

Keep as a souvenir of them

A Guard against "The Guardian."

THE following correspondence will speak for itself. The first letter appeared in the "Guardian" of September 2, 1877:

- EVOLUTION.

"SIR—do you have done me the honour of mentioning my name in connection with the subject of Evolution, will you allow me space for a few lines on one part of the subject, the importance of which cannot, I think, be overrated? Nothing the opinion that I do about it, I could not keep silent."

"I allude to your remark that whether all animals and plants were called into existence by the fiat of the Almighty Creator in the way that has from the first to all ages been believed, or by development from some few originals, or even from one, can make no difference from the religious point of view."

"To my mind it makes, as Aristotle says, 'not a little, but the whole difference.' I have seen the same thing said before by others, but only to my amazement whenever I have seen it."

"I readily grant that, *a priori*, the one mode of creation would be just as wonderful a proof of the almighty power of God as the other, each perhaps even seeming more wonderful than the other, were we to think of it by itself."

"But where is the setting forth of the doctrine of Evolution in the Book of Genesis? I see no trace or sign of it; but I do see what is agreeable to the reason which God has given me, which most severely the Darwinian doctrine is not, when looked at in the light of the facts of nature, and put forth moreover, as it is with the most flagrant, the most palpable, the most egregious self-contradictions, the most extravagant demands, contradicted by common sense, and in direct opposition to the teaching of Astronomy, which proves that in the impossibly vast space of time which Darwin demands for his theory it was utterly impossible for life of any sort to have existed on the earth (while it was, as the Sacred Scriptures says, "without form and void")."

"You have mentioned some eminent names who have pronounced against his doctrine, and you might have added to them Dr. Carruthers as a botanist, and of Mr. Davidson as a geologist. Davidson says—'You after you has passed away without my being able to trace the descent with modifications among the Branchiopoda which the Darwinian doctrine requires;' and Dr. Carruthers, that 'no single case of Evolution of one species from another has come within the observation of man.'"

"Dr. Allen Thomson states in his address that it requires a practiced eye to distinguish between the embryos of animals, birds, and reptiles, in the earliest stages of their existence. What is this but to admit that in those earlier stages of their existence there is a 'distinction and a difference' between them, and that it is distinguishable?"

"But even if it were not so, what then? The mere statement of a fact proves nothing unless you draw, or can draw, some valid conclusion from it. By itself it is *res of preterea nihil*. Science has to do with facts, not with fancies."

"Further, he states that the original, apparent, or, even if we were to grant, real similarity, gradually changes into diversity."

"No doubt about it, and the results are before us in all the species of the several Orders of animated nature. Nothing whatever is proved, but that it pleased the Almighty Creator at the first to mould the embryos of the multitude of his handiworks, thus 'curiously hidden,' as the Poet says, under one general type of form."

"And yet again, Darwin, as all the world knows, has never yet been able to produce or point to any one single existing creature of any kind in the net of Evolution from one species to another; and that for the best of all possible reasons. Nor has he been able to do so in the case of the creatures that have so long been extinct; no, not a single one in any of the inconceivably vast seas of time he is obliged to invent to build his fanciful theory on."

"Even so it is with the embryos of them. Can Dr. Allen Thomson show us any one of their embryos in any such transitional state? I know not; not one does he, because not one can be. He must leave them where and as he found them; he will not where he began, he no wiser than he is now, and all that he will be able to get them to tell him is that the 'Hand that made them is Divine,' and that 'whenever the Lord pleased, that did He, in the earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places.'"

"May I make one other remark in reference to your leading article on the subject?"

"You mention the fact that some of Darwin's fanciful phrases, such as 'natural selection,' 'survival of the fittest,' 'struggle for existence,' have been (though to some small extent only) naturalized among us as our own words, as if that was a sort of *passé proof* that there was something in his theories. I cannot for one moment admit this. It would be easy, I think, to mention only too many additions to the stock of phrases in our language that are not of any very great scientific value as proving anything."

"F. G. MORRIS."

"Newbernshire Rectory, Haydon, York, August 21, 1877."

LONDON: WILLIAM POOLE, 12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Price One Penny.

SECOND THOUSAND.

