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1925

## 672ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 1925,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The CHAIRMAN, at the beginning of the Meeting, announced that as the arrival of Professor Clay's paper on the "Amurru" had been delayed, Mr. Avary H. Forbes had kindly consented to read his paper, announced for the 23rd.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the Honorary Secretary announced the following elections:— As a Member, Mr. T. Tweedale Edwards; and as Associates, Miss C. A. M. Pearce, the Rev. Eric Lewis, B.A., and the Rev. Harold C. Morton, Ph.D.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Mr. Avary H. Forbes to read his paper on "Psychology in the Light of History: a Study in Heredity."

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### *PSYCHOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY : A STUDY IN HEREDITY.*

By AVARY H. FORBES, Esq., M.A.

IT will probably be admitted by all, that the two largest channels through which the evidence for Evolution flows are Heredity and Environment, and that, if one of these channels be blocked, the other will hardly be able to keep the theory alive. Of these channels, Heredity seems to be the most important, because it deals with the very essence of human nature. Libraries of learning have been written on the subject and by scientists of the first magnitude, yet I venture to think that this problem is best dealt with apart from learning, and that here Hobbes's paradox holds good—"If I had read as much as some of my critics, I should have been as ignorant as they." At all events I intend to treat the problem from the standpoint of observation and common sense alone; and I maintain that, from that standpoint, the Biblical account of the origin of man is not only true, but that it is scientifically and *necessarily* true. Let us at once bring Revelation and Evolution face to face.

In Genesis we are told that our race began in a state of sinless innocence, happiness and completeness of life, and that, by an act of disobedience to God, it fell to a state of incompleteness, sin, sorrow, pain, disease and death. Holy Scripture again teaches that the race has ever since been suffering from the effects of the Fall, and that such suffering is inevitable. Evolution teaches that the race has been slowly but surely eliminating the evils and degradation of existence, and advancing, intellectually and morally, to a height of being as yet unforeseen. Genesis tells us of two beings—and only two—holy, harmless, undefiled, descending, through the tragedy of sin, to the level of the beasts, and below them. The other teaches the development of our race from an atom, and passing through stages of protoplasm, tadpole, jelly-fish, amphibious creatures and ape-like animals, to a highly moral and intellectual being. The one, therefore, is the story of a stupendous fall from good to bad, from glory to shame, from life to death. The other is the story of a stupendous rise from squalor to sublimity, from a germ to a genius, from a microbe to a philosopher.

No two doctrines therefore could be more opposed, and as Evolution holds the upper hand to-day in almost all scientific schools, the Edenic story—"the feeble myth of Genesis"—is little more than food for mirth amongst the schools of science, "the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox," as Huxley termed it. Some Christian people tell us they can reconcile the two accounts, and say that Darwin was right, and yet Moses was not wrong. The "reconciliation," however, is usually effected by compromises largely at the expense of Moses. Darwin himself could not reconcile them. In a letter to Lyell (March 28th, 1859), he speaks about the "unorthodoxy" of his *Origin of Species* being "not more than any geological treatise which runs slap-counter to Genesis."\* And this unorthodoxy led him, naturally and gradually (as he tells us himself), to complete disbelief in Revelation.†

One secret of the great and speedy popularity of "Darwinism" is the assumption that Evolution spells *progress*, and the whole subject resolves itself (for the present purpose, at all events) into two great questions requiring separate answers.

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\* *Life of Darwin*, by his son. Chap. 11.

† *Ibid.*, Chap. 3.

First (A), Is the history of the human race (or Evolution) one of progress? Secondly (B), If so, does it square with the facts of human psychology? Both these claims I answer in the negative.

A general progressive improvement would manifest itself in three departments—Physical, Intellectual, and Moral.

#### A.—(1) HAS THE RACE PROGRESSED PHYSICALLY?

With the biological proofs of Evolution (being no scientist) I shall not meddle, and the physical triumphs of modern civilization I, of course, freely admit. From the middle of the eighteenth century to the present day there has been a period of unparalleled inventions and discoveries. Steam and electricity have been applied to manufactures, labour and locomotion, and, with chemistry, have completely revolutionized those activities. Steamers and railways have been invented, and the telephone, the phonograph, the telegraph, the microphone, the submarine, the motor, the aeroplane, radium, photography, X-rays, anæsthetics, wireless, and a vast number of other discoveries and inventions have come upon the scene. But all this is mere *mechanics*, and its value as a factor of actual improvement depends entirely on the moral results. To enable five, ten, or twenty men to live where one man lived before sounds like a gigantic improvement. It may be the reverse. It depends on whether the ten or twenty are as good or as happy as the original one. If they are not, it may be a curse rather than a blessing. And who will say that the people of this century are really happier than their forefathers of 500 years ago? Is not this the age *par excellence* of rush and hurry, strife and competition, nerve-strain, breakdowns, dyspepsia, insomnia and insanity, and that in an ever-increasing ratio?

The only industry that God appointed for man was agriculture. And what occupation could be more agreeable, where man is continually called upon to observe the wonderful works of God? But even the country is no longer what it was; it is undergoing a great transformation. Our old quietude, with its farmyard sights and sounds, is fast becoming a thing of the past. The sylvan solitude of lanes and woods and valleys are everywhere broken in on by the motor and the aeroplane, and soon there will be no such thing as a rural retreat anywhere.

Not only has machinery modified or destroyed a great part of our agricultural operations, but we are continually

abandoning the country and betaking ourselves to city life, with its awful monotony of desk and office, ledger, telephone, and typewriter, sedentary work in artificial light and late hours, vitiated atmosphere of smoke or fog, where men earn their bread, not in the sweat of their brow, but in the sweat of their brain.

