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"Professing Themselves to Be Wise, They Became Fools." Rom. 1, 22

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blutes. Jesus ehrte er hoch; Erlöser war er ihm nicht. Unter den Neuprotestanten galt sein Urtheil wie ein *Roma locuta*, während die Kirche ihm ablehnend gegenüberstand. Man erinnert sich noch des Sturmes, den einst sein Votum über das „von der Jungfrau Maria geboren“ hervorrief, als er vor Studenten erklärte, daß dieser Satz kein Recht im christlichen Glaubensbekenntnis habe. Noch andere Stürme riefen andere modernistische, ja radikale Äußerungen hervor. Dennoch gab er sich keiner Partei hin und scheute sich nicht, öffentlich auch Revision früherer Behauptungen vorzunehmen, wenn seine wissenschaftliche Überzeugung es verlangte. Lange Zeit nannte er das Johanneisevangelium unecht, eine theologische Erfindung eines Späteren; später bekennet er, daß, wenn ein Evangelium von einem Augenzeugen Jesu herrühre, sei es dies Evangelium; nur den Jünger Jesu als Verfasser lehnte er nach wie vor ab. Ebenso gab er seine kritische Haltung zu den Schriften des Lukas auf, deren Echtheit er später mit Entschiedenheit vertrat. Seine Schüler folgten ihm begeistert in der Negation; an seiner Position gingen sie vorüber und entzogen ihm ihr Vertrauen, so daß er mit den Jahren nicht mehr so im Mittelpunkt der allgemeinen Verehrung stand. Harnacks eigene religiöse Stellung wurde durch solche Wandlungen nicht beeinflusst. Als ihm Luthardt einmal bei einer besonderen Gelegenheit andeutete, daß er den Weg zur Theologie seines Vaters zurückzufinden scheine, antwortete Harnack freundlich, aber bestimmt, er habe sich nicht geändert. Er blieb der selbständige, aufrichtige, ehrliche Mann und vertrat unbekümmert seinen Standpunkt, was auch die Menschen sagen mochten. So machte er auch von seiner Wendung vom Monarchisten zum Republikaner kein Geheim, obwohl er wissen mußte, wie viele er sich damit entfremdete. Seine letzte aufsehenerregende Schrift war die über Marcion, dessen Verwerfung des Alten Testaments er billigte und rühmte, bis zu dem Urtheil, daß die Kirche sich selbst in Schaden brachte, weil sie Marcion nicht nachfolgte.“

Unser Urtheil fassen wir dahin zusammen: In Harnack trat uns die Feindschaft des natürlichen Menschen gegen das Evangelium vom gekreuzigten Christus in potenziertter Form entgegen, und zwar unter Mißbrauch der Heiligen Schrift und unter Mißbrauch des Wortes „Wissenschaft“. Was uns sonst noch aus „positiven“ Kreisen über Harnack vorliegt, möchten wir erst noch nachprüfen, ehe wir es weitergeben.

F. P.

“Professing Themselves to Be Wise, They Became Fools.” Rom. 1, 22.

The writer has been very forcefully reminded of this word of St. Paul by two articles which have recently appeared in two prominent and widely read journals, one in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, the other in the *Literary Digest* of January 25. The former

of the two articles is entitled "The Antireligious Front," by William L. Sullivan, and its purpose is to ridicule the antireligious vagaries of ungodly men who are "wise in their own conceits." Two sections of this article particularly appeal to me, and will, I think, appeal to others, as masterly presentations of the folly of learned unbelievers. To quote:—

"Three men, we are reminded, have reduced us to our proper insignificance and put an end to our primitive dream that we are godlike or that there is any God for us to resemble. They are Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud. Copernicus began the revelation of the vastness of the universe and the consequent triviality of our poor molecule of a planet. Darwin showed man's ancestry reaching, not up to the stars and their glory, but down to the mud and its fermentation. And Freud has pushed our humiliation into the last pit by the knowledge that what we thought was the light of spirit is only the sickly gleam of funguses growing rank in the cellars of physiology."

