

No. 5

IS EVOLUTION TRUE?

Error, and the
Way of Truth

By

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AUSTRALIAN EDITION.

Published by
THE CHRISTIAN WORKERS' DEPOT,
145 Commonwealth Street, Sydney.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

Quantities for Free Distribution at Greatly Reduced Prices.

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TH**ERE** are probably few people who are so thoughtless as never to ask themselves why they are in this world, and what their lives are for. Even when we are children we may wonder about this; for we find that there are things we have to do or to put up with, which we do not like. We may be sick sometimes, and we all have to study and to work. Are we to think then that the chief thing is to please ourselves and take no more trouble than we can help, and to have a good time? We can see plainly enough that this would be a selfish way to live, for it does not aim at being useful or helpful to others. If we look around us, we can see also that to be selfish is just the opposite of what goes on in nature.

For all things in nature are doing exactly what they are meant to do; and indeed, they wear themselves out to help others. The sun shines to give light and heat to the world; but it might say: "Why do I need to shine so very brightly? I would last much longer if I gave only a dull light." Yet if it did, the world would freeze and die. So it shines at its best.¹ The grass may feel that if it takes the trouble to grow, it will be eaten by sheep; but it is content to be of use. The plants and trees may say: "We live to purify the air, so that it is fit for the creatures to breathe. Without us the air would become so bad, they would all stifle." The forest trees are continually making good soil, with their fallen leaves, year by year; and even if they are cut down, and fruit trees are planted where they were, they say: "Never mind, we have served a useful purpose."

How does it happen that all things are helpful to one another in the world? The streams run

¹ Recent research indicates that the sun is using up its substance in giving out light and heat. Sir James Jeans supports this view.

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among the hills, where the wild creatures quench their thirst; the sunshine and the rain, and even the waves of the sea, are all doing what is needful. The only answer is that all these things were arranged when God created them. If human beings also are His people, because He made us and not we ourselves, we should surely feel that we ought to do as the Lord God wishes, and not just live to please ourselves. In this we have the perfect example of the Lord Jesus, for "even He pleased not Himself."

What Evolution teaches would upset all this entirely. For it says that all things developed of themselves, and each thing improved by struggling to get what was best for itself. This is just the opposite of the helpfulness which we see everywhere in nature. More than that, Evolution tells us that men are improved animals; and that we have to be as capable and clever as we are by pushing our way onward from the level of the beast where we began. If we believe this, it may no doubt make us very proud of ourselves, and self-satisfied; but it sets aside the idea of duty, that we ought to do what God wishes; and it leaves no place for gratitude to God, for giving us the faculties which we have, and for upholding us in life.

If we want to understand what God has done for us, and can do, we turn to what the Bible tells us. But we must begin at the beginning; and we will find what God intended man to be, and to do for the world. We will thus see that this world is very different from what the Creator meant it to be; and how it came about that so much sorrow and trouble is now around us.

What Should Have Been.

When God was going to create man, He first made a place ready which would be suitable for him to live in. This was what God had always done, during the creation of the world; He prepared be-

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forehand for what He intended to do; just as He made the grass grow before He made the sheep. The way He had often taken in the past ages to bring the world forward, was to create a new race of creatures to take the place of those which had been before them.¹ So there was another long step forward when man was created. For this brought a new creature into the world, quite different to any other before him; a human being, altogether superior to the animals; able to think and plan and invent. What then did God mean to be the outcome of this new beginning in the world? We will see what is said on this question in the Bible:—

“So God created man . . . male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish . . . and . . . the fowl . . . and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. i. 27-28). We may learn from this what God intended, and that He meant man to spread over the world. The garden of Eden, which was a better place than the rest of the world, would spread also; and the wild beasts would be pushed back and gradually disappear, and the plants and trees unsuited to man would be replaced by the better trees of Eden. Men would be kind to the animals, and would show their dominion over them by taking care of them; for man was created in the image of God, and had something of the goodness and thoughtfulness of God in his nature; and He provided food for all the creatures before He put them in the world.

