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ARTICLE IV.

THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

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I. EVOLUTION DEFINED.

It is the principle of progressive continuity in the material and moral universe. It does not account for original beginnings, but for the unfolding of all things from such beginnings.

Infidel and Christian evolutionists agree as to a First Cause: they differ as to the personality of that Cause. The former make the law of evolution self-executing; not only in the development of nature, but also in the creation of new beginnings—origin of species. The latter make God the originating and executive power of this and all other laws of nature. As gravitation is the divine method of sustaining the cosmos, so is evolution the divine plan for developing it. It is creation by natural process, but not so natural that it does not use supernatural aid in bridging the chasms between the different planes of nature.

Different qualities are developed by natural process; these different qualities when brought together under proper conditions, produce a new plane of creation. This is nature's birth. When hydrogen and oxygen are brought in contact, water is born. This combination nature is helpless to effect. There are too many elements to be arranged. Three different chemicals brought together in the green leaves of plants in the presence of sunlight, will produce living protoplasm. But this requires supernatural teleology; Christian Evolu-

tion therefore includes, not only natural process of development, but also direct supernatural combinations, by which nature mounts the rising rounds of the universe. And even here the divine touch is not always abrupt. Birth of something entirely new and different may result from the combination of certain forms of energy; or this may be made with embryos, and both develop together until the point of birth is reached, when a new order of creation is produced.

In that sense it may be true that the highest as well as the lowest parts of nature are the result of natural law; that what at last came to birth in man was contained in the womb of nature, as the life principle of animals and plants. But the point to be maintained is, the divine touch somewhere—by which nature is born from above into a new creation, whether plant, animal, or man.

II. IS EVOLUTION ESTABLISHED?

It is safe to say that nine-tenths of Christian scientists now accept the doctrine of progressive continuity. The principle in its minor details has not been verified, but as a general fact it is certain.

Its acceptance is necessitated by the facts of geology and astronomy, which proclaim the universality and continuity of law. The same law of gravitation controls a grain of sand that holds together the planetary system. In like manner the planetary system is developed by the same law that now controls the development of an egg into a bird, or a human seed into a man.

God works through infinite space with the law of gravitation, through infinite time with the law of evolution. In answer to the fear which this doctrine now excites in the Christian world, it may be said that the science of astronomy and geology were still more terrifying, but have resulted in far nobler conceptions of the God of nature, as the God of revelation; the same must be true of evolution.

These remarks as to evolution in general seem necessary as a basis for the evolution of Christianity. For if evolution be true in nature, then it must be true in Christianity; since there is one God, by whom, and in whom, all things exist. This will more clearly appear as we consider:—

1. *The Physical Nature of Man.*

The evolution of Christianity includes the human body. The opening words of the Bible concern the origin of it, and its closing chapters, its immortality. Science tells us that the law of continuity, connecting it with preceding physical forms, had to do with its origin, and Revelation declares the operation of the same law, in the transition of the material into the resurrection body. Of the first, we can speak more definitely than of the second. Man's body proclaims its origin. Its chemical constituents, its structure, and functions link him with the higher animals.

We are not of those who believe that the Bible obliges us to hold, in the face of Science, that God created all fossil remains in six literal days. Nor do we believe that God made man out of the dust, as a child makes dirt-pies. Nor, on the other hand, do we believe that man was not made at all, only "grewed" as Topsy, but that both are true; that his body is the result of divine agency by natural process, that is, that the human species, like all other new species, developed up to a certain point in the lower order, and was brought to the birth point by divine combinations, so that a new order of beings resulted.

2. *Man's Moral Nature.*

This is the counter and superior part to the physical; that which lifts him not only above animal life, but above his own physical nature. But this nature also in its lower ranges gives unmistakable evidence of continuous connection with pre-existent life. It is the relation of shadow to substance, promise to fulfilment, different not only in degree, but in kind, and yet the resemblance is so great as to prove a law of continuity.