[“We are not concerned to defend either the doctrine of Evolution or Dr. Allen Thomson’s handling of it. All that we have said is, first, that opinion has greatly changed in favour of the doctrine within the last thirty years—of which the popular use of the Darwinian phrases advanced by Dr. A. Thomson is a fair enough illustration; and, secondly, that there is nothing in this change of opinion which need alarm religious people. We did not say that the book of Genesis ‘sets forth the doctrine of Evolution.’ Our position is that it teaches only the great truth of the creation of the universe by the will of the Creator, but ‘sets forth’ no scientific doctrine at all about the manner of that creation. What we said was that in a narrative which must needs be ‘in some sense metaphorical,’ since the acts are Divine and the language human, we can see nothing ‘in the revealed record of creation which cannot be as well adapted to the one process as to the other;’ to the process, that is, of gradual evolution as of unconnected successive births. On this latter point Mr. Morris differs from us; in the former point he only misunderstands us—not, as we venture to think, from any dishonesty in our previous statement of them. But we have no space at present to argue the point with him; the object of this note is only to re-state briefly what we have before expressed at length.”]

In reply to the editor’s evasive comment, I wrote as follows, in good time for the next issue:

“SIR.—You allow such full latitude to your correspondents of diverse views on topics of interest to reply to one another, that I think I may venture to calculate on your giving me leave to send a very few lines in answer to yourself, though master of the situation.

“You needed not to have expressed your intention not to enter on any discussion of the matter at large ‘at present,’ for at no time should I presume to take up any such against you.

“You state that in one of the two points I have misunderstood you. Pardon me if I say that it seems to me to be rather the other way, and that my meaning has not been understood; perhaps through my own fault.

“It is quite true that you had not stated that the Book of Genesis ‘sets forth the doctrine of Evolution,’ but it is no less true that I never said that you had done so.

“The meaning of what I said was simply this, that the Book of Genesis most certainly does state that some kinds of creatures were created at different periods of time from others, in a regular order, and that the doctrine of Evolution is absolutely irreconcilable with any such statement, holding, as it does, that there was no creation at all, but that all the creatures in the world, and, I suppose, plants too, came down ‘in the sequence of events’ (these are their own words, the words of these ‘men of science,’ *evolutionists*), from some one original source, as they call it, the creature and the word alike of their own creating.

“Nor can I admit that the positive statements of the Book of Genesis are ‘in some sense metaphorical.’

“Our philosophers are vainly exhibiting the facility of attempting to be ‘wise above that which is written.’ The ways of the Lord are past finding out.—He giveth not an account of any of His matters.”

“These are the few and only words that I will trouble you with on the subject.

“Dr. Gwyn Jeffreys may well say, as he has well said, that Evolution is the product of the ‘human imagination,’ of the ‘Use of the Imagination in science,’ a notion which in the time will pass, like so many other nine-days wonders, into the ‘infinitesimal corner of the past.’

“I am, sir,

“Your very obedient servant,

“F. O. MORRIS.

“Newbernholme Rectory, Hays, York, September 7, 1877.”

This the editor, it seems, did not find it convenient to insert. He appears to have thought that he could silence me with a stroke of the pen; but he will find that he has been mistaken.

The publication of the first letter brought me the following:

“The ‘Guardian’ knows nothing of Evolution, and has no principle. It would give up the Bible and the Church as readily as the Churchyards. You should take ‘John Bull,’ where ‘* * *’ trampled the traitor up last week. Of course the Bible contradicts the science, ‘falsely so called,’ in the specific words ‘after its kind.’

“The ‘Guardian’ has long been very unsatisfactory. It has not the moral courage to steer straight.”

“Your valuable letter in this week’s ‘Guardian’ has emboldened me (being a stranger to you) to ask your acceptance of the accompanying volume, a portion of which bears intimately on the profound problem of creation, and the fashionable fallacy which takes its name from Mr. Darwin. Like you, I felt astonished at the line of argument taken in the ‘Guardian’ Leader of last week, and wondered if it were an instance of the betrayal of theological truth would be allowed to pass without some sort of reclamation. In the note appended to your

letter, the original offence is repeated in a highly aggravated form in the statement that—"there is nothing in this change of opinion (in favour of so-called evolution) which need alarm religious people." A statement so reckless, so heartless as this, excites feelings of just indignation in the mind of anyone professing to a *bona fide* belief in the divinely inspired records of the Book of Genesis.

"The entire note abounds in baseless assertions, and is pernicious in a high degree. But the most offensive and dangerous aspect of the position taken up by the editor, is his blind determination to close peremptorily a question which, in the present day, has pre-eminence claims to be ventilated in the columns of a Church newspaper. I fear there is but too much truth in the saying one hears frequently now, that the 'Guardian' grants nothing but its own subscriptions. Certainly to my knowledge, as a careful reader of the paper for the last twelve years, it has again and again (wittingly or unwittingly) betrayed the cause of Divine Truth, especially in matters relating to Science in its connection with Theology.

"I beg to apologise for thus addressing one to whom I am a stranger. May I plead, as some excuse, my deep sympathy with the spirit of your letter, the fact that I am a brother clergyman, and your own words 'holding the opinion I do about it, I could not keep silent.'

"Thanking you sincerely for your courageous testimony in behalf of the ancient belief, as against the most dangerous scientific fallacy of the day, etc."

Of the writers of these letters, one is a well-known dignitary of the Church, and author of a most valuable work, etc., etc.—a decidedly High Churchman. Another is an eminent dignitary. He also is a very High Churchman—both of them personally known to me.

Of the third I do not know the views, but I should incline to think that he may be rather on the other side. He, too, is the translator of a considerable foreign work of high value, the one sent to me. It is satisfactory that those of different opinions should thus unite in defence of the "Common Faith" of Christians.

It is not the first time that the "Guardian" has exhibited a leaning this way. It showed a little of the divine foot so long ago as December 16, 1874, when I wrote the following letter to it:

"THE NATURALIST IN NICARAGUA."

"Sir,—I have been reading with much interest your review of Mr. Bell's *Naturalist in Nicaragua*. I have no doubt but that it is well deserving of all you say in its favour, and a valuable and very entertaining book. I should much like to have it sent to read it.

"But I think that, to a certain extent, quotations from a work, if not commented on by the reviewer, may be taken by the general public, however erroneously, to be endorsed with his approval. I feel sure that it is not the case in this instance, but, on the other account, may I ask you to admit a very few lines from me in deprecation of the adoption of the Darwinian view which you observe may be seen to run through the whole of the book under review.

"How any persons can ever have brought themselves to address in support of a preconceived theory the most extravagant ideas that the exterior forms or appearance of (so-called) species of birds have been produced by the admixtion of males for females, or vice versa, does seem to me one of the most astounding notions that has ever been promulgated; nay, as yet forth, it appears, in the work under your review, even parts of the species, as, e.g., parts of the wings of butterflies. That some species of butterflies are poisonous or distasteful to birds, I do not for a moment believe. That many insects closely resemble the tree or leaf they harbour upon is nothing new, nor do those exceptional cases prove one jot of the Darwinian theory. That a beetle covered with long hairs does not try to hide itself because it instinctively feels that its being so covered gives it a protection from its enemies, so that it need not further fear them, is contradicted at once by the fact that thousands of beetles of the most bright and resplendent colours take no pains whatever to hide themselves therefore 'under leaves,' but fly about from flower to flower in the open sunshine, and the more so the more brightly the sun shines. Such are the *Chrysomelids*, even in this country, and many of the *Elaterids* in foreign countries—China, &c.—most, if not all of them, being day-flyers.

"Such theories remind one of the comedian—'Why is a riddle like a monkey?'—because it is far-fetched, and full of nonsense."

"Sir, is there any fault to human credulity? It appears not."

"F. O. MORRIS.

"Newburnholme Rectory, Hayton, York, December 4, 1874."

I feel sure that all loyal Churchmen, on whatever side they may be, will feel a just indignation at the conduct of a paper they have trusted to, as a so-called "Guardian," to be depended on in such a matter as this.

For myself, so far as mere names go, I am not, never was, and never will be, either a Low or a High Churchman; unless, indeed, I am both. If to take my

stand on the one great and main doctrine, which alone gives all others their importance, is to be a Low Churchman, then I am such in the very deepest depth. If to desire to see all things done reverently, "decently and in order," according to due order" is the Church, is to be a High Churchman, then I acknowledge myself to be a High Churchman, and a very high one.

It is always painful to me to see any common book laid on the Bible; but I would make one exception in favour of the Prayer Book, only as desiring that it rests solely on the authority of the Book of Books, namely, on the great Truth of Truths it contains, or the "Church's One Foundation." On the Bible and the Prayer Book, but in no "metaphorical sense," I take my stand—that is my Churchmanship.

In one of Miss Edgeworth's Tales she describes the "ineffable contempt and indignation" with which Sir Plantagenet Rowley received the proposition of Marvel, the Lincolnshire farmer, to purchase his Rectory near Spalding.

"Ineffable contempt and indignation" is the only feeling which any person of common sense and of a right mind must feel at the astounding possibilities of Darwinism, its ten thousand times worse than childish absurdities; contempt for them in themselves, and indignation at the criminal injury the miserable liability of the wretched system has done to the minds of too many. If the whole of the English language could be condensed into one word, it would not suffice to express the utter contempt those invite who are so deluded as to be disciples of such an imposture as Darwinism. That this is not speaking too strongly, let one instance suffice.

It has been gravely propounded to us that a bit of moon, adorning unimpaired to a red-hot thunderbolt shattered off from some wrecked world in the illimitable realms of space, fell millions upon millions of years ago, on this earth, and became the "promise and potency"—in the words of another of them—of every single species of the whole of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, of body, soul, and spirit. And this nonsense not from some obscure "man of science," some mere "professor," but from a President of the British Association at one of its annual meetings, and repeated, either by him or some one else, I forget which, at the following meeting.

I only ask, what next? Surely "the force of folly can no further go!" Nevertheless, if it can, I have no doubt but that it will. The "Use of the Imagination in Science" (Tyndall) will come to the help of some of our nineteenth-century "Philosophers," and each will out-Herod Herod in puerile absurdities like this to the end of their short chapter.

I am far from being alone in this opinion. I had the following, one of a large number of similar most gratifying expressions, from one who has held the very highest office in the State, speaking of my "ALL THE ARTICLES OF THE DARWIN FAITH."

"—your valuable exposure of Darwinism, and most heartily thank you for it. I believe that your mode of treating the preposterous notions of Darwin is the only way to shake the self-confident tone of would-be philosophers. Newton's greatest saying, after 'Eris uno et Alterius, et Alterius,' was 'hypotheses non fingo.' Newton kept back his Principia for years because a mistake had been made in the measurement of an arc of the meridian, so closely did he keep to experimental truth. Now the crude fancy—nothing like so ingenious as the Ptolemaic system, because, really, the Darwin fancy straggles at every step—is made into a snail exceeding that of the discovery of gravitation. In a clever sermon by Pritchard, now Savilian Professor at Oxford, and formerly President of the Royal Astronomical Society, preached before the British Association when Grove presided, he expressed the folly of this stuff, and in his Appendix to a print of it proves that the chances against the eye being formed by development are more in number than those of Darwin's book being taken by the printer to piece and tumbled into a bag, and then thrown back on the table in the same order as they were."

Others may do as they like, but, for myself, never again will I purchase a copy of the so-called "Guardian" newspaper, never read an advertisement to it, never write another line in it.

I shall take good care to circulate this letter far and wide, and let every one who writes in the "Guardian" have a copy of it.

The editor of the "Guardian" cannot uphold a falling cause, that of the "ism" of Darwinism, the most egregious piece of puerile folly of a "vain imagination" that has come to the surface in our day. It is fast going down, as surely as the rising horizon makes the sun set in the evening. "But the counsel of the Lord shall stand!" "The word of the Lord abideth for ever."
"F. O. MORRIS."

"Newchurch Lane Rectory, Haysom, York, September 12th, 1871."

ALL THE ARTICLES OF THE DARWIN FAITH.

BY THE REV. F. O. MORRIS, B.A.

Price One Shilling.

"An elegant and handy pocket volume. Mr. Morris has in playful but most convincing style exposed the gross inconsistencies, the huge contradictions, and the unaccountable delusions contained in some well-known works. This little treatise deserves a wide circulation. It will, no doubt, excite much righteous indignation from the hearty admirers of a posterously learned author. — Good and quick job of work!"

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