We may well believe that this is the meaning of Eden, and that when man came upon the earth, he was to bring in a better age, and the world was to become a paradise.² But because of man's failure,

¹ See explanations in No. 3 of this Series.

² This view is fully explained by Sir William Dawson, the eminent geologist, in “The Origin of the World,” pages 237-240.

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the whole creation groans and is in pain even to the present day, for it could not bring forth the better things which God had planned; but must still wait and hope for them. (See Rom. viii. 20-24.)

We have next in the Bible the sorrowful story, which tells us why the world did not become an Eden or Paradise, filled with goodness and contentment. Let us see then what it was that prevented this.

How Man Began.—We learn from the Bible that the first man and woman were pure and good, and they spoke freely and openly with God. They were also free to choose what they would do; for they could either do what the Lord wished them to do, or they could take their own way and do as they pleased, whether God liked it or not. This gave an opportunity to Satan; for he saw that if he could persuade them to choose wrong, he would upset the plan which God in His goodness had made for them. If we follow carefully the clever way which Satan took to lead them astray, we will see that it was just the same way in which people are still misled.

The Lord God had told the man that there was one tree in the garden of which he was not to eat or he would die. So when the Serpent came into the garden to tempt Eve, he first of all threw doubt on what God had said, and told her she would not surely die. This is even yet the first step in going wrong; for people begin by doubting God and what He has said in His Word, and they do not like to be told that God will punish them if they disobey Him.

But Satan wants them to think that they will never become wise and clever if they merely do what they are told. So Eve is deceived by these cunning arguments, and Adam also; and they disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit. When we read carefully what Satan says, we can see what his arguments lead to; for they mean that so long as they obey

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God and live under His orders, they will not get on. If they wish to make progress, they must become independent of God; they must plan for themselves and take their own way.

Now is not this the very temptation that every boy and girl meets with? Many of their school-fellows make a joke of obedience, and say that if they do what their parents tell them and obey their teacher, they will never be independent or manly. They should decide for themselves and do as they please. But what does the Prophet of the Lord say of this? "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," and he says that this wilfulness is "iniquity." If we would even look around upon nature, we would see the meaning of obedience; for every created thing, from the stars over our heads to the flowers at our feet, are carrying out perfectly the purpose for which they were made. They all obey the laws of nature which the Creator has appointed for them. Nature is like the music of a great orchestra, all in the perfect harmony of obedience. Do we realise, then, that when Adam and Eve took their own way and went against the wishes of God, this was the first time that any created thing upon the earth had gone contrary to the will of God? And since then each generation of people have done the same. There is only One, the Lord Jesus, Who could say: "I do always those things that please My Father in heaven."

This break in the plans of God, when our first parents went wrong, is called the Fall of man; and it still continues. We see it in every child; for the youngest child, almost before it can speak, tries to get its own way. We do not see the spirit of obedience; for the little one does not believe that its mother wishes to train it aright. A child may even wish to do a thing just because it is forbidden. There is also a distrust of the love of God in the heart of any who think the commandments of God are not

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meant for their highest welfare, but would only hinder them from pleasing themselves.

Unwillingness to Believe.—What has come down to us from sin at the beginning is plain enough; yet there are many who do not like to believe that man was good at first, and that we are now sinners and need help from God. They find that this humbles them; and they would rather join with the evolutionists, and flatter themselves that they have risen and improved. But those who choose to think this, cannot even understand their own hearts; for they can give no reason why we all have a feeling of shame and regret when we do what is wrong and our conscience accuses us.¹

There are also teachers who tell us that this story of the Fall of man is not real; it is only a myth or fable. They should be ashamed to say this, if they have read the ancient myths; for they should know what mythology is like. These old legends and fables make interesting tales, especially the nature-myths; but they are full of wild imagination and false ideas of heaven and earth.² The Bible does not ask us to believe any such impossible nonsense; what it says is sensible and reasonable. Indeed, the account in the Bible is the only light that we have, to tell us how sin and evil have come into God's world. If we do not believe it, we must remain in the dark about all such things.