Animal consciousness foreshadows human self-consciousness; animal will,—man's free will; instinct,—rational intelligence; sign language,—human speech. The lower passes into the higher, not by a self-development, but by a supernatural birth, which begins a new order of existence. Man now becomes a personality and so a master of material destiny. This was a part of God's work, when he made man a "living soul."

But man is more than this. His moral nature has a higher range; he is a spiritual and immortal being. Does the law of evolution still hold? We think it does; we have passed beyond matter into spirit. But it is still natural law in the spiritual world.

It is the same law operating at the two ends of the ladder. Animal consciousness, will, and instinct were the bases of self-consciousness, free will, and reason in man, and these in turn are the bases of man's spiritual nature,—a nature not self-developed, but born into being by a direct revelation of God's nature to him, by which he was made in God's image, and became a child of God—a creature of immortality. It is at this point that the Bible takes up man's history and unfolds it to the present time. This unfolding, we believe, will very strongly show the evolution of Christianity. According to the Bible, man was created an innocent but not a perfect being. That is, he was without the knowledge of evil, and was innocent, instead of virtuous; a pure being, untested by temptation. He was, therefore, not a perfect being; neither innocence nor happiness is perfection. Innocence was the gift of God in man's creation; but this innocence was given man as a basis on which to work out a character of virtue, which is the goal of humanity.

Innocence is a pre-established condition; virtue is self-acquired. Hence the forbidden tree in Eden. Man did not prove equal to the test, and so lost both virtue and innocence.

Sin, primarily, was not so much a fall from a higher to

a lower, as a failure to rise from a lower to a higher,—not so much eating of the forbidden tree, as failure to partake of the Tree of Life. The latter represented communion and correspondence with God, and had innocent man continued to reach out for this he would not have fallen. But, instead, he permitted Satan's suggestions concerning God to break this correspondence, and then followed the degradation of the forbidden fruit. Man's refusal to choose the higher, preceded and conditioned his fall to the lower, and the essence of sin is, therefore, in that refusal, whatever may cause the will to make it.

To be out of correspondence with God is death, as illustrated in both the first and second Adam. Jesus said, "To know God is eternal life;" that is, to be in union with him. Immanuel came to form the connecting link. The crowning sin of man is the neglect or refusal to avail himself of that connection, both in seeking and growing into the divine correspondence.

Man is lost now, as Adam was, by not grasping the higher, rather than by falling to the lower. The higher is the new birth by which such correspondence is effected.

Had man remained innocent, a perfect race would in time have been developed. This would not have followed from Adam's innocence alone. The race fell in him because he was the first man, but each one after him would have had to fight his own battle, and gain his own victory. In case all had succeeded, the topic of this article would be, the evolution of Humanity. But when innocence was lost, and the progressive continuity of the race was interrupted and destroyed, man became spiritually dead. His centripetal force was gone. His development was swiftly and endlessly away from God. He reverted to his original type of savage animalism, and yet, as a self-conscious and free-acting being, retained a sense of accountability, that filled him with fear and suffering. The Creator could do one of two things. In

perfect justice, man could be left to his fate; or, in infinite love, the broken chain could be relinked. This was done by the offering of Jesus, who came and recreated man in God's image, and started him on a new line of development; hence we write the evolution of Christianity, and not of Humanity.

3. *The Evolution of Christianity.*

The study of this evolution brings to our notice:—

1st. *The Old Testament.*—Jesus affirmed the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning himself;—a testimony faintly given to Adam, but growing more distinct with each new voice until the last, which shook profoundly the ancient land and people, with the announcement of his arrival.

The flower of the century plant is not more beautiful in itself, than in its slow but orderly evolution. The pre-eminence of Jesus as the flower of humanity was in part on account of his slow but orderly evolution as the Son of man, as well as the direct and perfect impartation of the divine nature which made him the Son of God.

The genealogies of the Gospels are as necessary as the story of the incarnation at Bethlehem. The evolution of the Old Testament justifies and defends its present canonical order.

