposive adaptations," is not surprising, since it leaves them nothing but the hated alternative of accepting Genesis with its personal God and creative acts.

But when we consider that the evolutionary theory was conceived in agnosticism, and born and nurtured in infidelity; that it is the backbone of the destructive higher criticism which has so viciously assailed both the integrity and authority of the Scriptures; that it utterly fails in explaining - what Genesis makes so clear - those tremendous facts in human history and human nature, the presence of evil and its attendant suffering; that it offers nothing but a negative reply to that supreme question of the ages, "If a man die, shall he live again?" that it, in fact, substitutes for a personal God "an infinite and eternal Energy" which is without moral qualities or positive attributes, is not wise, or good, or merciful or just; cannot love or hate, reward or punish; that it denies the personality of God and man, and presents them, together with nature, as under a process of evolution which has neither beginning nor end; and regards man as being simply a passing form of this universal Energy, and thus without free will, moral responsibility, or immortality, it becomes evident to every intelligent layman that such a system can have no possible points of contact with Christianity. He may well be pardoned if he views with astonishment ministers of the Gospel still clinging to it, and harbors a doubt of either their sincerity or sanity.

If it be said that most ministers who accept evolution do so only in its milder form, the supernaturalistic which permits of belief in a personal God, but claims that evolution is His method of working, man and nature being products of it, it may be said in reply that this view, quite as much as the naturalistic, necessitates the giving up of the account in Genesis, and generally carries with it a belief that the Bible is but a history of the evolution of the religious idea, and not what it everywhere claims to be, a Divine and supernatural revelation. Moreover, it is that part of the system which they accept (the origin of the species) which has quietly but firmly been labeled and shelved as merely one of the past phases of philosophic thought. To hold to it still is to subject themselves to doubts in the minds of their hearers as those expressed in regard to the holders of the naturalistic view.

We are not contending that there is not a sphere in which the law of evolution as propounded by Mr. Spencer is operative. On the contrary, we believe there is; but as said by Philip Mauro, it is "entirely confined to the sphere of the activities of fallen man." It is a most significant fact that it is from this sphere alone that Mr. Spencer draws all his illustrations, and for the simple reason that outside of it in all God's great universe, so far as known, there is not a scintilla of evidence that the law of evolution is, or ever has been, in operation. This fact has been the stumbling stone of the evolutionists from the first. All Mr. Spencer's pompous phraseology about a primitive homogeneous mass passing in endless cycles from the "imperceptible to the perceptible, and back again from the perceptible to the imperceptible," and from "indeterminate uniformity to determinate multiformity," has no more foundation in actual fact than an air castle or Gulliver's travels.

The limits of this article forbid further reference to the interesting fact - evidence of which is superabundant and convincing - that the law of evolution is strictly confined to the sphere of human activities, save to note that it is not, as so many suppose, a "natural law," but is, to borrow a term from Dr. H. Bushnell, one of "unnature." It is the law of human progress apart from God, and under the leadership of the prince of this world system who originated it.

If, as some assert, the clergymen who accepted the evolutionary theory were driven to it by fear of ridicule, or of not being thought abreast of "the trend of modern thought," it was not only cowardly on their part, but grossly inconsistent with their Christian profession. For even a partial investigation of the subject must have made clear to them that evolutionism and Christianity are, essentially, intensely antagonistic. The pulpit efforts of some ministers at reconciling them would be laughable from a logical standpoint were the issues involved not so serious and the effects upon some of their unthinking hearers not so deplorable. Certainly, scholarship can no longer be pleaded as an excuse for clinging to Darwinism; and, in the interest of common honesty, these men ought to either drop their materialism or leave the Christian pulpit.

Among the surprises that await the layman who would inform himself on this subject is the fact that much that was advanced by the leaders, including Mr. Darwin himself, in support of the evolutionary hypothesis was merely tentative It was only the smaller fry, the minnows and gudgeons, that were cocksure of its truth, and who gorged the unwholesome food. This may be affirmed with equal truth of a large part of what is taught by the ablest of the higher critics. Nor is the reason for it hard to find. It becomes apparent immediately one perceives how weak, unsatisfactory and illusive the evidence is that they offer in support of their destructive theories; evidence so insufficient and even trivial that, as said by Sir Robert Anderson, "it would be laughed out of any court in Christendom."

The layman, coming to a knowledge of this fact, finds his first feeling to be one of astonishment that men calling themselves Christians can on grounds so frivolous repudiate large parts of Scripture, and deliberately sow the seed of unfaith in the minds and hearts of thousands of their hearers. This is apt to be followed by one of indignation at the low moral quality and cowardice of their action in thus under-mining the faith of the Church while accepting its pay. For it is noticeable that however great their change of attitude toward the Scriptures and the doctrinal standards of the churches they are supposed to serve may be, no change is ever perceptible in the attitude of these gentlemen toward the acceptance of the salaries paid by these churches. And this despite the fact that, according to their own witness of themselves, their strong point is the possession and preaching of a very superior quality of ethics (?). Indeed, in listening to them one can hardly escape the conviction that righteousness, personal and civic, was a thing almost unknown before their advent.

Certainly no one can blame the ordinary individual who, unskilled in the intellectual subleties and plausible sophistries by which these gentlemen seek to justify their course, finds a feeling akin to disgust taking possession of him as he listens to their talk about being "governed solely by a desire for truth", in their actions in this matter, and of the "tenfold greater comfort, pleasure and profit" they derive from reading their polychrome Bibles; all of which, to his untrained and practical mind, sounds like unmitigated pharisaical cant. It is like a man who, having taken away all the foundation under his house save a few slender props, lies down in it declaring that he does so with a sense of security and peace to which he had been a stranger before.

Apparently the wild guesswork of a profligate and infidel like Astruc, or the equally wild philological speculations of a skeptic like Wellhausen, have more weight with these seekers after truth than has the "thus saith the Lord Jehovah" of the inspired prophets, or the testimony of the Son of God, and of His apostles. Moreover, they seem to completely ignore, and to be utterly unable to testify from personal experience to, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit working upon men's hearts through the Word.

Far better would it be for all concerned if these ministers had the courage of their convictions, and sense of honor enough to compel them to leave the Christian Church, taking with them those of their flocks who think like them and wish to follow, for they may be sure that the pretty little amenities of morality and sociology which they have substituted for the Gospel of regeneration can never take its place, or lead a single soul out of the death and darkness of sin into the life and light that are to be found in Christ alone.

Meanwhile, a few naturalists, clothed in sackcloth, may sit about the death bed of Materialism as mourners, and, in despair of finding anything else to fill the niche in their temple of lies left vacant by the removal of their idol, may on occasion galvanize the remains into an appearance of life. Their clerical sympathizers, too, may refuse to read the death bulletin already issued, or to take part in the obsequies. Nevertheless, there can be no reasonable doubt in any intelligent mind that Darwinism so far as it relates to man's origin and that of species in general is dead; and all who believe in a personal God and in a Divine revelation may say of it, paraphrasing Cushi's answer to King David: "The philosophic enemies of our Lord and King, and all of the isms that rise against His truth, be as this dead ism,"