What Came of the Fall.—While Adam and Eve were in Eden, they spoke openly to God and they led an innocent life, and they also had enough to do to keep them occupied. (See Gen. ii. 15 and iii. 8.) But when they became sinful, they were sent forth from Eden, because the way they had lived, while

¹ Even Freud recognises that man's conscience brings upon him "an eternal feeling of guilt and remorse," although this cannot be explained or remedied in his philosophy.

² See "The Bible, Science and Superstition" by the present writer. Booklet, 39 pages; issued by the Bible League, London.

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there, was no longer suited to them. So they had to live in the outside world, where there were wild animals and where thorns and thistles grew; and they had to work hard, for God said to the man: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." This explains to us why things are as we find them in the present world. For man has had to face the wild beasts; and every time we see a thorn-bush or a thistle, we are reminded that mankind is not in the perfected world which God meant it to be. Yet as things now are, hard work is best for people; for it is always bad for us to idle about with nothing to do.

When we look into the Bible, we find that it says all the way through that man is not what he ought to be. All the writers of Scripture take it to be true that man has fallen and gone astray, and is out of touch with God. Moses and the Prophets believed that we all need to be forgiven and brought back to God. This is the meaning of the sacrifices which the Lord told the people to offer, in the time of Moses. The Psalmist says to God: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant." The Prophet entreats: "Return unto the Lord . . . for He will abundantly pardon." The Lord Jesus speaks of Eden when He says that the devil was a liar from the beginning; and He repeats the very words which God spoke to Adam when Eve was brought to him. Paul the Apostle says: "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." At the end of the Bible, we still read of "that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan;" and we are told what will be done to him at last, because he has deceived mankind.¹

Christian leaders who have read the Bible carefully and have taught others what it says, have all understood that the Fall of man is the real beginning

¹ Such passages are innumerable. See Lev. xvi. 29-31. Those here referred to are: Ps. cxix. 176; Isa. lv. 7; John viii. 44; Matt. xix. 4-5; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Rev. xx. 2 and 10.

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of the whole. To give the words of only one of these leaders, John Wesley says: "The fall of man is the very foundation of revealed religion. If this be taken away, the Christian system is subverted, nor will it deserve so honourable an appellation as that of a cunningly devised fable."

But it is plain that Evolution takes away this foundation altogether. For Evolution tells us that we were animals at first, and became men by gradually growing more clever till we came to be what we now are. This is just the opposite of what the Scriptures declare; and if we take Evolution to be true, we cannot believe what the Bible tells us. But the trouble that Evolution brings upon us is worse than this; because it turns us aside from the only way by which we can ever become truly good. We will see this very clearly when we look next at the wonderful way which the Lord has provided for man, so that he can return to Him. This is called: The Path of righteousness, or the Way of salvation.

What God Did for Man.

When the first man and woman went wrong by taking their own way instead of doing as God wished, the great question came to be: What will God do about this? He intended the whole earth to become like Eden; He meant the animals to be looked after wisely under the care of men; He wished the world to be filled with people who were good and happy.¹ He had Himself intended to rest after His work in creating things; and to have man for His friend, in peace and rest with Him. But all these plans were upset because of man's wilfulness and disobedience. Could this be put right, and what was to be done about it?

One thing is sure; the eternal and almighty God

¹ Sir William Dawson, the geologist, shows that the world, instead of going forward, has been kept back a geological age by the Fall of Man.

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will not allow His plans to be overthrown for ever without remedy. But there is far more than this; for we are shown by what the Lord God did, that He had a deep love for man and had at heart his best welfare. For as soon as the trouble arose, the Lord tells Adam and Eve that Satan will not gain the rule over the world by his success in Eden; but that the "seed of the woman" who will come, would "bruise the serpent's head." This is the great promise of hope, which grows brighter all through the Old Testament. A deliverer would arise, who would "destroy the works of the devil."

