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INTRODUCTION.

During the last few years I have published under this title short articles dealing with the present status of Darwinism. In view of the kind reception which has been accorded to these articles by the reading public I have thought it well to bring them together in pamphlet form. Indeed, the Darwinian movement and its present status are eminently deserving of consideration, especially on the part of those before whom Darwinism has hitherto always been held up triumphantly as a scientific disproof of the very foundations of the Christian faith.

By way of introduction and explanation some general preliminary remarks may not be amiss here. Previous to twenty or thirty years ago, it was justifiable to identify Darwinism with the doctrine of Descent, for at that time Darwinism was the only doctrine of Descent which could claim any general recognition. Consequently, one who was an adherent of the doctrine of Descent was also a Darwinian. Those to whom this did not apply were so few as to be easily counted. The dispute then hinged primarily on Darwinism; hence, for those who did not admit the truth of that theory, the doctrine of Descent was for the most part also a myth.

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I say, for the most part; for there were already even at that time a few clear-sighted naturalists (Wigand, Naegeli, Koelliker and others) who saw plainly the residue of truth that would result from the discussion. But to the overwhelming majority, the alternatives seemed to be: Either Darwinism or no evolution at all. Today, however, the state of things is considerably altered. The doctrine of Descent is clearly and definitely distinguished from Darwinism at least by the majority of naturalists. It is therefore of the utmost importance that this luminous distinction should likewise become recognized in lay circles.

My object in these pages is to show that Darwinism will soon be a thing of the past, a matter of history; that we even now stand at its death-bed, while its friends are solicitous only to secure for it a decent burial.

Out of the chaos of controversy which has obtained during the last four decades there has emerged an element of truth—for there lurks a germ of truth in most errors—which has gained almost universal recognition among contemporary men of science, namely, the doctrine of Descent. The fact that living organisms form an ascending series from the less perfect to the more perfect; the further fact that they also form a series according as they display more or less homology of structure and are formed according to similar types; and, lastly, that the fossil remains of organisms found in the various strata of the earth's surface likewise represent an ascending series from the simple to the more complex—these three facts suggested to naturalists the thought that living organisms were

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not always as we find them today, but that the more perfect had developed from simpler forms through a series of modifications. These thoughts were at first advanced with some hesitation, and were confined to narrow circles. They received, however, material support when, during the fourth decade of the 19th century the splendid discovery was made (by K. E. von Baer) that every organism^{is} slowly developed from a germ, and in the process of development passes through temporary lower stages to a permanent higher one. Even at that time many naturalists believed in a corresponding development of the whole series of organisms, without of course being able to form a clear conception of the process. Such was the state of affairs when Darwin in the year 1859 published his principal work, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. In this work for the first time an exhaustive attempt was made to sketch a clear and completely detailed picture of the process of development.

Darwin started with the fact that breeders of animals and growers of plants, having at their disposal a large number of varieties, always diverging somewhat from each other, choose individuals possessing characteristics which they desired to strengthen, and use only these for procreation. In this manner the desired characteristic is gradually made more prominent, and the breeder appears to have obtained a new species. Similar conditions are supposed to prevail in Nature, only that there is lacking the selecting hand of the breeder. Here the so-called principle of Natural Selection holds automatic sway by means of the

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Struggle for Existence. All the various forms of life are warring for the means of subsistence, each striving to obtain for itself the best nourishment, etc. In this struggle those organisms will be victorious which possess the most favorable characteristics; all others must succumb. Hence those only will survive which are best adapted to their environment. But between those which survive, the struggle begins anew, and when the favoring peculiarities become more pronounced in some, (by chance, of course) these in turn win out. Thus Nature gradually improves her various breeds through the continued action of a self-regulating mechanism. Such are the main features of Darwinism, its real kernel, about which of course,—and this is a proof of its insufficiency,—from the very beginning a number of auxiliary hypotheses attached themselves.