The author then takes up the so-called "Copernican argument" from the vastness of the universe:—

"It runs as follows: There are from three to thirty billion suns. Our sun is of third-rate size among them. Our earth is a pathetic cinder, spinning round it. Ourselves are ephemera, clinging to the cinder with our ridiculous little heads thrust out into empty and prodigious space. With our whole solar system making up, let us say, one five-billionth part of the universe, how can we suppose that the mighty power behind it all is concerned with us? How can we pretend that this power is our Father? The notion of a Father-God arose because men thought that they and their planet formed the center of existence. How can it survive when we are reduced in the grand scheme to all but zero? And how can we homunculi presume to know anything of the Originator of the stupendous cosmos—if an Originator there is?

"The argument contains three propositions: first, that physical size is the determining factor in attracting God's attention, if there is a God, since the smaller a thing is, the less likely it is to interest Him; secondly, that men came to believe in God through a miscalculation in measurement—they imagined a Father-God because they fancied it was a kitchen universe—; and thirdly, that physical magnitude is a barrier to thought; the vast universe now known forbids us to form any conception of its ultimate source, if it has one. On all this let us briefly comment.

"To the first proposition: If God's lack of interest in us is because we are so little, then it must follow that He would take interest in us if we were enlarged. How large should we have to be before His interest began? If we were a hundred miles tall, should

we attract His attention? The answer, I gather, is: No, that is not enough. Ten thousand miles tall? We may probably expect another negative. But if we towered up to a stature equivalent to the orbit of Neptune, we might possibly enter upon significance for Deity. And if we stood so high that our hair was singed by Betelgeuse we might be admitted to the honor of audience with the Demiurge.

"Roaring nonsense? It is indeed, but it is the roaring nonsense of very solemn and learned men."

In another part of the article Mr. Sullivan pays his respect to the exponents of evolution by this delicious bit of raillery:—

"There are some students of color as a factor in evolution who hold that the flamingo got the pink tints of its plumage in this manner: The crocodiles which lived in the vicinity of flamingoes long ago, being short-sighted, fancied that the tinted birds standing in the shallow water were the rising or the setting sun and so let them alone. The hues which served so well became perpetuated; such flamingoes as were less fortunately colored were eaten; and we have the flamingo of to-day a living testimony to the value of resembling crepuscular dawn and afternoon. Is it all right to believe this? Certainly; it is eminently respectable. Still further, let us take man's beard and woman's beardlessness—a curious phenomenon, since both man and woman came from apes, and the female ape is quite as hairy as the male. It came to pass, sages say, because some of the earliest women were born with less hairy or possibly quite hairless faces. Instead of being crushed with shame as unaccountable freaks, these ancient dames discovered something amazing happening to them. The males round about fell violently in love with them. But this was not all. There was more of marvel and surprise. The males, once smitten by the smooth-faced ladies, refused to fall in love with the other kind. The bearded damsels, old as their lineage was, were ousted by the parvenus, could get no husbands, and died forlorn and childless. What began as a freak extirpated the original stock. On the other hand, such males as may have been beardless were shunned by the females and could get no wives. The women coveted whiskered, as earnestly as the men set their hearts on unwhiskered, spouses. And as a result of it, here, with such physiognomies as we have, we are!

"May a man believe this? With the utmost distinction of modernity, yes. But a man may not believe in God? Ah, no! That is too insecure a hypothesis! And we turn away feeling that it would be too rude to ask whether the billy-goat got his beard by the same discriminate selection of esthetic love.

"Perhaps we can tolerate one example more. Although we are informed that the argument on the existence of Deity is closed for intelligent people, and closed with a loud negative, persons worthy of that description may still carry on the debate over the cursorial

or arboreal origin of wings. It runs thus: Birds evolved from reptiles; and the ancestral reptile, one of the lizards probably, had to get wings, or a bird it could not be. How did it get them? The cursorial school maintains that for ages this family of lizards ran rapidly over the ground on their hind legs, flapping their fore legs as they went. After ages of this apparently insane procedure the fore legs changed their outer form and inner skeletal and muscular structure and became wings. No, say the arborealists, it was not so. What happened was that this lizard was not a runner, but a tree-climber and got into the habit of incessantly jumping from trees to the ground. As it jumped, it spread out its fore legs, which acquired, after countless years, first possibly a parachute form and later the wing form.

