

# The Bible Student.

CONTINUING

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**Creation versus Evolution.** "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." That is the first article of the baptismal creed of Western Christendom. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That is the first sentence in the Christian revelation. That God alone is the first and the last, who changes not; that all that exists in the work of His hands, and depends on His power for its existence and its continuance in being alike: this is the unvarying teaching of the whole Bible. It is part of the very essence of Christianity therefore that the explanation of the universe is found in God; and its fundamental word is accordingly "creation." Over against the Christian conception there has arisen in our day, however, a movement which has undertaken to explain the world and all that it contains without God,—without any reference to any unseen, supernatural, spiritual element. The watchword of this movement is "evolution." And its confession of faith runs: "I believe in an eternal flux, and the production of all things out of their precedent conditions, through the natural interworking of the forces intrinsic to the changing material."

**Pfleiderer's Evolutionary Scheme.**

Perhaps we may find as good a presentation of this evolutionary program as can easily be turned up, in OTTO PFLEIDERER'S discussion of "Evolution and Theology," which holds the first place in the volume of essays lately published by him under that title. The era of "scientific theology" is at last come, he tells us. And he explains "scientific theology" to mean a theology that has adopted "the scientific method." "This method," he proceeds, "is simply that of causal thinking, according to which every event is the necessary effect of causes whose operation is again determined by their connection with other causes, or by their place in a reciprocal action of forces according to law." Thus everything that comes into being, "is to be regarded as the effect of the causes lying in the preceding condition, these causes again serving as means for the purpose of the following condition." On the universality of the application of this principle he insists with the utmost emphasis. "There is only the one choice: either the evolutionary mode of thought is right, in which case it must be uniform in all fields of investigation, in history, then, as well in nature; or it

men. Perhaps archaeological discoveries may throw light upon it. In any case there is no reason for doubting its historical truthfulness.

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## THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS.

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As the subject of this paper sounds almost like a paradox, it will not be amiss to carefully define the meaning of the term gospel in the present discussion. Gospel, the Anglo-Saxon God-spell or God's story, is the English rendering of the well-known Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον*, which has a variety of meanings in the New Testament. The thoughtful reader has no doubt often noticed that this term is used even in common speech with various significations that really differ greatly. Hence, in order to avoid confusion and obscurity, it is necessary to arrive at an understanding in regard to its use in this article. It is quite evident that it would be folly to commence a search for the gospel in the opening book of the Old Testament without attaching a definite meaning to this term.

In many passages of the New Testament gospel connotes the glad tidings either of the Kingdom of God or of the Messiah who was to found it (Mk. i. 15, viii. 35, x. 29, xiii. 10, xiv. 9, xvi. 15; Mt. iv. 23, xxvi. 13). After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the word took on new meaning. It was no longer a message concerning a kingdom that was to be founded. The risen and glorified Lord became the central theme of the glad tidings. His death, his resurrection and his work in heaven were emphasized. The salvation from sin which he had made possible for all men, and all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, who was sent by this Saviour, became the chief theme of the glad tidings as they were proclaimed by the apostles. To sum it up in a very few words, the gospel is "the glad tidings of salvation through Christ." It was in this sense, capable of indefinite expansion, that Paul used it, when he triumphantly declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel, because it was the power of God unto salvation. It is with this expanded and richer signification,

which it assumed after Christ's death and resurrection, that the word is used in this paper.\*

