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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

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CHURCHMAN

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The work itself has no doubt been its own reward ; and the increased amount of attention given to the study of God's Word that has resulted will have fully repaid them. But our indebtedness is not thereby diminished ; and even though the blemishes had been tenfold more numerous than they are, supposing all the blemishes to be real ones, which is not likely, yet the indirect testimony we have thus obtained to the excellence of the A.V., and the invaluable commentary which has by this careful and laborious revision been supplied, makes the debt one that should on all possible occasions be gratefully acknowledged.

A LAYMAN.

Reviews.

Can the Old Faith Live with the New? A Problem of Evolution and Revelation. By the Rev. GEORGE MATHESON, D.D. Blackwood and Sons: Edinburgh.

“CAN the old faith live with the new?” In other words, Can the old faith live with *evolution*? For this is the problem which Dr. Matheson has set himself to solve. He accepts the evolutionary theory as an established law. But hypothesis and law are by no means convertible terms ; and evolution, by universal consent, has not yet got beyond the hypothesis stage. It is doubtful whether, even if it were perfectly true, it is susceptible of absolute demonstration ; for no man has ever seen the development of a new species. Indeed, Sir John Lubbock, in a recent address to the British Association, is reported to have stated that it was a popular misconception to imagine that the evolutionist held the Darwinian principle to be in operation now ; while the records of the vast periods which the theory demands for the accomplishment of its objects have no existence. It is true, many of the advocates of evolution speak as if it were an indisputable law, accepted by all except perhaps a few narrow-minded and ignorant persons ; yet Darwin himself did not venture to affirm as much. In his “Descent of Man” he says : “Of the older and honoured chiefs in natural science, many unfortunately are still opposed to evolution in every form.” Of these “honoured chiefs” the illustrious Agassiz is not the least, and his opinion of evolution is given in unmistakable language. “The theory,” he says, “is a scientific blunder, untrue in facts, unscientific in its methods, and ruinous in its tendency.” A long roll of distinguished names might be added to the list of those who have not accepted the theory of evolution, but it is unnecessary to labour the point.

After giving the animal and vegetable kingdoms a start in the world somehow—by spontaneous generation, or by life communicated by a meteoric visitor, or by one or more primordial germs containing an inherent power of development, for these are all suggested—the advocates of evolution build up the whole superstructure of the present condition of the world, with its multiform organizations, including man himself, on the assumed law of natural selection and survival of the fittest.

With many of the objections to this hypothesis readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* are no doubt familiar. It would, therefore, even if it were possible within the limits at my disposal to refer to them all, be unnecessary to do so. It will be sufficient to adduce one, if I can show that it is

an insuperable barrier to the reception of the evolution theory. And the laws which obtain in reference to *hybridism* afford just such an objection—an objection which has not been met, nor indeed ever can be met while the present constitution of the animal kingdom remains. "Species," to use Darwin's language, "are the modified descendants of other species," or as he has more definitely expressed it in another place, "In living bodies variations will cause slight alterations, generation will multiply them almost infinitely, and natural selection will pick out with unerring skill each improvement." We have here a compendious statement of the theory from the founder of the school. Let us see whether it will "hold water."

It is unnecessary to say that a transformation of one species into another is contrary to all the experience of mankind. No man has ever witnessed such an event. Why? Because the Creator has placed impassable barriers between the manifold species of living creatures which prevent their confusion and transformation.

God has impressed upon each species of the lower animals an immutable law by which it is kept distinct through an unconquerable instinct of repulsion towards every other species. In a wild state animals never cross. Sparrows do not cross with swallows, nor ducks with gulls. And the Creator has set His seal upon this law in a very remarkable way. Even where crosses have taken place between some of the allied races of domesticated animals, as the horse and the donkey, the offspring is not prolific; the mule leaves no descendant. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," is the rule of the Divine law; it is what in human law would be called a "perpetual injunction."

And this brings us to a remarkable fact. The whole theory of evolution leads up to man; the progression of the lower animals from protoplasm to the highest ape is of no value in the eyes of the evolutionist if it does not advance a step farther and take in man. To man as the ultimate product, the disciples of this school are ever looking. Not only the outward organization—the form and figure—but his mental and religious sentiments, we are told, are simply the outcome, the evolution, of inchoate emotions of like nature previously existing in the lower animals.

