

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTE.

EVOLUTION AND THE FALL OF MAN.

[The writer of this communication has the remarkable merit of being a self-denying missionary most highly esteemed by his associates, and at the same time of having won from the most eminent scientific men in the world the highest encomiums for original work in certain scientific lines. For many years Dr. Gulick was a resident of the Sandwich Islands, during which he conducted a most important series of observations upon the direct effect of the conditions of life in modifying the forms of certain animal species. The results of these observations, and the inferences drawn from them, have been published in elaborate papers, read before the Linnean Society. The respect in which his views are held will be seen in the following note by George F. Romanes (who is generally acknowledged to be Darwin's natural successor) in the exposition of the theory of the origin of species by natural selection) introducing a communication of Dr. Gulick to *Nature*,¹ the leading scientific journal of England:—

"I cannot allow the present communication to appear in these columns, without again recording my conviction that the writer is the most profound of living thinkers upon Darwinian topics, and that the generalizations which have been reached by his twenty years of thought are of more importance to the theory of evolution than any that have been published during the post-Darwinian period."—EDS.]

If it should eventually appear that man ascended from lower animal life (which I suppose is still an open question), how are we to understand the story of the fall?—a fall into sin and death, instead of a gradual rise out of animalism, with many stumblings backward?

I think our chief difficulties on this question arise from two sources: In the first place, we have added a host of our own speculations to the Scripture account of Adam's disobedience; and, in the second place, we use words without any careful definition, and imagine we have found contradictions in the results of different lines of investigation, when in reality no such contradiction exists.

Let us first consider the latter point. May it not be true that, in one important sense, man has risen above all the other animals and above his original condition as man, and at the same time equally true that, in another important sense, he has fallen below the condition in which he commenced his career as man and below the condition of any animal? It seems to be true that man is the only animal that is capable of apprehending the nature

¹ April 10, 1890, p. 535.

of the ends for which he acts, and of choosing between rival ends according to their apprehended worth; but it seems to be equally true that he is the only species that defies not only the natural instincts, which support the authority of the laws established by evolution, but conscience, which is the higher instinct supporting the authority of the laws revealed by rational apprehension. I believe there is no dictate of nature or reason that is not dishonored by some community of men. We have examples of this in the habits of cannibalism, that enslave so many of the lowest savage communities, and in those of infanticide, that undermine so many of the highest communities. As it seems very improbable that either of these practices exists amongst any of the anthropoid apes, it seems very doubtful whether we can attribute their hold on many communities of men to the remains of brute instincts that have not yet been eliminated. This class of facts furnishes, I think, strong proofs of a fall of some kind.

There is another class of facts that seems to throw still further light on the subject. It seems to be true that some, if not all, of the very worst fiends that prey upon their fellow-men, are reared in the midst of the most civilized communities. A certain portion of the criminal classes of civilized countries may be accounted for as reversions of type, by which the traits of savage ancestry are transmitted to certain individuals and families while the majority of the community inherit traits that have been evolved under a social environment of more recent origin, and another portion may be shown to be endowed with distorted and unsymmetrical brains; but the worst enemies of society are not these heirs of deficient organizations, but those who, endowed with the finest gifts, use these powers for the destruction of society. Their one pursuit is to aggrandize themselves by fair means or foul. While they remain in the civilized countries that produced them, they often have the prudence to maintain the appearance of law-abiding citizens, but in Africa and the South Sea Islands, where punishment is not likely to be the result, they throw off disguise and become pirates and slave hunters. The general fact under which these examples fall, may perhaps be expressed in the proposition, that human character before it has been established in virtue is in danger of a fall, the depth of which is measured by the height of the privilege and opportunity from which it falls. The establishing of character in virtue is the end sought by moral and religious training. This universal liability to incur ruin of character, and this universal necessity of having one's character established in the endeavor to attain one's own highest ideals, are the most constant elements of human experience in all the races of man. We may object to the philosophy under which these facts have been presented, but if we ignore the facts we are neither philosophical nor scientific.

This brings me back to the point that, to the Scripture account of Adam's disobedience, the doctrine of the fall, as usually stated, has added a large proportion of philosophic speculations. All that is told us of "the state of Edenic purity, innocence, and divine communion" in which Adam

lived before he fell, is an account of God's command to him concerning the fruits of the garden, and of His bringing to him first the beasts of the field to name, and then the woman to be his wife, to which is added the statement that "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." There is, however, an implication that if he continues obedient he shall escape many sorrows, for the warning is, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And after he has sinned he was told, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; . . . till thou return unto the ground." Now the only apparent discrepancy between this account and the theory of evolution seems to me to relate to the creation of woman, and I do not know as that difficulty is any greater than the one that at first sight seems to attach to the creation of man. In either case it seems to me to be a forcing of the passages to insist that they are opposed to the theory of creation by descent. As the central truth in the account of man's creation is that, though he is made of the dust of the earth and is therefore part of nature, he has a soul unlike that of the animals; so in the account of woman's creation she is put in direct contrast with the beasts of the field, none of whom were suitable companions for man; for she alone is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, the complete counterpart of man in every respect, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." This is quite at variance with the theories of married life that have prevailed in countries where women are the slaves of the men and are thought to have no rights in this life, and no prospects of anything better in the life to come, if indeed they have any share in life beyond the grave; but is it opposed to the theory of evolution?