Cities, too, are the most dependent places on earth. Cut off from the country, they are absolutely helpless. Without coal and iron supplies, their manufactures are at an end. Without food supplies, their shops close and the citizens starve. City work, too, in all its forms is pernicious as compared with work in the country.\*

Chemistry, the greatest scientific triumph of all, has profoundly modified the whole conditions of life, both in war and in peace. Our first parents were forbidden to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Of "good," be it noted, as well as evil. Chemistry is a big branch of that tree, and it shows us to-day how dangerous it is to presume too far (though we think it for our good) on God's laws. "God made man upright," said Solomon, "but they have sought out many inventions." The Post-diluvians thought to build a tower that would reach to Heaven—"And now," said the Almighty, "nothing will be restrained from them"—and they were confounded by their intellect being turned against them. And is it not the same to-day? The triumphs of science have been *turned against mankind*. We are coming to live more and more by chemistry. Nearly all our foods are prepared, and nearly all prepared foods are faked and adulterated with chemicals which are more or less deleterious.

"The increase of cancer in recent years," said Sir Frederick Treves, "has been exactly coincident with the introduction of preserved food, cold-storage supplies, tinned foods, concentrated foods, extracts, and foods treated with preservatives." Not only foods, but almost everything we wear or utilize is tampered with. To give one example: Our coffee is adulterated with the following articles—chicory, ground acorns, mangold-wurzel, roasted carrots, parsnips, turnips, horse-chestnuts, dog-biscuit, red earth, baked horse's liver, or mahogany sawdust.

Oh! But you say this is our own fault, since the analytical

\* It is noteworthy that, when God appointed a land for His chosen people, He gave them one without coal and without iron.

chemist can expose the fraud. This is not so easily done, for the very chemicals used by the analyst *are themselves adulterated*, and are therefore unreliable!

Again, in the Great War, chemistry was *the* great weapon of destruction, and chemical science was utilized for the destruction of life and property on a scale hitherto unexampled in history. Torture of the most horrible kind was inflicted on the soldiers, and non-combatants suffered as never before. All that was humane in international law was trampled on, and women and children, the aged, the poor, the sick and the wounded suffered alike. One nation began, and the others had to follow in self-defence.

Before the fourteenth century weapons of defence were effective. With the invention of gunpowder a great duel began between weapons of offence and of defence; and now the former have won all along the line. Gunpowder has been left far behind by modern explosives. But it is not so much explosives as *poisons* that will be utilized in the next war, and that war will be carried on chiefly in the air. A French military expert has consequently advised the scientist to concentrate on asphyxiating bombs and mustard and other deadly gases, which will affect the civil equally with the military population, by producing "congestion of the pulmonary system and death. Aeroplanes dropping mustard-gas on a town will cause the death of many of its inhabitants, and render the place uninhabitable for a number of days. It will also have the great moral effect of tending to ruin the resisting power of a nation. . . . It will also cause dreadful pain, and in many cases permanent blindness. Gas experts should endeavour to render it more persistent and dangerous."\*

Another form of slaughter will be by disseminating the bacilli of anthrax and other deadly diseases. These germs are being cultivated by the Medical Research Council; millions of billions of them are preserved in glass tubes. In one little test-tube (and there are many thousands of such tubes) "there are countless millions of plague bacilli, and, if they were let loose, they would kill half the people" in the town.† It is now admitted that, by one or other of these methods, the whole population of a great city, even of London, *could be wiped out in an hour's*

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\* *Morning Post*, May 18th, 1920.

† Dr. St. John Brookes, D.M., speaking at Chelsea, May 18th, 1920.

time. We read also of later inventions—a certain “ray of death,” which is capable of killing a man or an army at a distance; and of aeroplanes worked by wireless, capable of travelling hundreds of miles without an occupant, and dropping deadly bombs wherever required; yet we are only on the threshold of life-destroying inventions! Could any prospects be more essentially diabolical than these scientific inventions, which point to the extermination of the whole human race from off the face of the earth? But, however, the dream of the builders of Babel may be realized, and a remnant of the race may escape; for a Cambridge professor tells us, that “If the hydrogen in a tablespoonful of water could be transmuted into helium, the energy liberated would be far beyond the dreams of scientific fiction, with which the human race could alter the climate of the earth, or possible *migrate to a neighbouring planet.*”\* May we not well ask, is Evolution even physical progress?

Meanwhile the importance of chemistry in war, both for offence and defence, together with its money-making possibilities in peace time, has stimulated the cultivation of the subject in every civilized country, and laboratories have sprung up everywhere. But these laboratories, even when worked with the best intentions, cannot be worked with impunity. They take their toll of human health and life, and that with terrible cruelty. They are one and all hot-beds of septic poisoning arising from the poisonous fumes, and the workers have to face fresh battalions of disease and ailments—headache, anæmia, depression, stupor, vertigo, distress in breathing, impaired eyesight, nausea, inflamed kidneys, rapid pulse, chest pains, heart pains, gastric catarrh, paralysis, nausea, vomiting, fever, convulsions.†

I do not mean to represent human nature as actually degenerating. I believe it is morally stationary, neither better nor worse than it always has been. It is the *environment* created by science which has brought about the deterioration of life and character.

## (2) HAS THE RACE PROGRESSED INTELLECTUALLY?

I have no intention of trying to revive the “Boyle and Bentley” controversy of the eighteenth century. To deal with it properly

\* *Morning Post*, August 13th, 1922.

† *Manual of Explosives*. By Ramsay and Weston (Chap. vii). “The Medical Department of Krupp’s factory at Essen is a large and essential branch of the business. The doctors have to be incessantly attending to cases of fainting, nausea, heart trouble and blood-poisoning.”

would require far more learning than I possess, and I hardly think that the problem is capable of a satisfactory answer. That information, knowledge, facts, have vastly increased is indisputable; but that that increase is favourable to the moral nature, or even to worldly wisdom, has yet to be shown.

“ Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.”

