

Book, except the last, ends with a kind of doxology, which probably was sung at the end of each Psalm in that Book, as we sing the *Gloria* at the end of every Psalm. The fifth Book does not end with a doxology, because the last Psalm is a doxology from beginning to end.

The punctuation of the Revised Version of the Psalter differs from that in our Prayer-Books. The title-page of the Prayer-Book says: "The Psalter or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches." This pointing, or punctuation, is not merely grammatical, but musical also, the first half of each verse being separated from the second half by a colon, not according to the sense, but in that place where the first half of the chant ends. The punctuation in the Revised Bible Psalter marks the parallelism of the Hebrew poetry, but takes no notice of musical arrangements. "Great care," say the Revisers in their Preface, "has been bestowed on the punctuation." This was necessary, for punctuation is expression, and a false punctuation may give a wrong impression. The Revisers' task included the weighing of every comma and colon, and the more critically their work is examined, the greater is our admiration for the printers of it.



## Whence and Whither?

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THE question of man's origin has been much discussed. The evolution theory teaches that, descended from the lower animals and connected by blood not merely with the ape but with the *amæba*, man only very gradually rose to the comparative dignity of a savage, resembling, though far lower than, the most bestial of modern barbarians. Through a process of æonian duration alone has he attained his present position in the world, as "heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time." Hence it is asserted that self-consciousness, the

idea of responsibility for his actions, conscience, the recognition of moral distinctions, the institution of marriage, and everything else that distinguishes man from brute, was very slowly evolved in man, and did not originally exist in him. Accordingly, from the ideas and practices of savages alone can we learn, it is said, what primitive man thought and did. Religion itself has thus been developed from ghost-worship, corpse-worship, fetishism, or even—as some still argue—from magic, until it has culminated in Christianity.

Now, it must be admitted that the evolutionary theory has a charm of its own, all the more so because of its attempt to solve the problem of the origin of evil. Sin would thus be esteemed of little importance, for all sinful actions would be “merely” relapses to man’s “natural,” or original bestial or savage, state. Criminals would be accordingly “reversions to type.” But plausible as this may seem, it absolutely fails to stand examination. The “reversion to type” theory does not quite account for the forger, the drunkard, the grog-seller, the slave-driver. These can hardly be said to exist among the lowest savages. Nor can descent from the mere animal world explain the existence of unnatural vices, avarice, lying, blasphemy, slander, opium-smoking, and the ghastly murder of unborn children by their own mothers. These things do not exist among the brutes. With certain other sins a highly developed intellect is necessarily associated, and a corrupt civilization is required for their scene of action. Nor is there any evidence that man’s original state was that of the savages—of such savages, for instance, as those of Australia. Savagery tends to destroy the race, not to improve it. A well-known fact of anthropology is that, when a tribe has sunk below a certain level, all attempts to preserve it from extinction fail. If the savage state were man’s natural and original condition, he ought to flourish in it more than in any other.

Again, if we assume that the lowest modern type of savage best represents early man, we are met by the difficulty that the modern savage lacks both the germs of civilization and power

to develop them. Yet early man must have possessed these, for progress *has* been made, and civilization has arisen more than once. As Professor William M. Ramsay says :<sup>1</sup> "The primitive savage who develops naturally . . . into the wisdom of Sophocles and Socrates, or who transforms his fetish, in the course of many generations, through the Elohistic stage into the Jehovah of the Hebrews, is unknown to me. . . . I cannot invent for myself a primitive savage of such marvellous potentialities, when I find that the modern savage is devoid of any potentiality." As for the gradual evolution of conscience and the distinction between good and evil, there is no doubt that the modern savage possesses them. Like most men, his ethical ideas are far in advance of his conduct. He even distinguishes his deities into good and evil, benevolent or malevolent, and often neglects the former and dreads the latter. It stands to reason, too, that the recognition of moral distinctions must have existed in man from the very earliest times, for, as Dr. Tylor says, "Without a code of morals, the very existence of the rudest tribe would be impossible."<sup>2</sup>

As for religion, whatever theory may be accepted as to its origin, it is clear that it could never have come into existence if man had not originally possessed an aptitude for conceiving spiritual ideas, for rising in thought above the material, just as there evidently could never have arisen among us a science of astronomy had men not possessed eyes to see with. Schleiermacher is right, therefore, in holding that religion in man is founded on a special and noble faculty—namely, religious feeling—which is the direction of the spirit towards the infinite and the eternal. This is another way of saying that man, as man, has a *sensus numinis*, which is as real and far more important than any other of his senses. In fact, we may say with Plato and other wise men of the past that this tendency to *worship* is that which, above everything else, distinguishes man from brute.

<sup>1</sup> "The Cities of St. Paul."

<sup>2</sup> "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 360.

This tends to enable us to estimate at its real worth the contention of some persons that man at his best will be entirely devoid of all religious belief, regarding religion as worthy only of the childhood of the human race. It is true that among some men who hold this view religion has sunk to the level of that of the fetish-worshipper; and they cherish as high and noble a faith in their "mascot" as he does, though hardly quite as logically. But anthropology shows that this is not an "advanced" state of mind. It betokens rather the atrophy of the higher spiritual nature through want of exercise. On the evolutionary theory it is "reversion to type," the type of the lowest savages.