The first distinct upward movement in the evolution of Christianity in the Old Testament was the call of Abram. At this call, he steps upon a new plane of life, and becomes the founder of a new race; a race that walks by faith and not by sight. But is his break with the past so abrupt and absolute as to destroy all lines of progressive continuity?

Certainly all knowledge of the true God had not been lost, and Abram was therefore not the only person to claim it. This he distinctly avows in meeting Melchizedek, the best explanation of whose character is, that he was one of the few remaining original worshippers of the true God, in the midst of a heathen world.

Traditions of God's first and subsequent dealings with the race must have reached down to Abram. The Tower of Babel was a familiar sight, and proclaimed the story of the flood. The faith of Abram did not originate, *de novo*, with him. The materials were pre-existent in the traditions which he possessed. It was a new faith, however, in that God revealed himself to Abram so as to verify these traditions, and make them a basis of action in separating him from all idolatrous connections. It was a new birth, by bringing in contact with existing materials a clearer revelation of the divine character.

Abram the Hebrew (the man that crossed over) as he ascended the western bank of the Euphrates was no longer a Bedouin sheik, but the Friend of God. His relation henceforth to Christianity was that of the acorn to the oak. The evolution of the oak may fitly symbolize the development of both the Old and the New Testament life,—the smallness of the seed, the slowness of its growth, the knotted and twisted tree, and its final stateliness and blessing. There are many planes in the movement of Israel. Its history flows and ebbs like the sea, but is always an upward trend. The historical breaks are sometimes so wide that the future seems entirely severed from the past. The Exodus was marked by a new calendar of time, for God saith to Moses, "This shall be the beginning of months to you."

As the Red Sea was a new line of destiny at the beginning, so the crossing of the Jordan marked another at the close, of the desert life. Other epochs of almost equal importance followed. Notice the evolution of government from the anarchy of Samuel and the Judges into the orderly and world-admired kingship of David and Solomon. The return from Babylon marks the new era of the Restoration. But as wide as these gaps are, the bridges that span them, and make the two sides inseparable, are always plainly in sight. The farther end of the bridge is always lower down, for in

reaching the new plane there must be an ascent as well as a crossing. Whatever may be said of the lost tribes of the Jews, the continuity of the national life of the Hebrews, from Abraham to this hour, has remained intact.

What is true of government is still more true of religion, of which government was the expression. The most disastrous vicissitudes of the theocracy only developed in the nation the life of Theos more grandly.

What a difference between the motley herd of almost fetich worshippers, struck with terror at the foot of Sinai, and the spiritual procession which brought back the ark from the Philistines, or that heralded the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem! In Abraham's time the divine presence could be comprehended only in human form; talking with him in human voice and eating at his hospitable table. Very differently does Malachi set forth the spiritual and purifying character of Jehovah. The tabernacle is the unfolding seed of the temple. The pillar of cloud and fire is superseded at the Jordan by the ark, and the audible voice of God gives place to the Shekinah. In a word, the whole symbolism of the Old Testament always keeps step with the progressive spiritual development of Israel. So that, Hebrew ritualism at the coming of Jesus had lost its hold on the heart of the nation. The butchering scenes of the temple, once so impressive, had become almost disgusting, as a divine method for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus could not have introduced spiritual worship into the world so easily, had not this been the case. The evolution of Christianity was ready to burst the old shell of ritualism and send forth a spiritual and world-wide religion. Let us now turn to

2d. *The New Testament*, and notice, first, this evolution could not spring from merely human or natural sources; there are those who maintain that Christianity, like all other religions, is simply the result of the law of human progress.

This has been pointed out as impossible in regard to Judaism. Nature and the eternal truths of God are the basis of it, but direct divine revelation must touch that basis before Judaism could be born. This is shown by the fact that no other nation by the development of natural religion ever approached the divine nature of Hebrew worship.

Grecian culture comes the nearest, and many think Plato had a true conception of God. But, if it was true, it was so indistinct that his nation could not see it, and even, as concerns himself, it is by no means certain that he was not indebted for it to Judaism, of which it is believed by competent critics he was not ignorant: his voice, so far from that of a herald of a new day, sounds more like that of one crying in the darkness with a helpless cry for light. If Plato fell so far short of even Judaism, it is not credible that New Testament Christianity could have been evolved from Platonism.

