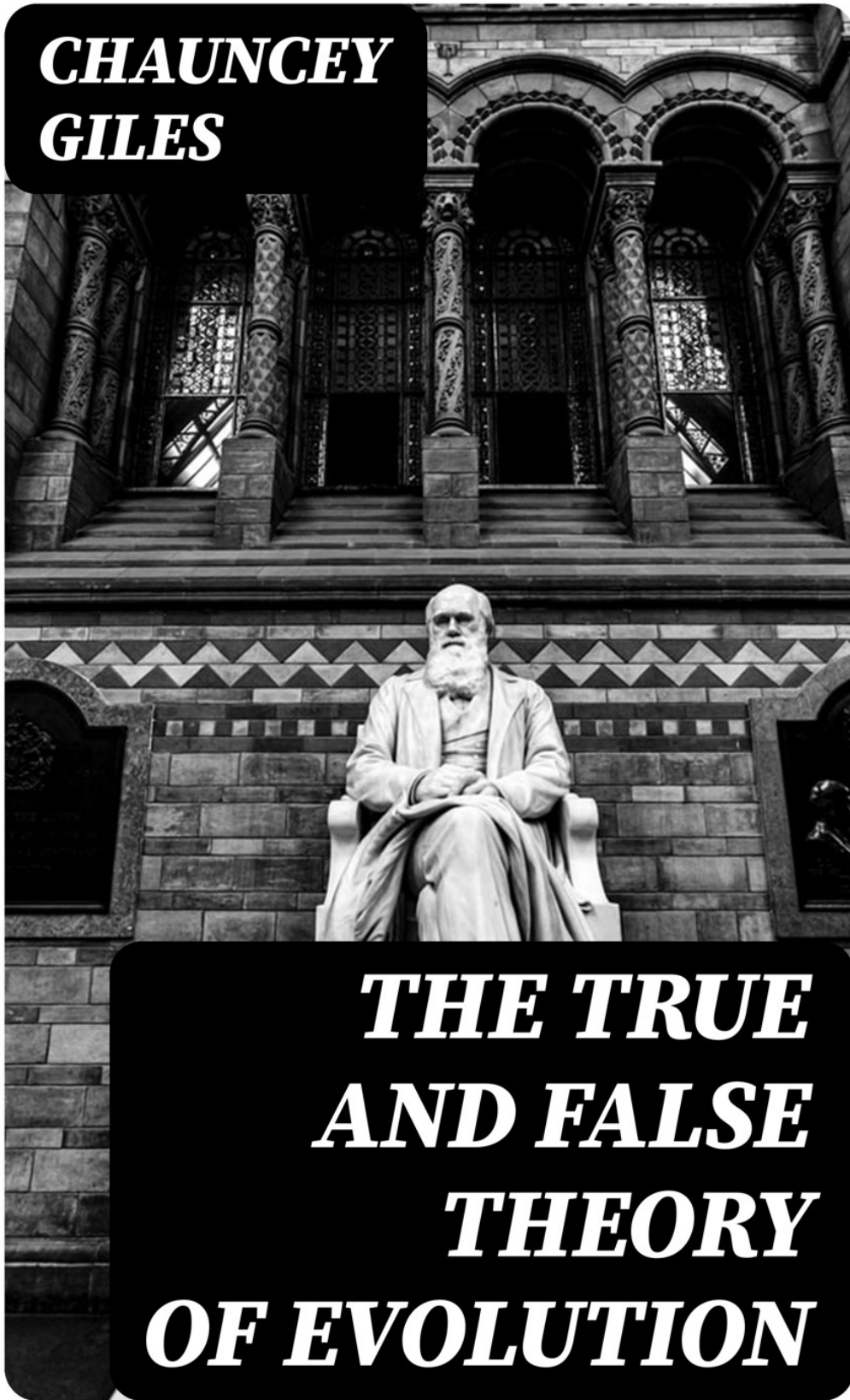


***CHAUNCEY
GILES***



***THE TRUE
AND FALSE
THEORY
OF EVOLUTION***

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Chauncey Giles

The True and False Theory of Evolution

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Lecture I: The True And The False Theory Of Evolution](#)

[Lecture II: The Origin And Nature Of Life](#)

[Lecture III: The Descent Of Man](#)

[Lecture IV: Heredity](#)

[Lecture V: Environment](#)

[Lecture VI: Degrees And Correspondence](#)

Introduction

Table of Contents

The interest which Evolution has awakened in the minds of the most acute and profound thinkers in the scientific and religious world, shows its intimate connection with the growing tendency to regard all things as connected, and related, and moving on in the paths of an immutable order. It is the effect of this intelligent, scientific spirit brooding over the chaotic theories of creation, causing a deeper penetration into its mysteries, and a more determined effort to solve the enigmas of the universe. That great good must result from this more extensive and accurate knowledge of the material world, and its relations to man and all the forms of life which exist in it, is evident to every one who is acquainted with the history of human progress in the knowledge of nature and man.