But there is still the further question: How is this to be done? The answer to this question would lead us into the deep things of God; things that even the angels desire to look into.¹ For God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor are our ways like His ways. Yet what we need to know is made very plain. Men were taught from the first, that they could only be forgiven through a sacrifice. This was made clear to Adam's own sons, and it was shown more plainly still by the sacrifice of the lamb at the Passover. These sacrifices were continued all down the centuries, and in the time of Christ the Passover was still kept. The great lesson that was thus taught, from the days of Adam to Christ, is summed up in one sentence in the New Testament: "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" that is, no forgiveness for sin and no way to be made clean and pure.

So the children in every generation amongst the Hebrew people, down to the time of Christ, were taught this lesson, which is the most needful of all to learn. When a boy was twelve years old, he went up to the Temple where the sacrifices were offered. They were thus led to understand what Christ would

¹ How it is that God can be just and yet justify the ungodly, is the greatest problem in the moral universe; involving consistency in the attributes of the Deity. (See Rom. iii. 24-26.)

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do when He came; and He was pointed out to the first disciples as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This then was the way which God thought out for man; and "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, . . . to redeem them that were under the law." His deep love for mankind is shown, because "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

God the Father made this wondrous sacrifice to bring men back to Himself, and He sends forth the call to the whole world: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And the Lord Jesus specially commands the Gospel to be made known to every one in all the world; because he that believes shall be saved.

The Contrast.

If we turn now to what Evolution teaches, we readily see that it sets all this aside. For it tells us that men began at a lower level than savages; they were merely animals. What the reason was that they were not content to remain animals, the evolutionists are unable to explain; nor do they know what caused them to develop.¹ Yet somehow these animals wanted to become different; so they kept on trying and striving, till they gradually learned to make things which they had not supposed that they would ever need. They also invented much better things for killing one another, than any animals could possibly have thought of. So the strongest and fiercest were better able to put down the others, which helped them very much to improve. After a very long time and much striving, they became so clever that they found they had turned into men.

Now, if this was the way that men came to be,

¹ The want of a cause (as evolutionists admit) is discussed in No. 4 of this Series.

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people can say: We have every reason to be proud, for we have done remarkably well. We have developed ourselves till we have become very capable. We do not need to be forgiven; we ought to be praised for having become as good as we are. All that we need to do is to go on improving ourselves and improving the world; and bye and bye we will all be comfortable and happy. So the evolutionists tell us that if we only have patience, it will not be so very long before the children who will be born will find themselves in a much better world.

This may sound very hopeful, but there are many questions to answer and many dark things in the world which make even evolutionists very doubtful that this will come true; and many of them quite despair of any real improvement. But we must go on to the most serious and important question of all. For it is surely plain, even to a child, that if people have improved from animals, they have done well and do not need to be forgiven. And if they can go on improving themselves till they are all perfectly good, they do not need any help, even from God. So the great question that we come to is this:—

Why was it that God sent His Son into the world, that the world through Him might be saved? Why did He take this trouble, as we may say, if it was not needed? Evolution says we are on the path of progress, and in no danger of going to destruction; and we do not need to repent by turning round to look for the narrow way which leads unto life. Is this what God thinks? Why, then, did He make the great sacrifice, and give His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life? When Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross, can anyone venture to hint that this was unnecessary?

The Bible from its opening to the close, has the one story to tell about sin and redemption; and the heart of the Gospel is that Christ came, as He Him-

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self says, to give His life as a ransom. But all this loses its meaning if we listen to Evolution; for it tells us that men have got on very well until now, and that our future is in our own hands. It is thus clear that Evolution takes away all meaning from pardon and salvation, by making them needless. We must each choose, therefore, whether we will accept what Evolution says, or believe the Gospel of the grace of God.

The Two Ways.