Now if this theory be true—if, for example, the red man of America is the descendant of an American monkey, and the negro the descendant of an African chimpanzee, then these races of men must constitute species as distinct as their simian ancestors. The differences between the white man and the negro are greater than the differences between many varieties of the lower animals which are distinctly recognised as specific differences. But we now come to an impassable gulf between man and all other animals. However different in colour or "habitat," we are distinctly told that God hath made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. No law of hybridism prevails as between whites and blacks, polar men and tropical men, Europeans and South Sea Islanders. Mulattos are as prolific as pure white or black or red men. There is, indeed, a mighty gulf between man and all the rest of the creation which no skill in dialectics nor sophistry, however subtle, can bridge over. When the inspired Evangelist traced the genealogy of our Lord, beginning from His reputed father Joseph, he speaks of each individual as being the son of another individual, "which was the son of David, which was the son of Jesse," and so on to the last human link in the chain, Adam, "which was the son of God," not the son of an ascidian tadpole, nor of an ape, but of the Omnipotent Creator Himself.

"This isolated position of man throughout the whole period of his history," says Sir William Dawson, in his "Story of Earth and Man"

(p. 364), "grows in importance the more it is studied ; it deprives evolution as applied to our species of any precise scientific basis, whether zoological or geological." And even Agassiz, although he denied the unity of the human race, yet taught in the clearest language the complete isolation of man from all other members of the animal kingdom. In speaking of the similarity to man of some of the vertebrates, he says :

This connection is not the consequence of a direct lineage between the fauna of different ages. There is nothing like parental descent connecting them. The fishes of the Palæozoic age are in no respect the ancestors of the reptiles of the Secondary age, nor does man descend from the mammals which preceded him in the Tertiary age. The link by which they are connected is of a higher and immaterial nature ; and their connection is to be sought in view of the Creator Himself.

Let us now turn for a few moments to the other phase of the evolution theory, the survival of the fittest. And here the most popular although not the most logical of the advocates of evolution has furnished us with an illustration which will, when examined, show the untenable nature of the theory. In the first of his recent Sunday lectures at Grosvenor House, Professor Drummond asked his hearers to suppose an observer visiting an island in the autumn, when he would find it inhabited by a thousand birds ; if he returned in the spring, he would find but a hundred. "Why?" he asks. "The biological answer," he replies, "is, that only the birds of the quickest wing, the most cunning ways, and the strongest muscle have survived." Now Mr. Drummond might readily find a thousand islands in which the same difference would be found between autumn and spring. But his inference is utterly erroneous and without any foundation in fact. Instead of an imaginary island let us take an actual instance—the Province of Nova Scotia—which is a peninsula. Although it lies considerably to the south of England, yet, as we all know, the isothermal line in crossing the ocean moves in a curve, so that the transatlantic winters are much colder than the winters of the same latitudes in Western Europe, and the summers are considerably hotter. Now during the summer in Nova Scotia, in every garden may be seen that most delicate and beautiful little creature, the humming-bird. Visit the same gardens in the spring and not a humming bird is visible. Why? Is it because, being neither quick of wing nor strong of muscle, it has not survived? Nothing could be further from the truth. It fled, on the approach of winter, to warmer and sunnier lands in obedience to its God-given instincts, and when the proper season again comes round it will be found in as great numbers as ever in every garden in the province. Look at a map of North America and see the enormous distance which this, the tiniest and most defenceless of birds, has traversed in the interval. Away from Nova Scotia to Florida or Georgia, and thence back to Nova Scotia, over many weary stretches of mountain and river, lake and ocean, this, the most helpless of all the fowls of the air, travels every year in safety, escaping the attacks of predaceous birds and animals and the vicissitudes of intervening climates. Is this the survival of the fittest and strongest?

