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(To W. O. (From Rev. W. A. Johnson to W. O.))

1876

"The Parsonage"

Weston 19. 10. 76

My dear Osler,

At last I have got through Mivart. I have been strongly tempted to put other things aside to enjoy his thoughts. My first feeling now is thankfulness to you for thinking of me at all, then for the kind of book you selected, what it is & what it leads to & what it has done respecting my former ideas. I really esteem your favour most highly & am very thankful for it. ~~Had it lay in my power I would gladly return it & will be happy always to acknowledge it.~~

As to the book itself I look upon the first chapters now as the best part of it. To me they are in the highest degree instructive. That the ego is demonstrable from my consciousness never struck me. Long ago I was of opinion but did not see how that all that was peculiar to adamic man, was the result of the contact or breathing into by the Creator. Now what is ^{that} but Mivart's moral consciousness? The first chap^s though difficult to master are very important. In the remaining chapters I suppose the very numerous instances brought to prove his points are valuable to those who understand & can appreciate them; to me, there is more proof than is necessary, but this of course is owing to my ignorance of peculiar forms & to my being satisfied of the correctness of his argument generally. I must read his "Genesis of species" if I can find it some day. Everything I see attests to evolution in some sense, but surely not chiefly by natural selection. The last chapter I would rather had never been added. Mivart's reverence for the Church makes him claim too much for it, at least so it seems to me. I can believe that devout unbiassed monobibliological students from St. Aug. to ~~Saunders~~ ^{Suarez} & to this day if they stated a formula of creation would be compelled so to word it so as to include evolution; but I do not at present believe what Mivart seems to, that the Ch. is divinely appointed or called to formulate truth, & science is to work up to it. ~~He~~ ^{He} may not mean this. I may misunderstand him; but it seems like it. What I mean is that ^{Believing as I do,} ~~that~~ the book of Nature & the book of Revelation are alike God's books. The one appealing to our sight the other to our hearing, or faith, a correct formula from one will agree in essential principles with a correct formula from the other. There is this difficulty to be met though. If you use the book of Revelation to formulate on the sciences, Geology we may say, the formula would be very brief, yet leaving room for all present discoveries, or all facts that may ever arise, & suppose a correct formula made first by Geologists, it will not be found to contradict revelation. For the purposes of moral enlightenment it is quite different. Here the formulae are very comprehensive, & agree in every part with experience. Mivart would have us believe that if the Pope expressed a formula on scientific subjects, it would be found correct. I do not want to deny him: He may be quite right: but it does not follow, as I think Mivart tries to shew, that every formula enunciated by the Pope must be correct because the Pope is divinely appointed for that purpose. I wish that the last chapter had been left out.

Do like a good fellow try to make my peace with kind M^{rs} Frances. I longed to be down & tried to get down to Montreal but really it was too expensive. Hoping to get down I delayed answering her, until I was ashamed to. Jimmy has gone

gone to London Hospital & grinds with D^r. Cook of Westminster. I see Dawson of Mont¹ is an agent for Cookes plates. If you think of it look at the four on comparative anatomy & tell me what you think of them. Everything flat and calm here, from the weather to the Village. My best wished for you. If any one is coming up send me something interesting for the microscope. I am all alone as usual but have an invaluable woman keeping house for me,

Yours very affectionately,

W. A. Johnson