So said Tennyson. Bacon said practically the same, and I think they were both right. This plethora of information, too, is piled up at the expense of our other faculties, for science has a trick of taking away with one hand more than she gives with the other; and as the sight is spoilt by reading, so the memory is spoilt by learning.

But I shall content myself with citing A. R. Wallace on this point: “ The great majority of educated persons hold the opinion that we are more intellectual and wiser than the men of past ages, that our mental faculties have increased in power. But the idea is totally unfounded.”\*

### (3) HAS THE RACE PROGRESSED MORALLY ?

The third question is a still greater one, for if there has not been moral progress in the history of the race there has been no progress at all. Now, if ever in the history of mankind Evolution had a field for display, and a chance, so to speak, of showing that it really was progressive improvement, it has been during the last 100 years. In that period Evolution has had, as it were, everywhere its own way. In the course of that century a whole series of revolutions took place. The Industrial Revolution was followed by the Scientific Revolution, and the movement spread to medicine, hygiene, chemistry, locomotion, agriculture, and to all the arts and manufactures, and, above all, to education in all its branches; and almost every phase of national and international life has been transformed. If, therefore, there has not been large and definite moral progress during this period (or, at all events, by the end of it), it is surely impossible to believe that there has been any improvement in the human race; or, rather, it will be difficult to deny that there is a principle of degeneration at work. Darwin was a very candid man and never minimized objections to his own conclusions. It would be interesting, therefore, to know what he would say on this point were he alive now. Alfred R. Wallace (the co-origimator with

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\* *Social Environment*, Chap. iv.

Darwin of the Evolution theory) was an equally candid man. He survived till a few years ago, and he has left us in no doubt as to his opinion. In 1913 he published his *Social Environment and Moral Progress*, in which he investigates very impartially the morality of our present social system, and finds it everywhere going from bad to worse. He deals with unhealthy trades, adulteration of food, bogus companies, commercial falsehoods, gambling, bribery, rings and combines worked by "ingenious robbers," the White Slave Traffic, drunkenness, suicide, and gratuitous infant mortality ("Who has murdered the 100,000 children who die annually before they are one year old?") These evil products we have ourselves created in the course of a single century. As to improvement in character, "there is no proof of any real advance in it during the whole historical period." His final verdict is as follows: "*Taking account of these various groups of undoubted facts, many of which are so gross, so terrible, that they cannot be overstated, it is not too much to say that our whole system of society is rotten from top to bottom, and the social environment as a whole, in relation to our possibilities and our claims, is the worst that the world has ever seen.*"\*

This seems fatal for the doctrine of Evolution, as generally understood. Is there no loophole, no saving factor? Oh, yes, there is; it is in the *future*. All this degeneration is transitory, and things will right themselves by and by. "Laws, under reasonable, just and economic conditions, will automatically abolish all these evils. . . . When we have cleansed the Augean stable of our present social organization . . . the future progress of the race will be rendered certain" (pp. 131-2 and 146).†

Sir Oliver Lodge recognizes the present "devilization" of things as clearly as Wallace did, and, like him, he flies for salvation to the future. These evils, he says, are "a disease of civilization, a mania . . . a devil that must be cast out . . . some day the race will realize its possibility and duty in this respect," etc.

Let us take an analogy from physical nature. The Ganges rises in the Himalayas and flows down its slopes, and on through the valleys of Northern India down to the sea. What does that

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\* Chap. 17. The italics are those of Wallace himself.

† Darwin thought the same. "Looking to future generations . . . we may expect that virtuous habits will grow stronger, becoming perhaps fixed by inheritance. In this case the struggle between the higher and lower impulses will be less severe, and virtue will be triumphant."

mean? It means, first, that the Ganges (like all other rivers) has a source higher than its own level; secondly, that it is ever seeking to rise to the level of its source; and, thirdly, that it never does, and never can, reach that level. More than that, the farther it flows the greater the disparity between its own level and that of its source; so that, if Wallace is right—that our most up-to-date civilization is “the worst the world has ever seen”—the analogy is complete.

It would be amusing, were it not pathetic, to see how all the great Evolutionists and social reformers find their panacea in the future (and almost always, be it remembered, by *materialistic readjustments*), and yet do not notice the peculiarity of their logic. Under the highest triumphs of science, things are admittedly going from bad to worse with headlong speed; therefore the future progress and happiness of the race will be rendered certain, and water will flow uphill!

## B.—THE FACTS OF PSYCHOLOGY.

### (a) *The Ideal Lost.*

Leaving the question of progressive improvement, let us see what Psychology has to say to the theory of Darwinian Evolution,—a part of the argument which has, according to my small reading, been entirely overlooked in the controversy; yet it appears to be a very vulnerable spot in the citadel. I assert, then, that Darwinian Evolution runs counter to the facts of human psychology, that those facts confirm the Bible story, and that if we did not find that story there we should have had to invent it ourselves.

A butterfly, if it could reason, would not look with pleasure at the chrysalis from which it sprang. Flying over hedges, lighting on flowers and basking in gardens, it would look with aversion on the dirty shell sticking to the wall of an out-house and surrounded with cobwebs and dust and a foul and gloomy atmosphere. Similarly, if men were descended through an ape-like ancestor from a tadpole, a jelly-fish, protoplasm, they would instinctively regard their past with loathing and disgust. That is why the Evolutionist is so in love with the future as the solution of all human problems. “Look ahead for your ideals,” he says. “Take a scientific interest, if you like, in the past, but for your ideal you must look to the future. Look away, therefore, and from the past—with its wars and struggles, its

errors and cruelties, its vice and agony—to the consummation of universal culture, happiness and peace in the far-off future.” Such is the peremptory mandate of Evolution. But human nature will do nothing of the kind. She persists in looking to the past, and seeing there, not an insensate degradation from which she has been evolved, but *an ideal eminence from which she has fallen*. The scientific and the unscientific mind are at one in *contemplating* the ideal. Everywhere the thoughtful mind credits human nature with the possibility of a state in which ignorance, pain, want, hatred, sorrow and all evils are absent, and where life is synonymous with happiness. But, though scientific dogmatism says that this ideal is ahead of us, or nowhere, the human heart is hopelessly in love with the past ; and the words “old-fashioned,” “antique,” “ancient,” and “quaint,” have a subtle and inextinguishable charm. The sentiment is a difficult one to express briefly, yet there are phrases which embody portions of it, *e.g.*, “the good old times,” “the brave days of old,” “the golden age,” etc.