It has been recently pointed out by a distinguished scholar of England, that the resemblance between Christianity and Platonism is mostly found in that which is not peculiar to Christianity, viz., natural religion and morality, and that every attempt to find the distinctive doctrines of Christianity in Platonism is a failure.

The atonement, the Trinity, regeneration, Holy Spirit, and resurrection are not even foreshadowed; so far as Plato provided the materials for their temple the writers of the New Testament are entitled to a new creation. Besides, it would be necessary to show that Christ and the apostles had acquaintance with Plato's writings. Neither can it be shown that Christianity was evolved out of Judaism by merely human or natural means—nay more, by the Old Testament plus the power of Platonism, for both of these were combined in Philo, the Alexandrian Jew. This distinguished philosopher and moralist comes nearest to Jesus of all who have wrought out systems, from which Christianity might have been derived. Even granting that Judaism is only the

highest religious round in the natural progress of humanity, we see the impossibility of completing the ascent to heaven itself by evolving Christianity from what has preceded it, by natural or merely human ability, in the signal failure of Philo to do so.

Instead of carrying forward the conceptions of the Old Testament on which Christianity rests, he even falls below them. So far from Philoism being a stepping-stone by which the authors of Christianity mounted up from Judaism to their perfect religion, it was a stumbling-stone. There are many points of wide divergence between Jesus and Philo, which would make the former an impossible borrower from the latter. But there are two impassable chasms between them. The first is the almost entire absence in Philo of Messiahship, which forms such a large part of the New Testament. The helplessness of the natural mind to evolve spiritual conceptions from lower and material ones is astonishingly shown in Philo, who, with all the Messianic prophecies spread out before him in the Old Testament, makes only a few confused allusions to it. He falls far short of his own nation in regard to the Messiahship.

The second fatal break is the utter absence in Philo of the corner-stone of Christianity, viz. the atonement.

The sacrificial character of the Old Testament, though "writ so large," failed utterly to suggest to him the Lamb of God. If Philo, a profound philosopher and a devout Hebrew, could not evolve from the Old Testament a parallel system to Christianity, or even supply a connecting link, by which the authors of Christianity could carry forward the line of progressive continuity, then we should not expect any greater success in accounting for Christianity (as alleged by German criticism) in saying that Jesus by using the materials of Judaism had succeeded (simply as a man) where Philo failed. Christianity in the New Testament is not therefore an evolution from natural or human sources, or even

from divine sources, by merely human ability; but it is a divine and supernatural evolution of spiritual religion from its material repressions in the Old Testament. It is the development out of the mechanical and formal into the natural and spiritual. Religion is, therefore, a growth as well as a gift. The inflexible and irreversible law of nature is the law of cause and effect; every event must have an adequate cause.

The Bible is a book of cause and effect. This trend of the Old Testament is plain to all; it is a book of law. The law kept or broken was the inevitable cause of certain effects; albeit the method of realizing those effects was not material and artificial. But the New Testament, it is said, deals with effects rather than causes. It is a book of grace; God takes care of the effects; we are "to cast our deadly doing down." There is truth in this. Doing in the old time was a failure, because it was an attempted evolution of something out of nothing; an effect without a cause, a development of spiritual life out of physical.