In what manner and to what extent are these glad tidings of salvation through a personal Saviour and all the resultant spiritual blessings to be found in the opening book of the Old Testament? Before attempting to answer this question, a word as to the method and the spirit, in which the inquiry is to be prosecuted, will not be out of place. It should be answered according to the rules and in the spirit of Biblical Theology, the queen of theological science. Consequently the method of our study may be termed historical, or perhaps still better genetic. The gospel truths are to be studied at their birth, and their unfolding and development in history are to be watched. This method of study is especially applicable to the book of Genesis, which contains God's earliest written revelation to mankind. Another science will indicate the importance and suggestiveness of this form of Biblical study. As child-psychology has revolutionized methods and thrown a flood of light on many dark questions in mental science, so this method will make the pages of the old and familiar book shine with the lustre of new meaning, because it recognizes the principle of growth and advancement. Furthermore, it realizes that development is not only an evolution but also an involution. As constituent elements are obscured or lost sight of in the product, and in order to recover them the mind of the child must be studied, so the components of many specifically gospel truths may be seen in all their simplicity by the application of this method to the book of Genesis. The writer thus strongly emphasizes the necessity for the use of the historical imagination in answering the question propounded above, because he has learned by experience in teaching that the majority of theological students at least either do not possess it or have never cultivated it.

In Genesis the simple elements of the gospel may be seen as they were first given to primitive man. The germs and foundations of many New Testament truths are to be found in nearly every section of the book, but the limits of this paper will permit the treatment of only a few important passages to illustrate the possi-

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\*In ecclesiastical terminology as well as in common speech, gospel is the term frequently applied to written narratives concerning Jesus Christ. It may be well to state that this meaning is wholly excluded from this discussion.

bilities of the historical method. A very familiar passage runs, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," Gen. i. 26. The meaning of this well known and oft quoted verse is evident, but all its implications are not quite so apparent. Man is an image of God, and the likeness which exists between the Creator and the highest product of his creative power is asserted in very simple language. As in the English, so also in the Hebrew, two different words are used to express this similitude. Image is the translation of the Hebrew word *zelem*, which comes from a root meaning "to cut" and hence is commonly used in the Old Testament of figures that have been carved out of wood or stone. Consequently this word clearly implies that man is a representation of an original which is none other than God himself. The term likeness is the rendering of the Hebrew *demuth*.

The Church Fathers exercised their ingenuity in trying to discover a difference in meaning between those two words. They thought that the first referred either to physical characteristics or innate faculties, while the latter denoted the spiritual traits which might be acquired. No fair exegesis of the Hebrew words can make this distinction between the two. If there is any real distinction, the second word may be said to have a more abstract meaning than the first.

This verse distinctly teaches that the nature and constitution of man was created divine and godlike. What distinguished and still distinguishes man from the inferior creatures is his similarity to God. Like his Maker, he is a person not only endowed with sensibilities and will, but blessed with reason and faculties capable of making moral distinctions. Not only is his nature but also his activity a reproduction of that of God in so far as it is not tainted with sin and evil. It is quite natural for us to ask whether this similitude includes man's physical as well as his spiritual nature. To answer this question in the affirmative, it is not necessary to make any artificial distinction between the two words referring one to the higher and the other to the lower nature of man. Man's body is in some sense godlike; if it were not, it would be difficult to understand how it could be an adequate instrument for expressing the thoughts, wishes and feelings of a soul that had been created in the divine image.

The careful explanation of this passage is justified by its funda-

mental character. It is the seed-plot of many distinctively gospel truths. In the fulness of time the Son of God was made in the likeness of man and was formed in fashion as a man. Wherein lies the possibility of the great miracle of the Incarnation? Its foundation is to be sought in the opening chapter of Genesis. God and man resemble one another in their natures, the latter is the similitude of the former. The divine Son of God could not have taken up his dwelling in man, if the latter were not capable of giving expression to divine feelings and godlike thoughts.

A fundamental thought in Christ's addresses to his disciples and the assembled throngs was the fatherhood of God and the correlated truth the divine sonship of man. He taught his disciples to pray "Our Father;" he spoke of Him as "Your Father" in addressing the crowds of eager hearers. Paul speaks of the adoption of the believer into the family of this divine Father. Now a child of one family may be adopted by another, but it is not possible to extend this privilege to animals. Similarity in nature is the condition of sonship and adoption. That man's nature furnishes the necessary prerequisite for the granting of this priceless boon is clearly indicated in the Biblical account of man's origin.

Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of believers; Paul regarded the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and to him this view of man's physical nature was a mighty uplifting moral force. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity could not abide in a human body and exert a real influence on the soul of man, if both had not been created in the similitude of God. Much less could man bring forth the fruits of the Spirit without the powers and faculties capable of receiving and expressing divine feelings and thoughts. This passage of Genesis opens up the future of man and throws light upon his destiny. It makes possible obedience to the command: Be ye holy as I am holy; it makes attainable the intimate communion and fellowship between God and man, which, although begun on earth, is fully realized only in Heaven. One cannot speak of fellowship between the animals and man, for the necessary condition, namely, similarity in nature, is not present. Likewise man's communion with God would be an impossibility, if it were not that He had created mankind in his own image and after his own likeness.

It may be objected that the writer is reading a large portion of

Christian theology into a part of a verse of Genesis. The raiser of such an objection fails to catch the meaning which is intended. It is not maintained that these doctrines are taught either explicitly or implicitly in this verse, but it is asserted that the truth set forth therein is fundamental and makes these possible. A child learns that fire burns, that sugar is sweet, through experience and the process of induction. And yet it does not have the slightest idea of the laws of scientific induction. Its mind is so constituted that it will follow this method when occasion demands, provided that it receives the necessary training. As the inner constitution or nature of the mind makes the inductive sciences possible, so this divine image in man is the *sine qua non* of Biblical revelation.

The well-known *protevangelium* is another passage, in which are wrapt up the future destinies of the human race, just as the mighty oak is wrapped up in the tiny acorn. It begins with a curse and ends with a promise. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is necessary to take a broad view of this passage in order to catch its full significance. The serpent represents not merely the animals of that species, but stands for the powers of evil, personal and impersonal, whether found in the lower animals, man, or the fallen angels. The seed is not to be limited to the individual Messiah, as it was in the early church by such men as Irenaeus and Cyprian. It was that prince of exegetes, Calvin, who recognized the generic idea in the word *seed* and the pronoun referring to it. This view does not deny that the deadly conflict would culminate in an individual, who would crush the powers of evil once for all, but it has the advantage of broadening the scope and application of the passage.

According to this curse and promise, there is to be a continual conflict between mankind and the powers of evil which beset him on every hand. The hopelessness of that struggle for a large part of the seed of the woman is not indicated here. Experience and history alone can prove this. The promise emphasizes the result which is certain and sure; the powers of evil will certainly be

overcome and crushed. What hope, comfort and strength this promise of God must have instilled into the hearts of devout men and women as they struggled against sin, since the time when Eden was lost until the complete fulfilment of the prophecy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

These words have been aptly termed the *protevangelium* and the *Magna Charta* of the human race. They sum up the entire moral and spiritual history of mankind. No one can look back upon the development and growth of the human race without realizing the continual and increasing war that has been waged by man against his evil enemies. No one can study the gradual revelation of God's plan of salvation, without seeing that it is summed up in this passage.

This curse and promise are the key that unlocks the mystery of the Saviour's passion, who was the seed of the woman in a peculiar sense of the term. The redemption and salvation of man through man is the one increasing purpose of God that runs through all the ages. This goal was reached in the Incarnate Saviour, who was the seed of the woman as no other man ever had been or ever will be.

This verse may be regarded as the text of Genesis and in fact of the entire Old Testament, which traces the gradual fulfilment of the promise, while it emphasizes the reality of the curse. In the blessing of Noah (Gen. ix. 25-27), it is clearly indicated that the descendants of Shem would be the medium through which Jehovah, the God of revelation, would reveal himself to humanity. Again, God finds it necessary to narrow the limits of that *seed*, and Abraham with his family are chosen. It is in him and his descendants that the human race is to be blessed, Gen. xii. 1-3, xiii. 14-18, xvii. 1-8, xviii. 17-19, xxii. 15-18, etc. In the blessing of Jacob,\* Gen. xlix. 8-12, Judah is pointed out as the leader. He is to be pre-eminent not only among the tribes, but all nations are to acknowledge his sceptre. Once more the source of the blessing promised in the *protevangelium* has been narrowed down to one of the tribes of Israel. Thus at this very early stage in the history of the human race God clearly indicated the channels through which the blessings promised in the *protevangelium* would flow to mankind.