The poets are particularly fond of painting the Age of Gold, *always in the far-off past*. Many poets seem to revel in it ; not those of our own time alone, but the pagan poets of Rome and Greece indulged the sentiment. Tibullus tells us that in the Golden Age of Saturn neither ox was yoked nor steed bitted ; that the houses had no doors, or the estates boundary stones. There were no armies, no war, no swords, no angry passions. “While now, under Jupiter as ruler, there is ever slaughter and wounds.”\* Ovid declares that in the Golden Age there was no magistrate, yet good faith and right flourished without the aid of law. Punishment and fear were unknown. No trenches surrounded the towns, no war trumpets were blown, no helmets or swords manufactured ; “without the need of soldiers, the nations, free from care, maintained agreeable leisure.”† Horace likewise speaks of the Fortunate Isles as a relic preserved by Jupiter when the Golden Age had degenerated to brass, and the brass to iron.‡ Virgil places his ideal

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\* *Opera* 1-3, l. 40 *et seq.*

† *Metamorphoses* I, l. 89 *et seq.* (*Sine militis usu mollia secuire peragebant otia gentes.*) The whole of the *Metamorphoses* is full of the same sentiment.

‡ *Epodes*, 16, l. 64-66. (*Ut inquinavit aere tempus aureum ; aere dehinc ferro duravit saecula.*)

in the past likewise; for in the *Æneid* he tells us "that the Golden Age was when Saturn ruled, when the people lived in placid peace, until by degrees a worse and discoloured age and the madness of war and greed of possession succeeded.\* Even in Homer we have the lotus-eaters enjoying a paradise in which they wished to live for ever.† Nay, Hesiod (perhaps the earliest of all the Greek poets) speaks of five ages, the first of which he calls the Age of Gold.‡

When, moreover, any poet coins a happy line or phrase, expressive of this sentiment, it is recognized as a touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, and is seized on as meeting a "long-felt want." Thus, Burns's "Auld Lang Syne" has become perhaps the most popular song ever written, and has been translated into some sixteen languages.§

Old china, old silver, old paintings, prints and works of art of all sorts are highly prized, and have a prodigious commercial value, not because they are useful, but because they are *old*. I may have a Bible with admirable references, notes and other helps, and if I want to sell it I may get a shilling for it. But if it is in a dead language and old black letter, without any helps or references, and practically useless, but provided it was printed in 1455, I could get £5,000 or £6,000 for it.

What a fascination old furniture, old houses, old castles, old towns and villages have for all of us!

If this sentiment were factitious and not of the essence of our psychology it would be lessened or eliminated in democratic and innovating times. But that this is far from being true, the case of America proves. The ancient cities and monuments of Europe have a wonderful attraction for Americans. Westminster Abbey is probably more venerated on the other side of the Atlantic than it is here, and what affects our American cousins most of all, it is said, is to be shown the holes in the cloisters where the Westminster schoolboys used to play marbles before America was discovered.

Literature abounds with this sentiment springing from the consciousness of a lost ideal. Indeed, were the sentiment to

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\* Book 8, l. 324 *et seq.*

† *Odyssey* 9, l. 82 *et seq.*

‡ *Weeks and Days*, l. 167. See also Virgil's *Georgics*, l. 12. Ovid, *Fasti*, l. 247 *et seq.*

§ Japanese gentlemen tell me it is familiar in Japan.

be taken away, our poetry would be well-nigh bankrupt of beauty and pathos. There are three fields in literature in which this lost ideal is sought for or lamented—vanished youth, deceased friends and ancient history.

YOUTH.—No sooner has youth passed than it assumes an attractiveness which it never had while it was present.

Listen to Byron :—

“O talk not to me of a name great in story ;  
The days of our youth are the days of our glory.”

Listen to Wordsworth :—

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy !  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy.”

Listen to Coleridge :—

“O youth ! For years so many and sweet,  
’Tis known that thou and I were one.  
I’ll think it but a fond conceit—  
It cannot be that thou art gone !

\* \* \* \* \*

Thy vesper bell hath not yet tolled—  
And thou were aye a masker bold. . . .  
Life is but thought ; so think I will  
That youth and I are housemates still.”

Listen to Vaughan :—

“Happy those early days when I  
Shined in my angel infancy. . . .  
O how I long to travel back  
And tread again that ancient track !”

DEATH.—Our friends are dear to us, but when they die they become trebly dear, and persons who never composed any other poetry have written elegies on their lost friends ; and it need not surprise us that a large portion of poetical masterpieces, from “Astrophel” to “In Memoriam,” are in the nature of a dirge.

ANCIENT HISTORY.—We have seen that this tendency to idealise the past is very ancient. It was a tendency in Solomon’s time, and one of which he did not approve : “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these ? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” (*Eccles.* vii, 10.) Macaulay was not given to sentimentality. He has told us so himself, and he would undoubtedly have agreed

with the Preacher as heartily as any Evolutionist of to-day. Yet Macaulay no more than anyone else can rid himself of the fascination of a distant past, and when he gets into verse he lets the tendency have full play :—

“ *Then* none was for a party ;  
 Then all were for the state.  
 Then the great man helped the poor  
 And the poor man loved the great.  
 Then lands were fairly portioned,  
 Then spoils were fairly sold,  
 The Romans were like brothers  
 In the brave days of old.”