In the journal kept by an officer on one of the Arctic voyages of discovery, he mentions the delight with which, on the return of the short summer in that high latitude, he saw a snipe alight upon the earth. Next to the humming-bird there is hardly a more defenceless bird in existence than the snipe. And yet over what boundless tracts of land and sea it must have travelled to reach its breeding-grounds within the Arctic circle! Is this the survival of the fittest and strongest? It would be easier to believe in the Claimant or in the Holy Coat of Treves than to believe that, either in the case of the snipe or of the humming-bird, its survival is due to its strength of muscle or wing.

The truth is that, even among the lower animals, the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but the care of their Creator is over all, even the weakest of His creatures; and the most defenceless races are those that survive in the greatest numbers.

What then can be the outcome of a system which in its fundamental principles sets aside the plainest facts in creation, and substitutes a theory resting on unproved assumptions in their stead? There can be but one reply. The tendency of the whole system is ruinous to faith. Take one of the most popular and widely read advocates of evolution perhaps since Darwin, Professor Drummond. To what has it led him? The real drift and tendency of his work on "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" has been shown by various writers; but he has himself, in his recent Sunday lectures at Grosvenor House, furnished unmistakable evidence of a steady retrogression from the truth. In his first lecture, in order to bring the Scriptures into harmony with evolution, he tells us that he can only consent to regard the Book of Genesis as a poem addressed to children's minds, like George Macdonald's poem "The Baby," not literally true, but true for the child; that the Fall appears to be after all not a fall but a rise; and the difficulty of accepting the miracles is met by the statement that there is "no need of accepting any miracle but the Resurrection, and this science makes possible and even probable."

The most recent contribution to the discussion of the question before us is Dr. Matheson's volume, "Can the Old Faith Live with the New?" and the *modus vivendi* which he advocates is virtually a concession to the modern evolutionary school of the most important conditions of the controversy.

It will be noticed by the readers of his book that in nearly every instance he states very fairly the views of those holding the old faith, and then those of the evolutionary school. But, having done this, he proceeds to state that there is no collision between them; that both are true. He entirely overlooks, however, the fact that the chief advocates of evolution, who ought to know their own minds, by no means admit this. Mr. Herbert Spencer, whom Dr. Matheson calls "distinctively the apostle of evolution," in a paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, clearly lays down, as the basis of reconciliation between theology and science, the abandonment by the former of all its anthropomorphic traits. His aim is to turn out the Personal God of the Christian from the universe, and to substitute that unknown blind Force which constitutes the ultimate factor in his system. Nor can it be denied that the whole school of scientific materialists on the Continent hailed the advent of the Darwinian theory as affording fresh grounds for denying the existence of the Christian's God.

Let us see how far Dr. Matheson has succeeded in his process of reconciliation, or, in other words, what he has given up to effect it. I have only space to refer to one or two instances. In his tenth chapter on "Evolution and the Second Adam," at page 270, he is speaking of the doctrine of the Atonement, where we read: "What we say is, that the Christian doctrine of the Atonement depends for its validity on the uninterrupted continuance of the law of mental evolution." Now no evolution, either physical or mental, has ever been proved to exist—up to the present hour, evolution is a mere figment of the imagination. The doctrine of the Atonement depends for its validity on no such illusory foundation; it depends on the Word of the living God conveyed to us by men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

This statement, then, that the doctrine of the Atonement depends on the law of mental evolution, seems to wander far enough away from the "old faith"; but Dr. Matheson's speculations on the origin of man have led him into a still deeper maze of error.

Scripture tells us that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and again it asserts, in equally clear language, that by man came death. Dr. Matheson, however, informs us that man was always subject to death like other animals ; that he had been evolved, like all other animals, from previously existing organizations, and was, like them, subject to death : and this condition of things must have existed for long periods of ages. This imaginary account is utterly opposed to that of Scripture. Moses informs us that God created man in His own image ; and when all was finished, pronounced His work to be very good. Dr. Matheson tells us that the primitive man, so far from being very good, had a "potentially of virtue," but was only "actually harmless"—that he was in short a harmless fool. Dr. Matheson has thus certainly succeeded in finding, or rather in inventing, the missing link between the ape and man, for which the evolutionists have so long been searching. But he proves too much. "The doctrine of evolution," he tells us, "admits of no leap in the order of nature ; it allows no paroxysm, no catastrophe, no sudden or unexpected emergency to break the ordinary sequence of that great chain of continuity which binds the highest to the lowest." The narrative of Genesis, he affirms, "in passing from the animal to man, recognises indeed the fact that nature has made a vast progress, but it holds the progress to have been made not by leaping but by stepping." And this is the significant conclusion at which he arrives : "The formation of man from the dust of the ground, and the breathing into man's nostrils of that breath of life which constitutes his humanity, would seem to have been not one act but two."