But the first effect of this awakened interest in, the laws and processes of creation seems to be injurious to religion and the belief in the existence of a supreme, intelligent, and personal Creator who controls and guides all things to effect the purposes of His love, according to the methods of His wisdom. The scientist gets so near to nature, and becomes so absorbed in watching the complex but orderly processes by which all things are created and sustained, that he has no thought of anything above and beyond what is cognizable by his senses. The causes he discovers are so powerful and specific in their application that they seem to him to be adequate to the effects. He sees law, order, the immutable relation of cause and effect existing in

everything around him. He finds abundant evidence of the slow but gradual changes which have been constantly going on in the material world; he can trace the natural connection between one thing and another, and he concludes that he has discovered all the substances that exist, and all the forces that operate in the creation.

He sees that every step in the ascent from lower to higher forms, in the production of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and in the development of human intelligence, has been taken by means of a preceding one. Why should he admit that this universe was created in a moment of time by a spoken word? He sees a chain of living creatures, with but few missing links, running through the creation from the lowest to the highest forms of life; he has abundant testimony that the lowest was first created, and he naturally concludes that each link in the chain was formed from it. The scientist has all the appearances of nature in his favor. All his senses testify to the truth of his theory. He can count the factors; he can see the process of creation. Why should he admit the existence of an unknown factor? Reasoning from these premises, he sees no need of interference with natural laws to produce any of the results which are manifest to human intelligence. Consequently, he rejects the idea of a special creation, and, consequently, of an intelligent personal Creator. That is one reason why he seeks to disprove the doctrine of distinct species, and to show that plants, animals, and men are all evolved from one substance by forces inherent in that substance. But he does not escape from the necessity of a Creator in this way. An intelligent Creator is as essential to the product of a given

effect which is reached through a long chain of causes and effects as by one act. The more numerous and complicated the factors, the louder the demand for a guiding and controlling intelligence. Every round in the ladder of ascent, from the primordial cell to man, is a distinct step, a special creation, and demands a Creator. A complicated machine that works with precision, and every movement of which conduces to the ultimate effect, is a far more conclusive proof of an intelligent inventor than the simple implement of the savage. Every wheel and spring was a special formation, though shaped in all its particulars with direct reference to the use it is to perform, and the co-operation it is to give, to every other part of the machine. We grant that the universal presence of law and order, of cause and effect, and the gradual creation and perfection of all forms of life, are conclusive evidence that the universe of material objects and living beings was not created in a moment by an Almighty fiat. But these facts do not abolish the necessity for an omnipotent and infinite Creator who provides the instrumentalities and constantly uses them. They are His ways of accomplishing His purposes. And when those purposes are correctly understood, it will be seen that they immeasurably increase the demand for one.

It seems to be taken for granted by many Christian scientists that we must adhere to the commonly-received doctrine that the material universe was created out of nothing by a spoken word, by the fiat of omnipotent power, or give up the idea that it is the product of an intelligent, personal, Divine Being. This is the reason why the doctrines of Evolution are regarded with so much suspicion, and are

so strenuously opposed by theologians. They cannot surrender the idea of a personal and omnipotent Creator. This would banish the Lord from the universe and practically deny His existence. They acknowledge that the scientist reasons logically from his premises; but they deny the premises. This is a fatal mistake. They would be in a much better position to discover the truth, if they accepted his premises and his facts, but denied his conclusions. The scientist arms himself with a vast number of familiar and indisputable facts. He traces the progress of creation from step to step; he shows the agency of natural causes in the products of life and the development of living beings. He sees no need of an intelligent Creator, and, therefore; he rules Him out of the universe and denies His existence. His fatal mistake consists in taking a part of the premises for the whole. He draws his conclusions from the appearances disclosed to the senses whose testimony is known to be unsafe and illusory in the most common things.

The Christian can accept all the facts of the scientist. He could do it if there were no "missing links" in the chain of natural causes and effects from the lowest plane of creation to the highest, and find increasing confirmation at every step of the presence of a Divine power and the guiding hand of a Divine wisdom. There is no ground for conflict between a true science and a true theology. They are the essential parts of a true knowledge of God and His works. They are a light to each other, which is essential to a correct understanding of both. Science without God is but half of the truth. It is a body without a soul; and God, without a true knowledge of the functions of nature and of human life is

but a formless, substanceless abstraction. Science needs theology to lift it above the low level and the narrow limits of the material world, the theatre of natural causes and effects. Theology needs the aid of science to bring it down from the abstract and formless to, the concrete, and give it body, form, substance, conceivable qualities and relations. Science ought to be the handmaid of theology, and it is due to the misconceptions or ignorance of both scientist and theologian that she is not. The facts of Evolution which science has discovered and brought to general notice, when correctly understood and divested of the false conclusions to which its ardent votaries have blindly rushed, will establish upon the basis of immutable law the principles which a superficial and partial knowledge assumes to have disproved. They will bring the Lord near to man as a personal and constant factor in the creation, instead of banishing Him from it. They will teach man how to see the Lord's love and wisdom and constant care for His children in all the works of His hands.

Evolution has forced Christianity into a false position, or taken advantage of a false position already assumed, and with the adroitness of a special advocate, or the unconsciousness of the full force of its testimony, it has gained acceptance for witnesses which do not testify in its favor. This is a fact which should be clearly understood. For the want of it many misconceptions about the theory have gained credence. Many honest minds have been led to believe that it was established beyond doubt, and even its most ardent advocates seem to have been deceived by it. The essential principle of Evolution, which distinguishes it

from all other theories, is that matter has no origin, and that it contains within itself all the substances and forces, and all the organic forms and qualities of plants, animals, and men. Growth, development, and progress of all kinds are cited as examples of Evolution, and proof of its essential principle. It evolves the spiritual and supernatural from dreams and natural phenomena of whose causes men in their undeveloped state were ignorant. The idea of God and the obligation to worship and obey Him are evolved from reverence and regard for ancestors who had been removed by death. All that the evolutionist needs to create a religion, a spiritual world, and a Supreme Being, is some hint or fancy of an ignorant savage. We have lectures on the evolution of the steam-engine, of the various sciences and of Revelation in the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, evolution is driving the old words, progress, improvement, development, out of use and usurping their places. If it simply took their place and meaning, there would be no serious objection to the change. But it carries with it a principle or an assumption which does not belong to the common words, and then cites them as witnesses in favor of a doctrine which they never taught. There is a fallacy in this method of proof which has deceived many Christians, and probably many of the scientists themselves. Progress in knowledge upon any subject, natural or spiritual, is not the evolution of some indistinct hint or vague fancy about it. It is made by gaining new ideas; by the light of new truths which did not originate in the imperfect notions of ignorance. It is as impossible to evolve knowledge from ignorance as it is to gain light from darkness. Knowledge upon any subject is

enlarged and perfected by more knowledge. The supposition that ignorance or error can by any process of increase or development or evolution, become truth, is as absurd as the doctrine of the creation of the universe out of nothing. Improvement in the arts and industries and methods of business and mechanical appliances is not the evolution of any principle or force that was inherent in them. It has been made by the application of truths and forces which were not in them. The promise and potency of the steam-engine do not exist in iron, or of a palace in clay and marble. A vast number of the facts which are cited in proof of evolution are of this nature. They are not germane to the subject, and should be ruled out of court.

If we admit the premises that every step in the progress of creation is taken by causes which inhere in matter, and that the highest is evolved from the lowest, as power from inertia, life from death, there is no escape from the testimony of the facts. But we are not compelled to admit the premises or deny the facts. We admit, without hesitation or exception, that creation is a gradual process, in which natural means co-operate with other forces; that every step in it is connected and related as cause and effect; and still we emphatically deny the fundamental principle a Evolution. Gradual advancement by natural instrumentalities is not limited to any special theory of the first cause and origin of creation. It is valid against the doctrine of instantaneous creation by omnipotent fiat; but it applies with equal, if not more, convincing power to the idea of an intelligent, personal and Divine Author, who acts from the ends of infinite love, and creates and employs an infinite variety of

means to accomplish His purposes. Those who believe in the Divine origin of the creation may frankly admit all the facts of the advocates of Evolution. They may even gratefully accept them as a most important service to religion, and beautiful illustrations of the methods of infinite wisdom, while they utterly repudiate the essential theory they are summoned to prove. The theory leaves out of account the most important factor, the constant presence and persistent action of the spiritual and Divine substances and forces from which matter itself and all its forces are evolved, and by which it is constantly moved to action and molded into form. Still we believe that the scientist has rendered an invaluable service to an intelligent and undoubting belief in the existence of a supreme, personal Being, by demonstrating the manifold, infinitely complex and orderly means by which He manifests His love and wisdom and attains His ends. The scientist himself is a most important agent in this work, and he is rendering a service to humanity of which he is wholly unconscious.

There is another principle which has led to man misconceptions and errors concerning the constant agency of the Lord in the creation; and that is, the nature and, functions of law. Law is regarded as a force in itself; as having some independent and self-derived power of creating and destroying. Men talk of the laws of nature as though they were independent powers which controlled and guided all the movements of material substances. Even those who believe in the existence of an intelligent and personal Creator, practically admit that He has committed the universe of matter and mind to the government of