"We may indeed marvel at the perseverance of this tree-jumper in letting go his hold for a thousand centuries before he had acquired any device for easing his fall. The breakage must have been enormous and the casualties appalling. We may also wonder how it is that monkeys which have been jumping from trees for ages on end have developed thus far not a sign or rudiment of wings. But these solicitations of curiosity are beside the point. The point is that wise and solemn heads may dignify the cursorial-arboreal debate while hushed academies look on; whereas, if one should mention the divine as worth our study, we should hear from the antireligious front that it is a subject to which the scrupulous mind can no longer descend.

"Since, then, we see it permissible to cover creation with a fog of theory, fashionable to entertain conjectures which can never reach to even the lowest grade of knowledge, and praiseworthy to erect learned memorials to absurdity, but censurable to hold a conviction which the greatest minds have held and unnumbered generations have lived by, we cannot be blamed if we regard this whole business as confusing and incoherent. May we not even be pardoned for thinking that the claim to intellectual austerity is humbug? The men who make it seem to have a credulity and to show an intolerance as capacious as may be found in any of the less advanced souls who tremble before them. And so in the general method and intellectual climate of our monitors we end with disillusion and the sense of having been pompously fooled."

The article in the *Literary Digest* has the heading "Knocking the Ape Off Our Family-Tree" and, as the title intimates, also bears on the subject of evolution. It comments on the address of Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborne, retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, delivered at the recent annual meeting of that association in Des Moines, Iowa. Although his remarks have been copiously commented on by our press, it will not harm to quote some salient paragraphs. In his address he advanced the theory "that

man did not pass through a stage of tree-life, but emerged on the high plateaus of Central Asia, a free-running bipedal being," and he asserted "that his own studies, based upon those of others, indicate that man appeared upon the earth with the creation of the first great plateaus in Central Asia, perhaps 1,250,000,000 years ago, when the human stock separated from other animal stocks." He bases his assertion, we are told, on this, that "recent discoveries show that certain races of fossil man of the last 1,250,000 years had a brain cube equal to, or greater than, that of modern man," the conclusion being inevitable that "the main cubic evolution of the human brain took place during antecedent Tertiary time and not, as we formerly thought, during the Quaternary Age of Man, or the Glacial period." Other evidence, according to Dr. Osborne, "is the fact, now established, that even in the Upper Pliocene Age man was an extremely adept flint-worker, with deft hand and fingers, guided by an imaginative and intelligent forebrain, and that he was already a nomad and needed long and agile lower limbs as his only means of distant transportation." This, declares Dr. Osborne, forces us "to reconsider Darwin's concept of the primitive ape-man as inhabiting a 'warm, forest-clad land.'" The *Digest* says that Dr. Osborne did not hazard an opinion how and from what man evolved. But he declared that "both with Lamarck and Darwin the 'ape-man' descent was never more than a working hypothesis, based upon the closer approach of the anthropoid apes to man than that observed in any other group, for want of any positive data."—In commenting on the theory advanced by Dr. Osborne, a secular paper, the *Detroit Free Press*, is quoted as saying: "The difference between what is generally called the Darwinian theory of evolution and the hypothesis advanced by Dr. Osborne, seems to be a difference of detail rather than a clash over a fundamental. Whether man and the anthropoid apes diverged from a common ancestor 1,000,000 or 10,000,000 years ago, and whether that ancestor was itself apelike or something quite different, are questions of great interest; but nevertheless they are, relatively, points of secondary importance."

It is difficult for the ordinary "unscientific" man to follow these "learned" discussions of our (so-called) scientists. Our purpose in quoting this theory and the comments on it is to show again how the "scientists," in trying to prove their theory of evolution, operate with unproved hypotheses and assertions and with calculations running into hundreds of millions and now, in this latest discussion, even a billion of years. You will note, in particular, Dr. Osborne's admission that the theory of Darwin and Lamarck "was never more than a working hypothesis." No doubt later "scientists" will say the same of Dr. Osborne's theory. — Gen. 1 and 2 is good enough for us.

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