Now if this fantastic dream were true, let us mark well what its inevitable result would be. It would sweep away every vestige of foundation for the Gospel plan of salvation. If the lower type of man, after he had emerged from the simian stage, but before he received the affatus "which constitutes his humanity," continued in this lower state for "a long period of ages," then at the time that he received his "higher and later life," and became true man, there must have been many millions of the race in existence. This banishes into the region of legendary myths the Mosaic account, which represents the human family as descended from a single pair ; but it goes much further, for it destroys the plan of redemption by one Man, Jesus Christ, which God has indissolubly connected with the creation and fall of the head of the whole human family. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," are His own words. And Adam cannot here be used as a generic term including a multitudinous race of human beings ; for St. Paul, as if to shut out all controversy on the point, says in another place, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

And when, we may ask, did all these untold myriads of men, into whom was breathed the breath of life, lapse into sin ? Was the lapse universal and simultaneous ? If so, as Dr. Matheson appears to hold, there is clearly no room for the story of the serpent tempting Eve to a single definite act of disobedience. This must also be given up as a poetical myth, adapted to the infancy of mankind, but not to be treated seriously by men of intelligence in the present day. If, on the other hand, the fall was not simultaneous, but men were lapsing, one to-day and another to-morrow, over a long period of time, when did the declaration of Scripture become true ? "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

This, however, and many other insurmountable difficulties, are only the inevitable outcome of the adoption of the evolutionary hypothesis. The attempts to reconcile the old faith with the new can only succeed by

compromising, and conceding, to the men who set science before religion, everything that is worth preserving. They remind one of the matrimonial quarrel which was settled by compromise. The husband, being a man of prosaic tastes, wished to dine at one o'clock ; the wife, with loftier social aspirations, preferred dinner at seven ; and an unhappy feud was the result. At length, however, the controversy was amicably arranged ; and the husband, in answer to the inquiries of a friend to whom he had confided his grief, informed him that the quarrel was over and peace restored—that they had "compromised" on seven o'clock. This, it appears to me, is precisely what the advocates of harmony between Scripture and Evolution are now engaged in doing. I fear, however, that their efforts will never lead any soul into rest or peace. To attain that, the inquirer must walk in another path. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

P. CARTERET HILL.

Old Church Life in Scotland. Lectures on Kirk-Session and Presbytery Records. By ANDREW EDGAR, Minister at Mauchline. Pp. 365. Alexander Gardner : Paisley, and 12, Paternoster Row. 1885.

Every summer brings to Mauchline visitors from all parts of the world, from Maidenkirk and John o' Groats', from England and Ireland, from Australia and the great Republic of America. All or nearly all these visitors make a loving and curious inspection of the churchyard. That little enclosure is to them an object of the deepest interest, but it is not because old stern Covenanters are resting there from their warfare, nor because morbid-minded monks, weary of the world, were buried there under the shadows of the old sanctuary, where morning, noon, and night they sang and prayed, and led sad but saintly lives hid with Christ in God. It is because the place has been consecrated by the genius of the national poet of Scotland. Many a time have the feet of Burns trod that hallowed ground. It was in the old church that he worshipped, and I presume it was in the old church that his marriage was "solemnly confirmed." It was in the old church and the present churchyard that those scenes of mingled solemnity and profanation were witnessed, that have been described, perhaps too truly, in his Communion satire. It was in the modern mansion adjoining the churchyard and contiguous to the castle, that Gavin Hamilton, the poet's friend and landlord, lived, and where the poet spent many of his gayest and happiest hours. It was about a stone-cast beyond, in a green meadow, on the banks of what was then a bright and purling brook, that tradition says the poet first caught sight of the village belle who became his bride, and whose charms he has immortalized in imperishable song. It was in the upper room of a small two-storied, red-sandstone house, facing the eastern gable of Mr. Hamilton's mansion, that the poet and his wife took up their first abode together. It was in one of the houses that still form the north-eastern boundary of the churchyard, and is separated from Burns's own dwelling

By a narrow street

Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet,

that Nanse Tinnock had her comfortable and respectable alehouse.