\* \* \* \* \*

*Now* Roman is to Roman  
 More hateful than a foe,” etc.

To this element in our nature must also be attributed the fact that the Greek mythology has such an irresistible attraction for all educated minds. That mythology contains much wit and wisdom, though mixed up with a good deal that is childish, grotesque and vicious. But it was far off, unreal, imaginary, and it has in it many of the elements of the ideal. That was enough ; and many a genius who would have scorned to accept the “ Garden of Eden,” has loved to revel in the “ Gardens of the Hesperides ” and the “ Elysian Fields.” Such writers as Leigh Hunt, Keats, Byron, Shelley and Matthew Arnold would laugh at the idea of sin and sorrow being introduced to the earth by Satan—a fallen angel expelled from Heaven, and tempting Eve with an apple ; but the expulsion of Ate from the celestial regions and the discord she spread on earth by the apple she threw among the guests at Peleus’ wedding is for them a graceful and poetic ornament. The tree of life, guarded by Cherubim and a flaming sword, was an incredible myth ; but planted on Mount Atlas, and guarded by a watchful dragon, it is very welcome to flourish :—

“ All amidst the gardens fair  
 Of Hesperus and his daughters three,  
 That sing around the golden tree.”

The idea of Cain marrying his sister is a great stumbling-block ; not so Jupiter marrying his sister Juno, or Saturn his daughter Vesta :—

“ In Saturn’s reign,  
 Such mixture was not held a stain.”

Noah's flood must be repudiated, but Deucalion's may be tolerated. Samson and his exploits must be cast out, but they may come back under the name of Hercules and his Labours. Joshua's arrest of the sun is an inconceivable fable, but Phaethon's allowing the sun-chariot to go out of its course for a day (and thereby delaying it) is a beautiful allegory. That the walls of Jericho should fall down at the blast of Joshua's trumpets cannot be admitted, but Amphion may be allowed to build the walls of Thebes by the music of his lyre. That Lot's wife should become a pillar of salt because she looked back at Sodom is unthinkable, but that everyone that looked at Medusa's head should be turned into stone is abundantly instructive. That Saul, by the help of the witch of Endor, should recall Samuel from the world of spirits is an old wives' fable, but that Orpheus should visit Hades and lead back "his half-regained Eurydice" to the confines of this world is an edifying poeticism. Parallels might be pointed out indefinitely.

Of course, our poets did not *believe* these myths any more than they did the Biblical stories. That, however, is not the point. The point is, that what one part of our nature discards another part demands back. What the intellect rejects the imagination revels in. Reason may expel the world of miracle by one door as long as fancy admits it by another.

Surely all this worship of the past, as a universal instinct in human nature, would be a contradiction, a psychological impossibility, if man were descended from protoplasm, a germ, or (as someone has, with brutal bluntness, termed it) "a speck of palpitating slime"!

(b) *The Ideal Sought.*

The psychological argument, however, is not exhausted by the foregoing considerations. The loss of anything stimulates us to recover the thing or person lost. And a further scrutiny of human nature will show us that there is not only a universal worshipping of and lament for the past, but also an incessant and world-wide struggle to *regain the lost ideal*, and, at the same time, an incessant and world-wide *failure* to succeed. This great principle is commensurate with, and inseparable from, the whole of human existence, for what is all life but an endeavour to recover a lost ideal?

The goal of physical science itself, what is it but the realization of the ideal? To master the forces of nature and thereby facilitate the production of food, clothing, buildings, wealth of every kind; to discover new remedies for disease, to improve sanitation and prevent sickness, to make travelling cheap and easy, to diminish

exertion and yet increase the fruits of labour ; these are the means which science adopts to eliminate the evils of existence and bring about an age of universal peace and plenty. Thus her methods differ from, but her goal is the same as, that of the poet and the philosopher. The former hopes to win, chiefly by supplying corporeal desiderata : the latter by ministering chiefly to the moral and intellectual demands of human nature.

At present the methods of physical science hold the field. Moral and religious teachers, unless they conform their doctrines in some way to the theories demanded by Evolution, are hardly listened to. The very word "science" has almost come to be synonymous with *physical* science. Yet nearly everyone seems blind to the fact that the methods of physical science can *never* bring to the human race the wished-for millennium. They may multiply the race, but to think that by so doing the *happiness* of the people is increased is one of those essential delusions which neither logic nor accumulated experience will ever destroy. Meanwhile, the belief prevails, and the effort is made. In almost every walk of civilized life there is a constant attempt being made to recover a lost ideal. Look at this fact in connection with governments, institutions, authorship, oratory, art, literature, poetry, the country and the Church.

Our governments are theoretically good ; but in practice, mistakes, follies, blunders, even crimes, are committed by those very persons who form or administer them. Our legislation shows not the smallest sign of reaching a goal. The new laws to be made increase rather than diminish from year to year. Our laws, too, are mostly righteous and better than can be carried out. Criminals often escape, and the innocent suffer. Thousands of persons prefer to take the wrong which the law condemns rather than face the delay, the expense, the pitfalls which beset an appeal to those laws.

It is similar with our Institutions. While they are for the most part well designed and provided for and, on the whole, creditably worked, their theory and spirit are being continually violated by corruption, self-interest, party spirit and ignorance.

The same holds good of Authorship, Oratory and Politics. How many of the books and speeches with which the public are so liberally supplied are a faithful counterpart of the life and character of the author or speaker ? Or how many persons would like to have their public professions tested by a candid comparison with their private conduct ? Immediately a man steps on the platform or takes a pen in his hand he begins, in a greater or less degree, to act a part.