Darwin's theory sounds so clear and simple, and seems at first blush so luminous that it is no wonder if many careful naturalists regarded it as an incontrovertible truth. The warning voice of the more prudent men of science was silenced by the loud enthusiasm of the younger generation over the solution of the greatest of the world-problems: the genesis of living beings had been brought to light, and—a thing which admitted of no doubt—man as well as the brute creation was a product of purely natural evolution. The doctrine which materialism had already proclaimed with prophetic insight, had at length been irrefragably established on a scientific basis: God, Soul and Immortality were contemptuously relegated to the domain of nursery tales. What further use was there for a God

when, in addition to the Kant-Laplacian theory of the origin of the planetary system, it had been discovered that living organisms had likewise evolved spontaneously? How could man who had sprung from the irrational brute possess a soul? And thus, finally, disappeared the third delusion, the hope of immortality. For with death the functions of the body simply cease, as also do those of the brain, which people had foolishly believed to be something more than an aggregation of atoms. The body dissolves into its constituent elements and serves in its turn to build up other organisms: but as a human body it all turns to dust nor 'leaves a wrack behind'. Thus Darwinism was made the basis first for a materialistic, and then for a monistic, view of the world, and hence came to be rigorously opposed to every form of Theism. But since, at that time, Darwinism was the only theory of evolution recognized by the world of science, the opposition of the Christian world was directed not specifically against Darwinism, but against the theory of evolution as such. The wheat was rooted up with the tares.

I will not discuss here which of the two views concerning creation; the origin of the world in one moment of time, or a gradual evolution of the world and its potentialities, is the more worthy of the creative power of God. Manifestly the greatness and magnificence of creation will in no way be compromised by the concept of evolution. This, of course, is simply my opinion. Any further statement would be out of place here.

But what is the Darwinian position?

It is merely a special form of the evolutionary theory, one of the various attempts to explain how the process of development actually took place. Darwinism as understood in the following chapters possesses the following characteristic traits:

- (1) Evolution began and continues without the aid or intervention of a Creator.
- (2) In the production of Variations there is no definite law; Chance reigns supreme.
- (3) There is no indication of purpose or finality to be detected anywhere in the evolutionary process.
- (4) The working factor in evolution is Egoism, a war of each against his fellows: this is the predominating principle which manifests itself in Nature.
- (5) In this struggle the strongest, fleetest and most cunning will always prevail, (the Darwinian term "fittest" has been the innocent source of a great deal of error).
- (6) Man, whether you regard his body or his mind, is nothing but a highly developed animal.

A careful examination of Darwinism shows that these are the necessary presuppositions, or, if you will, the inevitable consequences of that theory. To accept that theory is to repudiate the Christian view of the world. The truth of the above propositions is utterly incompatible, not only with any religious views, but with our civil and social principles as well.

The most patent facts of man's moral life, however, cannot be explained on any such hypothesis, and the logic of events has already shown that Darwinism could never have won general acceptance but for the incautious enthusiasm of youth which intoxicated the minds of the rising generation of naturalists and incapacitated them for the exercise of sober judgment. To show that there is among contemporary men of science a healthy reaction against Darwinism is the object of this treatise.

The reader may now ask, What, then, is your idea of evolution? It certainly is easier to criticise than to do constructive work. An honest study of nature, however, inevitably leads us to the conclusion that the final solution of the problem is still far distant. Many a stone has already been quarried for the future edifice of evolution by unwearied research during the last four decades. But in opposition to Darwinism it may, at the present time, be confidently asserted that any future doctrine of evolution will have to be constructed on the following basic principles:

- (1) All evolution is characterized by finality; it proceeds according to a definite plan, and tends to a definite end.
- (2) Chance and disorder find no place in Nature; every stage of the evolutionary process is the result of law-controlled factors.
- (3) Egoism and struggle among living organisms are of very subordinate importance in comparison with cooperation and social action.

(4) The soul of man is an independent substance, and entirely unintelligible as a mere higher stage of development of animal instinct.

A theory of evolution, however, resting on these principles cannot dispense with a Creator and Conserver of the world and of life.