We have quoted the preceding paragraph from the opening lecture on Churchyards in the volume before us by the "Minister at Mauchline;" it will have an interest for those who have paid a visit to that classic spot. He proceeds to speak of Mary Morrison's house, and adds that in the churchyard of Mauchline are the graves of many that were known and endeared to the poet. But in addition to the immediate surroundings,

he says, you look out from the church-tower on Mossgiel and Ballochmyle, the Ayr and the Lugar, the banks of Afton and the Braes of Doon.

While we refer to Mauchline as the home of Burns, we may quote a few sentences from the preface of this volume which relate to the poet in connection with Church discipline. In dealing with cases of scandal the author has generally withheld the names of persons involved when it seemed possible "that such names could be identified with families still represented in the district of Mauchline." But to this rule he has made one notable exception. "The public interest in the national poet is so absorbing," we read, "and people are so anxious to know the whole truth about his bright and sad career, that I have thought it proper to tell nearly all that the Session Records of Mauchline have to say about him and the persons that figure in his poems." We learn that Burns never had to sit on the Repentance Stool.

The information given about discipline is very curious, and will strike many readers with surprise. Officers were appointed to keep the people in till the service was ended. The kirk-officer of Perth was bidden to have "his red staff in the kirk on the Sabbath day, wherewith to waken sleepers and remove greeting bairns." The Kirk-Session of Monifeith in 1643 gave the "bedall 5s. to buy ane pynt of tar to put upon the women that held the plaid above their head in church." A reason was given by one Kirk Session in 1642 why "no woman be suffered to sit in the time of sommer with plyds upon their heads." The reason was "it is a cleuck to their sleeping in tyme of sermon." One minister is reported to have paused in the reading of the Scriptures, and to have called out—"I see a man aneath that laft wi' his hat on. I'm sure ye're clear o' the soogh o' the door. Keep aff yer bannet, Tammas, an' if yer bare pow be cauld, ye maun jist get a grey worsit wig like mysel." Kirk Sessions, of course, did not always succeed in making the people amenable to their rule. It often happened, indeed, that the stool of repentance was broken to pieces by some irate offender. One Agnes Ronald, when brought before the Session, "declared her resolution to continue in the sin of drunkenness," "ane verie vicious woman in face of Session threatened her goodman," and in 1645 a woman was brought before the Session of Fenwick for "upbraiding of the Session from off the public place of repentance, when she should have made confession of her fault."

The Kirk Session is made up chiefly of "such as are commonly called elders." But who is really an *elder*? In the Church of Scotland, says Mr. Edgar, "elders and presbyters mean the same thing." A Presbyterian Church, therefore, he says, means a Church that is governed exclusively by presbyters or elders; all its Courts might with perfect propriety be called either Presbyteries or Elderships. The General Assembly might be called the general or "hail" Presbytery of the Church; the Synods might be called Provincial Presbyteries; and Kirk-Sessions might be called the Parochial Presbyteries. Each of these Courts is composed of Presbyters or Elders. But—here is the explanatory line—there are *two kinds* of Elders. First, there are "those that not only exercise authority and take part in government, but labour in word and doctrine." There are the Ministers or Pastors, and Doctors of Divinity. Second, there are Elders who have no licence to preach, or administer sacraments or solemnize marriages. Their office is simply to exercise rule, and for that reason they are called *ruling* Elders. There is a common notion, however, that there is some specially important personage in the Kirk Session—some one that in virtue of rank or commanding influence is exalted above the other Elders. This is not the case. All Elders, says our author, are *ruling* Elders. That some members of the Church of England should make a mistake upon this point (as recent discussions on Church Courts seemed to show) is very natural; and even officials of the Scottish Kirk have gone astray.