He sets about erecting a standard which he himself does not and cannot altogether act up to. All this is equally true of the minister of religion, be he an open-air preacher, a Free Church minister, a vicar in his parish pulpit, or a bishop in his cathedral. His exhortations to faith and love and obedience and humility and self-sacrifice and holiness invariably point to a higher life than he himself lives up to. Nor is there necessarily in all this anything of conscious hypocrisy. With the purest motives and the best intentions man's heart continually goes out towards the ideal. A man who preached no better life and doctrine than he and his hearers lived up to would soon cease to be listened to.

Everywhere men wish to be thought better than they are—more consistent, truthful, disinterested, honest, generous. A little time spent in our criminal courts would show that this is true even of the most profligate and abandoned characters. Before the scrutiny of the jury, the ears of the judge, and the eyes of the public the criminal will soon be put to the blush ; or, if he be literally too hardened to blush, he will perjure himself, accuse others commit a worse offence than that of which he is accused if he can thereby only persuade the court and public that he is innocent. And this is not done merely to escape punishment. Murderers often go to the gallows with a lie on their lips rather than own their guilt before their fellow-men.

Art is another field, and a large one, in which men seek to recover the lost ideal. Art is not a mere transcript of nature. The artist always seeks to *improve* upon nature. A landscape painter will not be satisfied to paint *any* scene. He will choose one that he thinks particularly beautiful ; and even then he will try to improve it, throwing in a tree or a cottage or a figure to give symmetry or human interest to the picture. The same principle obtains in portrait painting and even in photography. All this is psychologically natural, because men are everywhere seeking, and everywhere failing, to recover the lost ideal. Sir Joshua Reynolds saw that this truth held good in his own art, and frankly acknowledged it. The goal of the true painter, he said, is an idea which "subsists only in the mind ; the sight never beheld it, nor has the hand expressed it ; it is an idea residing in the breast of the artist which he is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting."

The like reasoning is true of music and poetry, which are always striving, and always failing, to reach perfection. Keats and Shelley

are especially frank on the psychology of poetry. Fancy, says the former, is our ideal messenger, restoring the past, divining the future, and always superior to reality.

“ Then let winged fancy wander  
Through the thought still spread beyond her.

\* \* \* \* \*

She will bring, in spite of frost,  
Beauties that the earth hath lost.”

Shelley is even deeper and more true in this matter. The poet, he says, is a professional idealist, whose vocation it is not to copy nature, but to create—not to reflect reality, but to beget scenes and beings beyond experience. But—

“ From these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality.”

It is the same with prose, fiction and the drama. The heroes and heroines of our literature, from Palamon to Arthur and from Griselda to Diana Vernon, are so many ideal beings with just enough humanity about them to make them intelligible and possible. Mere transcripts never satisfy. There must be, as in painting, artistic selection and embellishment, and the author who cannot give us this will fail to please.

Nowhere is the search for the lost ideal carried on more earnestly than in the department of Love poetry. But the passion has always a *past* or a *future*—never a present foundation. Love poetry is almost invariably composed before marriage or after death. Some people love a city life; others, perhaps the majority of poetic minds, seek their ideal in rural retirement. The *Hoc erat in votis* of Horace has been echoed by multitudes of bards and minstrels down to our own days. To quote examples would be superfluous. Our literature abounds with “Arcadias” in prose and verse, from the “Flower and the Leaf” to the “Lotus-Eaters.” Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Cowper, Shelley, Wordsworth, Tennyson, are full of the passionate appreciation of rural quietude.

Huxley admitted that he could not account for our love of beautiful scenery on any principle of Evolution. He could not see that it in any way contributed to the survival of the fittest or the development of the race. But if (as he contended) we are evolved from a speck of protoplasm, how could he account for our inveterate tendency to adore *antiquity* also? In the solution here

contended for (*i.e.*, the Biblical one), both tendencies take their place naturally in the human problem. Milton has lavished all his wealth of poetic imagery in describing the Garden of Eden, and most readers will join with Addison in thanking him for doing so, for beautiful scenery is particularly suggestive of the recovery of a lost ideal. A lovely landscape—especially as seen from a height—suggests a paradise in which we can fly, free as a bird of the air, over valley and lake, over mountain and river—regions where the climate is always genial and the inhabitants always happy. Our æsthetic distance is ever full of the most beautiful bubbles, but contact with experience breaks them all.

Some seek the goal in one direction and some in another, but the remarkable fact is that the aspiration pervades all minds that are capable of having aspirations at all. The Evolutionist, as we have seen, regards the human race as advancing “from precedent to precedent” towards a goal where every prospect pleases, and not even man is vile. “The historical evolution of humanity,” says Huxley, “is generally, and I venture to think not unreasonably, regarded as progress.”\*

Christianity, however, is the only thing that causes an *enthusiastic* looking forward to a perfect state. This Christian ideal springs partly from revelation, from the Promised Seed of Eden, and the millennial pictures of Isaiah. But while the Evolutionist looks for the consummation through the development of humanity as it is, no Christian who knows his Bible will look for the Millennium in the present dispensation. He looks for a new heaven and a new earth.

The whole of human life and conduct is coloured by this divided allegiance, which is doubtless but a fragment of some greater truth. Such as it is, meanwhile, it may suggest to some that the “feeble myth” of Genesis throws more light on human psychology than the authors of the *Descent of Man*, the *First Principles* or the *Riddle of the Universe* would have us believe. There are many chasms between humanity and the evolutionary goal. All of these chasms may be bridged over but one. But as long as one remains to be bridged, the goal is as far from being reached as ever. And how is the psychological chasm to be bridged? The universal worship of the past as containing a lost ideal and the perpetual struggle to recover that ideal seems to constitute a *primitive instinct* in human

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\* *Naturalism and Supernaturalism.*

nature. A primitive instinct, if it is not already there, cannot be imparted; and, if it is there, cannot be extinguished. Here, then, is a gulf over which I can see no bridge.