The New Testament furnishes a spiritual cause,—so far it is a book of grace; of receiving instead of doing; of effect rather than cause. The spiritual seed is from God; here as in nature. "In the beginning God created;" this divine effect now becomes a human cause, from which all spiritual life is evolved by the same invariable laws which are at work in nature. The concise statement of this law is this, we love God (effect) because he first loved us (cause). The evolution of that love into all spiritual fruits is along the same line of the inflexible law of cause and effect. Jesus is introduced to us as the author of two worlds; the material and spiritual. The more we study these two worlds, the more we see not only the identity of the Omnipotence that gave them existence, but also the laws of their development. Our Lord wrote these laws so plainly in the physical world that all who run may read. He is equally explicit in the spiritual record. One of

the most important words in the New Testament is the monosyllable "if." These two letters condense Christianity into a scheme of cause and effect. If ye keep my commandments (cause) ye shall abide in my love (effect). The very heart of the Gospels (John xiv. and xv.) teems with this word. The Epistles are no less emphatic. This "if" is the cable link that makes God's immutable promise (cause) inseparable from the result (effect) of our obedience. The everlasting "if's" of Jesus have been sadly overlooked.

It is a mistake and disaster of the Christian world that effects are sought instead of causes. Heaven is aimed at, while the causes from which it only can result, are slighted or ignored. The remedy is in a vital connection with Christ. He is the all-producing cause; we must abide in him as the branch in the vine. The evolution of Christianity in the New Testament is the progressive unfolding therein of the Christ nature, which is both the seed and the growth of the spiritual life in man.

We say progressive unfolding, since Jesus came to fulfil all righteousness, as to the law of physical and spiritual life, as well as the ceremonial law. His body was the result of natural process: from divine seed. He increased in wisdom, and his innocence was developed into virtue by temptation. His self-denial in the home life at Nazareth was the seed of his sacrifice at Jerusalem for the human race. Faith is the universal law of salvation, as gravitation is the universal law that saves the physical worlds. Christ was subject to that law. He was saved by faith in God as we are saved by faith in him. This faith is a development. From feebleness it grows into assurance, and ripens into sight. It would not be too much to say that Jesus could not have borne at the outset the tests put to his faith on the cross, else he would have mocked his disciples, instead of comforting them with the words, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Step by step they should conquer as he had done.

We come now to his public ministry. We have here the same proof of evolution. This is shown in the New Testament canon. The present order of these books is not a sudden or artificial arrangement. It is the growth of centuries, and is the natural development of a life. Notice

(1) The character of the *Gospels*. They give us a physical basis of Christianity. It was necessary that the incarnate life of God should be absolutely certified as a human and historic fact. This has been done so effectually by the biographers of Jesus as to render all mythical origin of Christianity impossible of extensive belief, and this is all they did do. The evangelists are not teachers of spiritual religion. Their office was to furnish facts, which the Holy Spirit could use subsequently, in the evolution of Christianity. In the statement of these facts, there is also a natural order of growth from the material to the spiritual.

Matthew comes first, presenting Jesus as a lawgiver, and also, by a Jewish genealogy, making the New Testament an indenture of the Old. But there is no spiritual effect in this picture. The Sermon on the Mount excited great admiration and possibly good resolutions, but how far short of the spiritual results of Peter's sermon at Pentecost! verifying Christ's assurance, that his disciples should do greater work than he.

Mark describes the amazement of the people at the miracles of Jesus, but he does not tell us of any one crying out for salvation. It is the Gospel of physical not spiritual power.

Luke is the humanitarian. His master is the Friend of humanity. Herein his genealogy is an advance on Matthew's. The latter, as a Messianic historian, keeps within Jewish lines and stops with Abraham, while the former writes of Jesus as the Son of man, and extends the chain of descent back to God.

As a sacred historian, Luke writes in a very different

tone in the Gospels, from what he used in the Acts. His humanitarian Gospel of Jesus' kindness to the sick falls far short of Christ's spiritual healing of the Philippian jailor, and many others whom Luke describes when with Paul on his missionary tours.

John's Gospel is a great spiritual advance on the other three. The spiritual effect of the fourth Gospel is not because Christ's life here described produced a spiritual impression at the time, but because John did not write until the Holy Spirit had brought out the spiritual significance of that life: John himself points out more plainly than the others that the people, and even the disciples, did not understand his spiritual sayings at the time. And it is in John's Gospel that Jesus declares that the further evolution of his religion requires the removal of his bodily presence, that on this material foundation of his life may be erected the spiritual superstructure of Christianity.

We now pass from the acts of Christ in the flesh to the acts of Christ in the Spirit. We have here no new truth; but simply the facts of the incarnation made spiritual. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks *to* man, in the Acts, he speaks *in* man, and what an evolution of power is shown by our Saviour in the Acts beyond that of the Gospels! How much greater are his spiritual miracles than the physical! the birth of Christ in the soul is greater than his birth in the flesh. Humanity made Christian at the Pentecost is greater than the Christ made human at Bethlehem.

(2) The *Epistles* are an evolution of the Acts, as the Acts are of the Gospels. In the Acts there is birth and infancy, in the Epistles growth and maturity. Two words cover all this part of the New Testament, "In Christ." The doctrines are not Pauline or Petrine; they are Christian.

The practical importance of the evolution of Scripture is very great. The Bible is the nilometer of Christian life. It reveals Jesus as the standard of all spiritual measurement.

A certain pleasure in the Gospels is not, therefore, a sufficient ground of hope. The material Christ, only, is there presented. A perfect humanity is there, which inspires as a beautiful example. It is an inspiration from without, and does not meet the wants of depraved natures, which must be re-created from within. It is an ideal picture, in which even infidelity and atheism may find pleasure. Christians draw spiritual strength from the Gospels, because they are read in a spiritual atmosphere and understanding. But when the Acts are reached, the unbeliever parts company with the Christian. There is nothing in his experience to correspond with Pentecost: much less will he feel at home in the Epistles. Hence, liberal Christianity has never gotten beyond the Sermon on the Mount, in its relish of the New Testament. Strong efforts have been made to cultivate a taste for later scriptures, but they are bitter still to the natural heart.

The Revelation is the severest test of all, for it reveals to every character the final result of evolutionized Christianity. The redeemed humanity before the throne proves the spiritual survival of the fittest, and that those only who overcome, shall wear crowns. But does the evolution of Christianity stop with the New Testament? As to the communication of truth from God, it does: but as to the apprehension and application of that truth, it does not. Hence we have systems of theology. The history of Christian doctrine proves the evolution of Christianity, and it is one of the strongest assurances of Christian faith. The great doctrines of Christianity are connecting links between the present and the apostolic church. There is a logical and natural order in these doctrines almost as strongly marked as the canon of Scripture itself. The ecumenical mind of the church has built up, age after age, a system of truth which is as compactly knit together as the most symmetrical structure of mankind. The three great outlines of this system are the

doctrines of the Trinity, Anthropology, and Soteriology. These were wrought out in defence of Christianity in answer to the attacks of its enemies in different ages. But this trinity of doctrines is one in purpose; that is, to convict the world of sin. This is in accordance with the statement of Jesus concerning the first great epoch in the evolution of spiritual Christianity.

When the Holy Spirit began this work, human nature resisted him with the charge, that the sacrifice for sin was not divine, and therefore sin could not be so heinous an offence before God as the first preachers of the gospel alleged. In answer to this charge was wrought out the great doctrine of the Trinity, establishing the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The next point of attack on the Christian defences was in regard to the nature of man. A denial of original sin, and less moral accountability in general, was alleged in answer to the Scripture account of the virulence and universality of the Fall.

Hence, by long and bitter controversy, was evolved the scientific doctrine of Anthropology. Having failed at both of these points, the forces of the enemy were concentrated on the centre, like Napoleon at Waterloo, or Lee at Gettysburg, viz., the atonement. The defenders of Christianity were challenged to show *how* the death of Christ was a satisfaction for sin. The answer to this challenge is not yet fully returned, and it is uncertain when it will be. At the present time all theories of the atonement are at a discount. But while the nexus between the death of Christ and the sinful soul may not be fully stated, the fact itself has been more firmly proved by every step in the discussion of the ages.

May not the atonement have been made to cover too much, as an explanation of the fact that all theories are unsatisfactory? As typified in Jewish sacrifices, it would chiefly relate to the sins of the past. There can be no law

without penalty, and this penalty was laid on scape-goats and burning-offerings. The sacrifice of Christ is the penalty of man's sin. But Jesus provides for the future as well as for the past. In the Old Testament, man carried away a pardon, as he might carry from the market something purchased, just as the Romanist now does, but would have no principle of holiness which would protect against future sin. But in the New Testament, while pardon for the past is secured by the atonement, the future is provided for by accepting Christ as a personal life in the soul, which removes the love of sin, and therefore guards against the guilt of it. And yet, if any man sin, the atonement still avails in Christ, our Advocate with the Father.

The fact is that all these doctrines are relaxing their hold on the human mind, not because they are less true or important, but because they are now established as much as they probably ever will be, and furnish a basis for the further evolution of Christian truths. No one can doubt that we are in an age of transition.

The creed statements of the past are protested. The doctrine of sin is not now the substance of preaching. Hell excites little fear; converts do not speak of conviction of sin as formerly. A sinful record does not oppress them. The moving motive is to attain something better. Not the fear of the past, but the hope of the future, has led them to Christ. Are these things signs of the times? Has the evolution of Christianity reached a second epoch in its advancement? or are these things evidence of a retrograde movement? Whether the former or the latter remains to be seen. Meanwhile, what saith the Scripture? Did Jesus anticipate our age, when he outlined the three successive stages of the work of the Holy Spirit? First, the conviction of Sin. This has been his work up to the present time. Second, the conviction of (his) Righteousness. This, you may say, in a sense is included in the first; and yet it is separate, though in a sense

it includes the first, as the first includes it. The difference is that the first emphasizes the past; the second lays stress on the future.

One cries, "How shall I escape?" the other, "How shall I attain?" The first is an appeal to fear, the second to an inspiring destiny; the latter is the greater, because an evolution of the former. It marks growth; ought not this higher motive to be expected after eighteen centuries of Christianity?

The race is not the same as in the apostolic days. There is a higher moral tone—a Christian consciousness—in the world, unknown to them.

Besides, look at the intellectual development of our time, which would necessitate new statements of biblical truth. The material motives that move ignorance must give place to appeals to the moral nature, through the intellect and man's enlarged sense of possibility and destiny. If this is to be the statement of truth for our time, certain other changes must conform to it.

There will be a change in the type of conversion. As an escape from an impending peril it made a marked impression; a moral eruption never to be forgotten as to the day or hour. As the setting out on a heavenward destiny, the exact moment of starting may be less exciting, and of shorter memory, but why the latter should be less valuable than the former, does not appear, providing it brings one with equal certainty to the heavenly terminus.

And is not the latter more in accordance with a true philosophy of salvation? The goal in either case is righteousness, which is the Christ character. Now character is not more a birth than a growth. The trouble in the past has been in making the birth so prominent that the necessity of growth has been overlooked. But the emphasis of righteousness makes the latter as important as the former. Is there any law in the New Testament according to which this new statement of truth may be formulated? Jesus seemed

to indicate such a law, when he defined his relation to the disciples by the word "friendship." Ye are my friends. The foundation of such a relation is social law. The author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" has increased our obligation to him, in unfolding also the Social Law in the Spiritual World. By this law divine friendship is begun and increased by the same methods and to the same results as human friendship—Jesus comes to every man as a true spiritual Friend. If the spiritual needs of a man at the time of Jesus' contact be great, the sense of relief which the friendship of Christ affords will bring a corresponding gratitude and love. The beginning of this friendship may be less marked, and the first meeting with Jesus be more casual, but in both cases the friendship can be strengthened and made indestructable by the same methods which increase human friendship, that is by personal association, communion, and sacrificing service. As a human word, *friendship* is shallow, but in divine speech it is very deep. Its Scripture cognate is love; and next to holiness love is the central word of the Bible. The results of such a developed relationship is oneness of character, and that is salvation. It is the difference between the acceptance of a principle and a person. Principles are the creeds of Christianity. But Christianity is Christ himself. The former are received as a bride accepts wedding presents; the latter, as the bride accepts the bridegroom himself, that is, by entire surrender of herself to him. But when Christ is received as a personal, divine friend into the heart, the guilt of sin is not provided for by newly purchased pardons, so much as by the removal of the love of sin by his presence within men. It is a preventive as well as a cure. One is duty, the other is love. It is Calvin instead of Christ. The former represents determinism; the latter, voluntary obedience.

There was great strength of character in Calvinism. It replaced corrupt priestly power by divine authority. Right-

eousness was enforced by omnipotent law, and since man was ordained as the human executor of that law, it is no wonder that the Puritan character should have been austere. Hence Calvinism is suggestive of Calvary rather than Calvary itself. The supremacy and vitality of the English-speaking race are the outcome of a Christianity of duty. But the coming race will be ruled by love, and will conquer the world. A great external personality will call out great devotion, but a reverse of fortune destroys it. Napoleon bitterly voiced this in contrasting his fallen empire of personal leadership with the millions ready to die for their personal indwelling Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The evolution of Christianity will emphasize the personality of Jesus. This is true also of the past,—the battles of the ages have raged around his person, and decisive victories have been won for historical evidences. Rationalistic and infidel theories have been abandoned as explanations of the New Testament story. The life, death, and even resurrection of Christ (in a spiritual sense) are admitted by the most able and most hostile critics, though his divinity is yet denied. The key of the battle-field hereafter will be *internal* instead of *external* evidences. Christian experience as well as Scripture record, spiritual rather than physical miracles, a living Christ in men to-day rather than the Christ of Palestine, will be the tests.

Christian experience must be defended hereafter as the most trustworthy evidence of the reality of Jesus. The final proof of Christ's righteousness was his exaltation to the right hand of power. Proof of this to the natural man of course is more difficult than historical evidence. It is, nevertheless, a fact of inspired record that Stephen saw the bodily exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God. Paul and John say that they also saw the Lord after his resurrection. Many dying disciples have testified to like visions, and many especially consecrated and powerful servants of Christ bear

similar testimony. All this may be discounted by unbelief, though admitting the spiritual force of Christianity in the world. But this concession is a great gain, since it gives common standing-ground from which we may advance to the proof of such power being in the world as the direct result of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, which Peter declared on the day of Pentecost as the fulfilment of the explicit voice of prophecy. His great sermon reached its climax in the declaration, "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, . . . he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Peter's "therefore" is the watershed between Judaism and Christianity—the golden hinge of the ever-widening door of biblical truth,—the transition from a mechanical to an expanding spiritual religion. Pentecost was the sequence of Old-Testament anticipation, and in turn it became a forecast of the evolution of the New Testament. It was the mountain summit, tipped with a rising sun, whose light shall one day flood the deepest valleys of the whole earth, as the waters of a shoreless sea. It is the cable link which unites historical evidence with Christian experience. The spiritual birth and growth of Christianity are the logical (therefore) results of divine prophecy.

The average Christian experience may be a weak evidence of Christ's spiritual power, as dispensed from his throne on high; but taking together the millions on earth who are conscious of the power of his personal presence, it becomes a cumulative proof. A yet more conclusive evidence of such exaltation is the succession of great spiritual awakenings and revivals of Christian history, by which the world has been lifted to higher planes of moral power and blessing. The working of spiritual forces at such times has always been along the line of a supernatural, new birth, by which Christ is born into the human soul, as an abiding and transforming presence. Such special displays of spiritual power have always been overwhelmingly convincing; and all

that is wanting to break down the unbelief of the whole world is to make such special seasons the constant and normal forms of the church. The evolution of Christianity will be along that line. Christ will prove himself Lord and Saviour by clearer and larger revelations of himself to his disciples, and through them to the world. Christian experience will be a conclusive proof of Christ's exaltation, and, therefore, of his righteousness. Jesus will be enthroned in man, because he is enthroned in heaven. In obedience to his sceptre of love, human nature can be transformed into divine nature; duplicating Jesus' life on earth of Glory to God in the highest, and peace, good-will to men.