Historically examined, religion always and everywhere, apart from revelation, shows a tendency to degeneration, and not to advance and improvement. Who can compare the religious conceptions of Ignatius Loyola with those of St. Paul? "The sublimer portions of the Egyptian religion," says Renouf, "are not the comparatively late result of a process of development. The sublimer portions are demonstrably ancient, and the last stage of the Egyptian religion was by far the grossest and most corrupt." So modern Hinduism, too, has sunk infinitely below the religion of the Rig-Veda; modern Buddhism is far inferior to the philosophy of Gautama. Hence it seems clear that, though the earliest men were clad in skins,<sup>1</sup> did not know the use of metals,<sup>2</sup> and had no modern luxuries, they were not savages, nor was their religion as low and degraded as that of their fashionably-dressed, mascot-cherishing descendants. In matters of religion there have been so many falls in historical times that it is not unreasonable to believe that one occurred in the case of the parents of the human species.

But whether we admit this or not, and whatever view we take of the origin of man, whether the evolutionary or any other, it is clear to the lowest intellect that man as he at present exists—whether considered as a fallen being or as one who has made great progress from a lower state of existence—is by no

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gen. iv. 22.

means perfect. Euripides and Æschylus agree with Buddha and Confucius on this point. No reasonable being can fancy that man—*σκιᾶς ὄντα ἀνθρώπου*—is now at best what he should be. However he came by them, he now normally possesses a conscience, a moral code, a universally diffused belief in some superior power or powers, in an after-life, in future rewards and punishments. If these are *developments*, it is evident that they have been developed in accordance with a Divine purpose, just as is the case with the growth of a tree or that of man's individual body or mind. As this is so, man is responsible for the use which he makes of his acquired or developed sense of responsibility, his conscience, his intellect, his religious convictions. If these faculties are not used aright, if they are not healthily exercised, they decay and perish, or, at least, are greatly enfeebled, as is the case with a limb or with any one of the five senses under like circumstances. To say that because the moral powers have, *ex hypostasi*, been acquired through development, therefore we are justified in dispensing with them and "reverting to type," is as reasonable as it would be to assert that because, without any hypothesis, we were once babies, and rather proud of being able to crawl, it is quite the proper thing for us to do so now, or to suck our thumbs, or to cry for the moon.

We must on any theory guard against the danger and not minimize the guilt of "reverting to type," if we use this *petitio principii* term in place of "sin." Such a "reversion" means at least this—that the individual guilty of it has fallen out of line, and is opposing that progress upon which the very existence of the race depends. It also implies that he has set himself in opposition to the eternal purpose, whatever it be, for which man as a race has been called into being. This is clear even on the evolutionary hypothesis, apart from revelation.

Hence, whatever be the facts about our origin, the duty of living up to our conscience and obeying the inborn moral law is not thereby affected. Our consciousness of guilt when this law is transgressed cannot be explained away, nor can our con-

sciousness of the existence of God and our *need* of Him. These and certain other basal facts in our nature may be denied, may be resisted, but they cannot be overthrown. We must face the facts and try to adapt our conduct to them, otherwise the result will be bad—not for the facts, but for ourselves. Just as one is crushed when he rashly defies the physical laws of the Cosmos, so must he be if he comes into collision with the moral laws of the universe. On the other hand, as by co-operating with physical laws man may advance in material civilization, so also, by becoming a fellow-worker “together with God” in the moral and spiritual sphere, he may make moral and spiritual progress. By this means he will be developing his higher nature in the manner in which both reason and religion teach that it is intended to be developed, not only with a view to harmonizing it with God’s will here, but also with that of preparing it for entrance into the higher state, which instinct as well as revelation informs us awaits man after death—unless perchance he unfits himself for it by here degrading and perhaps destroying, if that be possible, his higher faculties.

The existence of the moral and spiritual faculties in man, and their development and improvement in the best of men, are an indication, a foreshadowing, of a higher state than the present, one in which these faculties will have a wider scope for exercise—just as the faint budding of a tree in early spring is a prophecy of the glory of its summer.

In all things experience shows us that it is impossible to stand still. Progress there must be, or retrogression : and retrogression means decay and death. If, whether with or without revelation, man has here made any moral or spiritual progress, this progress must be continued here and hereafter, or all must end in ruin. There can be no question that the sin and misery of the world are out of harmony with the Divine Will. These must be overcome and finally abolished, if that Eternal Purpose<sup>1</sup> is to attain realization. Apart from revelation, it is hard to see how this is to be done ; but our experience teaches us that, as

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iii. 11.

Augustine<sup>1</sup> says, "Of our vices we make ourselves a ladder, if we tread the vices themselves underfoot." History shows that only through Christ, only through the power of the Holy Spirit, has this ever been done. Hence it is that in this twentieth century earnest and thoughtful men, who see how in all ages everything else has failed to raise men morally and to satisfy their spiritual yearnings, and how faith in Christ has produced the desired result in countless instances, are coming more and more to realize that, in the political and social as well as in the religious world, the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.

Revelation alone makes clear the goal towards which the race is, or should be, tending. A recent writer<sup>2</sup> well says: "Man's work in life is to turn himself from the raw product into a piece of fine art. The Nikê of Samothrace in the natural state is but a lump of clay." This is true. But how much clearer and fuller is the teaching of St. Paul—that God's purpose for each member of the human race is he should attain, if he will, "unto<sup>3</sup> a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." A higher ideal, a nobler model, a loftier aim, is unthinkable; and this, being the highest conceivable, is thereby proved to be the truest too.



### The Temptation.

INTO the wilderness  
 Driven was He,  
 Into the Tempter's realm  
 Driven for me;  
 Filled with the Holy Ghost,  
 Hailed by John's pilgrim host,  
 Acclaimed by Heaven,  
 Yet into Satan's lair  
 Forth was He driven!

<sup>1</sup> Sermo iii., *De Ascensione.*

<sup>2</sup> R. Whiteing, "No. 5, John Street," Epilogue.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iv. 13.