For these reasons I am of opinion that, whatever biology may have to say for the progressive Evolution of man's physical structure, his psychological instincts, as well as his experience, belie the claim for his moral nature, and therefore, as far as life is concerned, belie it altogether; and that, while the Darwinian hypothesis finds no confirmation in man's mental constitution, the story of Genesis strikes a chord which beats in harmony with the human heart and with human experience; and confirms the motto of the Oberlin University, "Inspiration is better than Information."

#### DISCUSSION.

Dr. THIRTLE, who presided, in moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, declared the paper to be profoundly humiliating in many of its implicates. He was sure that the audience would agree that Mr. Forbes had not only read widely on the subject, but had likewise embodied observations pointing to conclusions of deep and very practical interest. Quite evidently many of the inventions of science make for alienation from God, and it would also appear that in some cases they threaten undoing for the human race.

Proceeding, the Chairman found satisfaction in the fact that the lessons indicated by the lecturer are to-day being learned, not only in our own land, but also in others. Convincing as he deemed the arguments of the lecturer to be, he followed him in the judgment that in God's own time evil will be restrained, and the vexing problems of the hour will find their solution by a Divine intervention; for it could not but be that the Author of Creation and Redemption will, before angels and men, vindicate His own honour and make clear beyond question the wisdom that lies behind all His works—in their origin, their continuance, and their appointed end.

The resolution of thanks was carried with acclamation.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE said: May I suggest that no attempt to discuss from the standpoint of "common sense" a theory which is (at least professedly) based on scientific and philosophic arguments is likely to lead to any useful conclusions.

The inadequacy of the "common-sense" method is implied in

the author's first paragraph, when he urges that a certain conclusion is *scientifically* and necessarily true.

No doubt the author can deflect the darts of any scientific adversaries from the numerous gaps in his armour by exclaiming that he does not profess to any scientific accuracy of fact or inference, but what useful purpose is served thereby ?

Turning to the body of the paper, several queries suggest themselves :—

(1) Why, when professing to discuss progress under the three separate aspects, Physical, Intellectual and Moral, has the author, nevertheless, introduced the moral aspect into all three departments ?

(2) How can it be said that the bearing of psychology upon the evolutionary theory has been "entirely overlooked" when it occupies a distinct place in the theories of physiological psychologists and of the Freudians ?

(3) Why, in suggesting an explanation of the values attached to certain old objects, has he completely ignored the factors of rarity and association of ideas which entirely explain the value of most, if not all, of his examples ?

(4) Is not the alleged struggle to *regain* a *lost* ideal more commonly regarded by the participants as a struggle for an *unrealized* ideal ?

I do not wish to support the evolutionary hypothesis, but I do not like to see a good cause supported by inconclusive arguments.

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said : It is on record that the great Pro-Consul, Warren Hastings, once said that after the conclusion of Burke's Impeachment Speech he almost felt himself a criminal.

To-night, after the conclusion of the lecture to which we have just listened, I felt like the Prophet Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."

We are indeed a bad lot and, apart from Sovereign Grace and divine Mercy, our outlook is desperate.

Our friend's paper is rather pessimistic, but running through it there is a note of ultimate hope, and I might describe our lecturer as a futuristic optimist.

Now it is, in my humble opinion, very easy to bring a vast and imposing array of facts to prove or justify the pessimistic view of life and things as they are.

In these later days we feel acutely the truth of the prophecy "that evil men shall wax worse and worse."

It is equally possible to produce an immense number of facts to support the optimist and to think of the time when "the whole earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord."

How can these antithetical position, theories, or frames of mind be harmonized ?

I believe that if evil were to have its way unchecked and unhindered the worst dreams of the most despairing pessimists would soon be realized and exceeded, but that it is checked and hindered by something that "makes for Righteousness."

The wrath of man HE makes to praise HIM and what cannot be thus overruled—the remainder—HE restrains.

Sin in the last analysis is mental, physical, and moral or spiritual suicide, *e.g.*, in the nature of things the visitation of the iniquities of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation works for the elimination of evil.

This is that Nemesis of sin that keeps "working out" the very existence of uprising evil and evil men and things and preserving the best.

How rarely do we see a wicked man or woman over 50 ?

How many bad men and women have we not seen die before they came of age ?

But when the best are taken away at the first Resurrection how rapidly—it may be in a few months—the wicked will gain the upper hand.

Then all the horrors of the reign of the man of Sin and the false prophet and the beast, foretold in the Apocalypse, will begin and culminate in the darkest picture that our eloquent lecturer or any one else can draw.

Our friend seems to me to have looked at things from the dark side, and dark indeed is the picture he draws, but not too dark or too hopeless apart from restraining Grace and Mercy.

We ought not to forget that outbursts of great wickedness do often produce great reactions.

The stage may sink so low that "common decency" is outraged, and perforce it must try to reform or close down.

The pen of the novelists may degrade literature (if such it can be called) and horrify even debauchees.

These reactions, history shows us, often prepare the way for revivals of true religion, so that when men like Bishop Butler sink almost into despair and pessimism, let us remember that at that dark and awful moment in our country's history God was preparing for and actually beginning the great revival of Whitfield and Wesley.

I despair of things as they are—of our race as it is—but I know that there is an election of Grace which is calling out a people, and that God will one day make ready for that people a new Heaven and a new Earth, so that I am at once both a pessimist and an optimist.

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS thought the lecturer had done well to confine himself to his own subject—history, particularly—as it was one in which his audience could better follow him than if he had dealt with the more technical sciences. He instanced as showing the progress of moral degeneration the three national revolutions of modern times which had involved the violent death of the monarch. Our Charles I was solemnly tried and sentenced by men whom he would have executed if he had defeated them, whereas the death of Louis XVI of France was voted by a passionate political assembly, and the Tsar Nicholas II was assassinated by order of the supreme Government without any trial at all. The treatment of the children of these three monarchs showed the same course of degeneration, for Charles' children were supplied with money and sent out of the country with due safeguard, whereas all would remember the cruel treatment meted out to Louis' young son, resulting in his death, and the Tsar's children were assassinated with himself.