There is a way to tell whether a thing is true, which we may well look into. When learned men are trying to find out more, they may begin by supposing some new thing to be true, and see what this leads to; and they can then judge whether it is correct or not. For if it brings them to a wrong conclusion, it cannot be right. The schoolboy learns this way of testing truth in his geometry. For example, he is told to suppose that two triangles which are described are not equal; and when he reasons this out, he reaches a conclusion which is impossible. So it is clear that he must have started wrong; and what he supposed, cannot be true. Questions of right and wrong can be judged in the same way. We may suppose that it is no harm to tell lies, and then see what would come of this, if no one could trust what anyone else said.

It is, therefore, quite fair to try the theory of Evolution in this way; to learn what it leads to, and what influence it has on those who take it to be true. We have an account of this from a girl-student at a great University, where the professors taught Evolution to the students. As she was in her senior year, she had been for three or four years amongst the students; and when asked to explain what came of this teaching, she said:—

“The boys and girls that I know, who have accepted the idea that they are only superior

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animals, are no longer interested in religion and are wholly animal in their tendencies. Ninety per cent. of the immorality in our University is traceable to this notion. These girls and boys seem to think that all restraint has been removed by this discovery that God did not make them as taught by the Bible, and that therefore there is no responsibility to God for their actions. The girls are often heard to excuse themselves (for their excesses) on the very ground that God and heaven and hell and all the rest of it, have been ruled out of existence by Evolution." Her attitude seemed to be that every student felt that he must "turn down" one or other, either the Christian faith or Evolution.¹

So these clear-headed young people understand how to reason correctly, and they have found the results that Evolution must lead to. The worst thing that it does is to overthrow their faith in God, which would give them strength and courage against evil. It is not only students at the Universities who find this, but learned men of science have the same story to tell. Dr. G. J. Romanes, well known as a friend of Darwin, was led away from his faith by Evolution. In looking back when near the end of his life, he speaks of "the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of the creed that once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as I now find it." Sir Arthur Keith, a former President of the British Association, tells us what came to him when he was taught to believe Evolution: "By this new knowledge my youthful creed was smashed to atoms. My personal God, Creator of heaven and earth, melted away. The desire to pray—not the need—was lost; for one cannot pray for help to an abstraction."²

¹ Interview with a young woman undergraduate, given in an American magazine, and reprinted in "The Bible for China," November, 1927. No names are given.

² From "Thoughts on Religion," by Romanes; and "The Forum" for April, 1930.

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We see, then, how Evolution upsets the most intelligent, and the educated young men and women, by turning their minds away from the truth of the Bible and belief in Christ. When this goes on in countries which are enlightened, we may look next at the other extreme; to see how the most degraded of men can be made better. We ask: How can they be raised to a higher level, and freed from the evils which keep them down? We have the answer from one who knew such people well; from James Chalmers, who lived a long time among the degraded tribes of the South Sea Islands. He shows how true uplift can be brought to such people, when he says:—

"I have had twenty-one years' experience among natives. I have seen the half-civilised and the uncivilised; I have lived with the Christian native, and I have lived, dined and slept with the cannibals. For at least nine years of my life I have lived with the savages of New Guinea. But I have never yet met with a single man or woman, or a single people, that your civilisation without Christianity has civilised. Wherever there has been the slightest spark of civilisation in the Southern Seas, it has been because the Gospel has been preached there; and wherever you find a friendly people, there the missionaries of the Cross have been preaching Christ."

The Gospel is thus able to change the lowest of men into new creatures. Evolution asks us to hope for slow improvement during many generations, which may not come about; but the Gospel transforms the people themselves who hear the message. No one can deny that this actually happens, and is now going on in the world. Those who were brought up as pagans, and lived in dread of evil spirits, are being brought into peace with God; their cruelty turns to kindness, and the deadly quarrel gives place to forgiveness, which was never known before; the

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harsh ways between the father and mother soften down into loving helpfulness, and the children learn this spirit.

What, then, shall we believe? On the one hand there is Evolution, which is unproved in the past and is powerless in the present world to help us to develop into anything better; and on the other hand there is the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes. If we would enter the kingdom of heaven we must come into it like little children; and our belief in Christ and His cross, we may put in the words of the simple hymn:—

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

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