Turning to the account of the Edenic period, evolutionary science not only brings no reason to doubt that primitive man was in a state of nakedness without shame, eating of fruits that required no cultivation, but it presents many good reasons for believing that this was their condition, and that the conditions of climate which allowed of such a life without houses or clothing once extended over the northern-temperate Zone, while subsequent changes of climate brought a curse upon the same lands, requiring painful cultivation of the soil in order to gain subsistence.

What the condition of man would have been if he had always lived according to his highest knowledge, neither the Bible nor science do more than dimly hint, and there is no sufficient ground for saying that they disagree. If man always had treated woman with kindness, and had cultivated justice and peace instead of war, who can tell what joys might have filled the place of the woes that have fallen on all the nations?

I am not able to discover that the Bible teaches that, if man had not become sinful, his body would never have grown old or decayed. Paul says that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). Adam was told, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But when judgment was pronounced on him, we find the punishment was ex-

clusion from the happy life of Eden, and spending all his days in sorrow "till thou return unto the ground." The death was the misery and separation from God. So in Romans, fifth chapter, we are apt to think that Paul means to teach that the death of the body is due to Adam's disobedience; but, if this is what he refers to as death, then the eternal life, which he says comes by Christ, must be freedom from the death of the body. That neither of these meanings is the correct interpretation becomes more and more apparent as we follow Paul's argument into the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Romans. See, for example, Rom. vii. 24, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The fifth chapter of Romans should also be read in connection with the fifteenth of First Corinthians. We there see that Adam is the natural man, the natural life which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, while the second Adam is the spiritual life, the divine life realized in and through Christ.

It is with reference to the establishing of character in virtue that Paul finds only death in the Adamic life, and life eternal in the Christ life. The eternal life which we receive through Christ is, however, to be finally embodied, not in flesh and blood, but in a spiritual body. The nature of this spiritual resurrection body it is of course not given to us to understand, but Paul says that it will be like unto the glorious body in which Christ has been embodied since his resurrection (Phil. iii. 21).

There is one further difficulty in Paul's picture of the fall. How is it that he can say "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19)? I think this is the same idea as that in the twelfth verse of the same chapter, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." My interpretation of these passages is somewhat as follows: Adam's disobedience has introduced an environment that tends to drag down his descendants, just as Christ has introduced a spiritual environment that brings new possibilities and new motives; but there is a still deeper meaning, for by our natural birth, which is from Adam, we receive a nature that is in its primal instincts guided by self-seeking motives, but by the new birth our spiritual nature is quickened, and the motives that centre in God gain the ascendancy. The first birth leaves man subject to selfishness, which is sin, and sin necessarily separates from God, and therefore involves death.

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ARTICLE IX.

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

STUDIES IN ETHICS AND RELIGION; or, Discourses, Essays, and Reviews pertaining to Theism, Inspiration, Christian Ethics, and Education for the Ministry. By Alvah Hovey, D. D., LL. D., President of Newton Theological Institution. New York, Boston, and Chicago: Silver, Burdett and Company. 1892. (Pp. viii, 573. 6¾x3½.) \$2.00.

Dr. Hovey's long connection with Newton Theological Seminary, where he has been a teacher since 1849, gives special interest to this volume, as an index of the views which have been imparted to more than forty classes of theological students, the most of whom are still actively at work in the ministry. Both his pupils and the general public will be glad, also, of the liberty which the publishers have taken to insert an excellent portrait of the author.

Nearly half of this volume is devoted to the subjects of theism and inspiration. The part relating to inspiration is a complete treatise in itself. Upon the subject of theism, Dr. Hovey defends the ordinary view of God's creative activity, over against the exaggeration of the doctrine of divine immanence as presented by Lotze and Schurman. His view rejects "deism on the one hand and pantheism on the other; but asserts a constant relation of God to every part of nature, and of every part of nature to God. In particular, it asserts the dependence of nature upon God for the continuance as well as for the origin of its powers" (p. 53). Professor Schurman is thought to go so far in emphasizing the immanence of God as to make his philosophy pantheistic. Especially does this appear in his views upon sin, which he defines as selfishness, or self-isolation; but at the same time regards as an essential preliminary condition of communion with God. To use Schurman's own words, "Without self-absorption there could be no sense of union with God. For consciousness is possible only through opposition. To know A, we must know it through not-A. Alienation from God is the necessary condition of communion with God" (p. 47). To this philosophy Dr. Hovey justly objects, that it surrenders the whole ground to the pantheist. The consciousness of sin, which involves that of the independent action of the human will, raises an inseparable barrier between pantheism and Christian theism. President Schurman's system founders upon this rock. He endeavors by subtlety of thought to bridge over a mystery which cannot be spanned by the human understanding. In a finite being the power of sinning is a prerogative bestowed upon man by absolute creation, and it brings intuitively to light the separation which exists between God and one part, at least, of his