The immense improvement resulting from the coming of Christ must not be overlooked. At that very time Augustus Cæsar, after crushing the insurrection of the slaves in Italy, returned thirty thousand captives to their masters, all to be crucified, involving an amount of human suffering almost incredible, and absolutely impossible in later times.

He regarded the Cross as the crisis in human history. There the full evil of man's heart was displayed, for then only was it tested by perfect goodness. All that Scripture says is that particular persons—“evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse” (2 Tim. iii, 13).

He avowed himself a convinced optimist, and was glad that both the chairman and the lecturer looked forward to the personal reign of Christ, though we have the Dean of that highly dangerous structure,

St. Paul's Cathedral, in the current *Edinburgh Review*, saying that "Millenarianism . . . in its original shape of a belief in the approaching end of the world is quite dead, except among persons of very low intellectual cultivation"; but we had greater intellects than the Dean on our side, and best of all the testimony of Holy Writ.

He considered that in Christianity we had "heredity" in individuals being born of Christ by the Spirit, and "environment" in being baptized by that Spirit into one body, the Christian Church.

Rev. J. J. B. COLES said: The "psychological chasm" can be bridged by those who believe that the Creator was pleased to use *both* evolutionary *and* special creative methods—as set forth in Genesis i and ii. These chapters ought not to be amalgamated; they referred to distinct processes of indirect and direct Divine creative action.

Did Cain marry his sister? Holy Scripture does not say so, nor does it state that there was only one pair of human beings in Genesis i. If we keep closely to the living oracles of God, and neither add to them nor take away from them, we shall not be perplexed by theories as to prehistoric man nor by other questions of origins.

Lieut.-Colonel G. MACKINLAY said: Mr. Avary Forbes appeals, I think with success, to the very widely implanted seeking for a lost ideal (p. 71)—for something better than that which is to be seen at the present time, and to the implications which arise; they certainly agree better with the Bible narrative of the creation of man, rather than the theory that he is descended from lower forms of life.

Dr. A. T. SCHOFIELD writes: Being unavoidably absent on Monday, I send you one or two remarks on Mr. Forbes's paper. With its general tenor I agree, although the conclusion that inspiration is better than information strikes me rather as one of those comparisons which have been described as "odious." True information is of great value. Page 65 contains a serious discrepancy. The query (1) Has the race progressed physically? is not answered at all. What follows does not attempt to give the physical increase in stature, weight, length of life, progress in athletics, etc., but

*very curiously* seems to consider telephones, microphones, aeroplanes, radium, wireless, etc., as related to the question; and lower down speaks of these as mere *mechanics*, which certainly they are not. On p. 66 Mr. Forbes points out that the tree gives the knowledge of "good" as well as "evil," but fortunately draws no conclusion from this remarkable fact. Of course, conscience awake necessarily reveals the two. But when he proceeds to assert that chemistry is a big branch of this remarkable tree, we must demur.

I fear his comparisons on p. 67 hardly hold water. The Bible set are given us as truths, the others are mythological fables and allegories, and the two must not be contrasted as if the latter are now believed as true.

The AUTHOR'S reply: Mr. Leslie has misunderstood me. I know that evolutionists have treated of psychology, and that very largely. In my opening paragraph I said that "libraries of learning have been written on the subject," *i.e.*, Heredity, in which psychology bulks very largely. My point was that *one great fact* of psychology—worship of the past, and seeking there a lost ideal—had been overlooked by the philosophers. Mr. Leslie likewise falls into the error (against which I protested,—p. 77) of limiting the word science to *physical* science; whereas mental science is equally—or rather more, important. In mental science the highest appeal is to common sense. Both Berkeley and his critics, when in controversy over Idealism, continually appeal to the "plain man," or—as we now call him—the "man in the street." And the reason is obvious. The physical scientist must have a well-equipped laboratory and extensive technical knowledge; while the mental scientist has the complete apparatus and knowledge provided for him by nature.

How was it possible to omit the moral aspect, when I distinctly stated (what, as far as I know, nobody has denied) that, unless there has been moral progress, there has been "no progress at all" (p. 69)?

As to "rarity," it is in itself no factor of value at all. I have books in my library, which, I am confident, are not now to be bought in any shop. But their value is that of waste paper. Mr. Leslie is quite right as to association of ideas. We are surrounded by rocks

as old as the time of Abraham ; yet, if there be no human associations connected with them, they are, of course, of no special value. But I gave my hearers credit for supplying that elementary consideration, and also for understanding that such associations are necessarily of the past. They point to an ideal, not only unrealized, but unrealizable.

If the words "the race" (p. 65) be replaced by "civilization" (as I agree they might be), Dr. Schofield's "serious discrepancy" disappears.

The learned doctor, however, has confounded two things which are entirely different, viz., the development of the individual and the progress of the race. Into the former subject (Biology), I declined to enquire ; and the whole of Section A (1) plainly shows that I was dealing with *civilization* on its physical side.

While thanking the other speakers, I should like to explain that it was no part of my purpose to establish either pessimism or optimism, and I am sorry that that will-o'-the-wisp was followed or started at all. My purpose was to show that Darwinism and human psychology are at variance ; that, while Darwinism presupposes that human nature never had an ideal state, but must look forward to attaining one in the future, human nature feels that it had, and therefore looks back to, and idolizes, the past : that these two attitudes *contradict* each other, and that, therefore, by the laws of logic, one of them must be false. Further, that the first is a *theory*, and the other a *fact* ; that, as the fact cannot be false, the theory must be. That is the "dilemma" I sought to establish.