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\*It is but fair to state that the meaning of this passage is somewhat uncertain.

These passages have from time immemorial been known in the church as distinctly Messianic, but the gospel in Genesis is not limited to them. The narratives concerning the Patriarchs and their families are full of gospel-truth. The scholars who regard them as mythological figures and do away with their real historicity destroy to our mind one of the most instructive and valuable portions of the Old Testament. Two of the sublimest examples of faith, simple and childlike, yet immovable as the granite rocks, are found in this book; one is Abraham, the other is Joseph. Faith as a doctrine or an abstract principle may be difficult to grasp, but incarnate in character it appeals strongly to all men.

One of the most remarkable passages in Genesis is that found in xv. 6, which runs, "And he believed in Jehovah; and he counted it to him for righteousness." This verse was an important factor in moulding the thought of the Apostle Paul (Rom. iv. 3, 5, 6, 9, 22; Gal. iii. 6). One of the principal elements of the doctrine of justification by faith is concretely set forth. Jehovah makes a definite promise to Abraham in regard to his posterity, and the father of the faithful believes this promise. This faith is reckoned as righteousness. Here we have the important element of justification, the instrument of means. This parallel between Abraham's case and that of the Christian is very evident. The instrument of salvation in both cases is the same. The only difference between the two is not essential, a matter of form rather than principle. With the former faith was reckoned as righteousness, with the latter faith secures the imputation of the righteousness of the Incarnate Saviour. There are only two kinds of religion, one of works and the other of grace; and the foundation of the latter is found in this verse. Abraham may not inaptly be termed the Luther of the Hebrew race.

Faith is not only the fundamental doctrine of the religion of grace but it is the basis of a true and practical philosophy of life, and as such it is found incarnate in the Hebrew slave who became prime minister of Pharaoh's realm. Joseph, as he faithfully performed his humble duties, whether in the prison or in Potiphar's house, certainly had no hope of earthly appreciation or advancement, but his faithfulness must have had as its sure foundation a sublime faith in God's providence. It was this principle moulding his character which eventually made him Pharaoh's equal.

And what shall we say more? for time will fail if we tell of love, patience, unselfishness and goodness, the great fruits of the Blessed Spirit, that were manifested in these lives. This paper is far from being exhaustive; it suggests a method of study and illustrates its application. If the student will follow the principles of Biblical Theology through the book of Genesis the writer is confident that he will find an inexhaustible mine of gospel truth.

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### THE FALL AND MODERN THOUGHT.

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By modern thought, as the phrase is used in this paper, is meant the new method of looking at and dealing with the Old Testament Biblical problems and materials—especially those of the Pentateuch—brought into vogue, in this country and Great Britain, during the last half of the nineteenth century. The method was born of the modern hypothesis of evolution, and is the application of that hypothesis to Bible facts and history.

As a matter of course, the new method has been applied to the Biblical account of the Fall as recorded in Genesis. Dr. Lyman Abbott, who is not to be held to any logical or theological consistency of view on this subject, in answering the question, "What is the nature and origin of sin?" in his book entitled "The Theology of an Evolutionist," sets forth with sufficient definiteness for our purposes the two answers, in sharp contrast:

"To this question there are two answers—the theological and the evolutionary. The theological is that God created man perfect, that man fell by voluntary transgression of the law which God imposed upon him, and that in consequence of that fall sin entered into the world and poisoned the entire race."

He should have called it the *historical* answer. The evolutionary answer, as summarized from his statement, is as follows:

"Man is an animal and has ascended from a lower animal; but he is something immeasurably more than an animal. How did he get *this something more?* Answers to this question have been formulated in creationism, traducianism, evolutionism, and conditional immortality."

Dr. Abbott adopts evolutionism, at least in modified form: