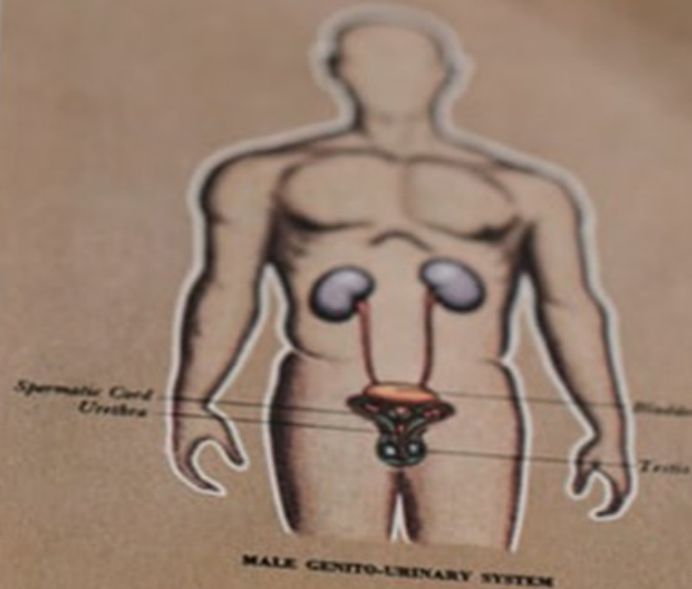
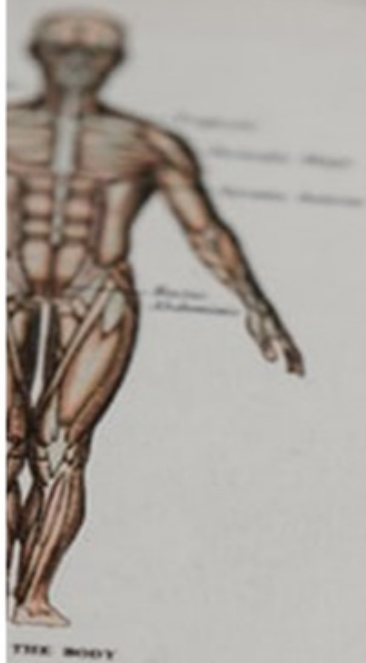
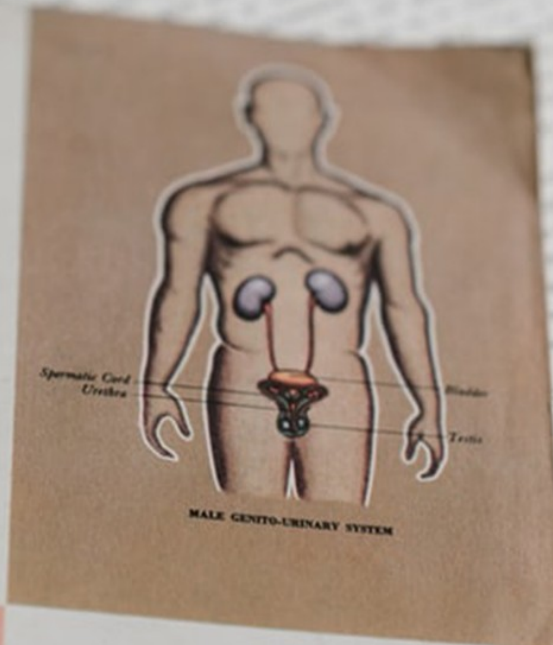


**CHARLES
HODGE**



**WHAT
IS DARWINISM?**

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Charles Hodge

What is Darwinism?

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WHAT IS DARWINISM?

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This is a question which needs an answer. Great confusion and diversity of opinion prevail as to the real views of the man whose writings have agitated the whole world, scientific and religious. If a man says he is a Darwinian, many understand him to avow himself virtually an atheist; while another understands him as saying that he adopts some harmless form of the doctrine of evolution. This is a great evil.

It is obviously useless to discuss any theory until we are agreed as to what that theory is. The question, therefore, What is Darwinism? must take precedence of all discussion of its merits.

The great fact of experience is that the universe exists. The great problem which has ever pressed upon the human mind is to account for its existence. What was its origin? To what causes are the changes we witness around us to be referred? As we are a part of the universe, these questions concern ourselves. What are the origin, nature, and destiny of man? Professor Huxley is right in saying, "The question of questions for mankind—the problem which underlies all others, and is more interesting than any other—is the ascertainment of the place which Man occupies in nature and of his relation to the universe of things. Whence our race has come, what are the limits of our power over nature, and of nature's power over us, to what goal are we tending, are the problems which present themselves anew and with undiminished interest to every man born into the world."[\[1\]](#) Mr. Darwin undertakes to answer these questions. He

proposes a solution of the problem which thus deeply concerns every living man. Darwinism is, therefore, a theory of the universe, at least so far as the living organisms on this earth are concerned. This being the case, it may be well to state, in few words, the other prevalent theories on this great subject, that the points of agreement and of difference between them and the views of Mr. Darwin may be the more clearly seen.

The Scriptural Solution of the Problem of the Universe.

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That solution is stated in words equally simple and sublime: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." We have here, first, the idea of God. The word God has in the Bible a definite meaning. It does not stand for an abstraction, for mere force, for law or ordered sequence. God is a spirit, and as we are spirits, we know from consciousness that God is, (1.) A Substance; (2.) That He is a person; and, therefore, a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary agent. He can say I; we can address Him as Thou; we can speak of Him as He or Him. This idea of God pervades the Scriptures. It lies at the foundation of natural religion. It is involved in our religious consciousness. It enters essentially into our sense of moral obligation. It is inscribed ineffaceably, in letters more or less legible, on the heart of every human being. The man who is trying to be an atheist is trying to free himself from the laws of his being. He might as well try to free himself from liability to hunger or thirst.

The God of the Bible, then, is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and truth. As every theory must begin with some postulate, this is the grand postulate with which the Bible begins. This is the first point.

The second point concerns the origin of the universe. It is not eternal either as to matter or form. It is not independent of God. It is not an evolution of his being, or his existence

form. He is extramundane as well as antemundane. The universe owes its existence to his will.

Thirdly, as to the nature of the universe; it is not a mere phenomenon. It is an entity, having real objective existence, or actuality. This implies that matter is a substance endowed with certain properties, in virtue of which it is capable of acting and of being acted upon. These properties being uniform and constant, are physical laws to which, as their proximate causes, all the phenomena of nature are to be referred.

Fourthly, although God is extramundane, He is nevertheless everywhere present. That presence is not only a presence of essence, but also of knowledge and power. He upholds all things. He controls all physical causes, working through them, with them, and without them, as He sees fit. As we, in our limited spheres, can use physical causes to accomplish our purposes, so God everywhere and always coöperates with them to accomplish his infinitely wise and merciful designs.

Fifthly, man a part of the universe, is, according to the Scriptures, as concerns his body, of the earth. So far, he belongs to the animal kingdom. As to his soul, he is a child of God, who is declared to be the Father of the spirits of all men. God is a spirit, and we are spirits. We are, therefore, of the same nature with God. We are God-like; so that in knowing ourselves we know God. No man conscious of his manhood can be ignorant of his relationship to God as his Father.

The truth of this theory of the universe rests, in the first place, so far as it has been correctly stated, on the infallible authority of the Word of God. In the second place, it is a satisfactory solution of the problem to be solved—(1.) It accounts for the origin of the universe. (2.) It accounts for

all the universe contains, and gives a satisfactory explanation of the marvellous contrivances which abound in living organisms, of the adaptations of these organisms to conditions external to themselves, and for those provisions for the future, which on any other assumption are utterly inexplicable. (3.) It is in conflict with no truth of reason and with no fact of experience.[\[2\]](#) (4.) The Scriptural doctrine accounts for the spiritual nature of man, and meets all his spiritual necessities. It gives him an object of adoration, love, and confidence. It reveals the Being on whom his indestructible sense of responsibility terminates. The truth of this doctrine, therefore, rests not only on the authority of the Scriptures, but on the very constitution of our nature. The Bible has little charity for those who reject it. It pronounces them to be either derationalized or demoralized, or both.

FOOTNOTES:

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[\[1\]](#) *Evidences of Man's Place in Nature*. London, 1864, p. 57.

[\[2\]](#) The two facts which are commonly urged as inconsistent with Theism, are the existence of misery in the world, and the occurrence of undeveloped or useless organs, as teeth in the jaws of the whale and mammæ on the breast of a man. As to the former objection, sin, which is the only real evil, is accounted for by the voluntary apostasy of man; and as to undeveloped organs they are regarded as evidences of the great plan of structure which can be traced in the different orders of animals. These unused organs were—says Professor Joseph Le Conte, in his interesting volume on *Religion and Science*, New York, 1874, p. 54—regarded as blunders in nature, until it was discovered that use is not the only end of design. "By further patient study of nature," he

says, "came the recognition of another law beside use—a law of order underlying and conditioning the law of use. Organisms are, indeed, contrived for use, but according to a preordained plan of structure, which must not be violated." It is of little moment whether this explanation be considered satisfactory or not. It would certainly be irrational to refuse to believe that the eye was made for the purpose of vision, because we cannot tell why a man has mammæ. A man might as well refuse to admit that there is any meaning in all the writings of Plato, because there is a sentence in them which he cannot understand.

The Pantheistic Theory.

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This has been one of the most widely diffused and persistent forms of human thought on this whole subject. It has been for thousands of years not only the philosophy, but the religion of India, and, to a great extent, of China. It underlies all the forms of Greek philosophy. It crept into the Church, concealed under the disguise of Scriptural terminology, in the form of Neo-Platonism. It was constantly reappearing during the Middle Ages, sometimes in a philosophical, and sometimes a mystical form. It was revived by Spinoza in the seventeenth century, and subsequently became dominant in the philosophy and literature of Europe. It is coming up again. Some distinguished naturalists are swinging round from one pole to the opposite; from saying there is no God, to teaching that everything is God. Sometimes, one and the same book in one half teaches materialism, in the other half idealism: the one affirming that everything is matter, the other that matter is nothing, but that everything is mind, and mind is God.

The leading principles of the Pantheistic theory are—(1.) That there is an Infinite and Absolute Being. Of this Being nothing can be affirmed but actuality. It is denied that it is conscious, intelligent, or voluntary. (2.) It is subject to the blind necessity of self-evolution or development. (3.) This development being necessary is constant; from everlasting to everlasting. According to the Braminical doctrine, indeed, there are successive cycles of activity and repose, each cycle being measured by countless millions of centuries. According to the moderns, self-evolution being necessary,

there can be no repose, so that Ohne Welt kein Gott. (4.) The Finite is, therefore, the existence form of the Infinite; all that is in the latter for the time being is in the former. All that is possible is actual. (5.) The Finite is the Infinite, or, to use theistic language, the World is God, in the sense that all the world is and contains is the form in which God, at each successive moment, exists. There is no power, save only the power manifested in the world; no consciousness, intelligence, or voluntary activity, but in finite things, and the aggregate of these is the power, consciousness, intelligence, and activity of God. What we call sin is as much a form of God's activity as what we call virtue. In other words, there is no such thing as free agency in man, no such thing as sin or responsibility. When a man dies he sinks into the abyss of being as a drop of water is lost in the ocean. (6.) Man is the highest form of God's existence. God is incarnate in the human race. Strauss says, that what the Church teaches of Christ is not true of any individual man, but is true of mankind. Or, as Feuerbach more concisely expresses it, "Man alone is our God." The blasphemy of some of the German philosophers on this subject is simply unutterable. In India we see the practical operation of this system when it takes hold on the people. There the personification of the Infinite as evil (the Goddess Kala) is the most popular object of worship.

Epicurean Theory.

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Epicurus assumed the existence of matter, force and motion —Stoff und Kraft. He held that all space was filled with molecules of matter in a state of rapid motion in every direction. These molecules were subject to gravity and endowed with properties or forces. One combination of molecules gave rise to unorganized matter, another to life, another to mind; and from the various combinations, guided by unintelligent physical laws, all the wonderful organisms of plants and animals have arisen. To these combinations also all the phenomena of life, instinct, and intelligence in the world are to be referred. This theory has been adopted in our day by a large class of scientific men, especially in Germany. The modern advocates of the theory are immeasurably superior to the ancient Epicureans in their knowledge of astronomy, botany, zoölogy, and biology; but in their theory of the universe, and in their mode of accounting for all the phenomena of life and intelligence, they are precisely on the same level. They have not added an idea to the system, which has ever been regarded as the opprobrium of human thought. Büchner, Moleschott, Vogt, hold that matter is eternal and indestructible; that matter and force are inseparable: the one cannot exist without the other. What, it is asked, is motion without something moving? What is electricity without an electrified body? What is attraction without molecules attracting each other? What is contractibility without muscular fibre, or secretion without a secreting gland? One combination of molecules exhibits the phenomena of life, another combination exhibits the phenomena of mind. All this was taught by the old heathen philosopher more than two thousand years ago.

That this system denies the existence of God, of mind as a thinking substance distinct from matter, and of the possibility of the conscious existence of man after death, are not inferences drawn by opponents, but conclusions openly avowed by its advocates.