

· EVOLUTION AND DOGMA ·

J. A. ZAHM.

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Very Sincerely,
L. A. Zahm, Esq.

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EVOLUTION AND DOGMA

BY

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Author of "Sound and Music," "Bible, Science and Faith," "Catholic Science and Catholic Scientists," etc.

Πάντα διεκόσμησε νόος.

—ANAXAGORAS.

THE rose-seed holds the glory of the rose;
Within its heart sweet summer fragrance bides,
And there each petal's tender blush-tint hides,
Till June bids nature all her charms disclose.

The sleeping infant's heart and brain may hold
The glorious power that in future years
Shall move the listening world to smiles and tears—
'Tis life potential that the days unfold.

One act of Will Divine, and lo! the seed
Of growth was sown in young creation's heart,
From Life Eternal hath all life its start
And endless change as changeless law we read.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

PART Second of this work covers substantially the same ground as my lectures on Evolution, delivered before the Madison and Plattsburgh Summer Schools and before the Winter School of New Orleans. Indeed, the chief difference between the subject-matter of Part Second, and that of the lectures as given at the Summer and Winter Schools, consists in the foot-notes which have been added to the text, and in a more exhaustive treatment of certain topics herein discussed than was possible in the time allotted to them in the lecture hall.

J. A. ZAHM, C. S. C.

NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY, December 18, 1895.

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PART I.
INTRODUCTION.

“Il faut savoir douter où il faut, assurer où il faut, et se soumettre où il faut. Qui ne fait ainsi n’entend pas la force de la raison. Il y en a qui faillent contre ces trois principes; ou en assurant tout comme démonstratif, manque de se connaître en démonstration; ou en doutant de tout, manque de savoir où il faut se soumettre; ou en se soumettant en tout, manque de savoir où il faut juger.” Pascal, “Pensées.”

“We must know when to doubt, when to feel certain, when to submit. Who fails in this understands not the force of reason. There are those who offend against these three rules, either by accepting everything as evidence, for want of knowing what evidence is; or by doubting everything, for want of knowing when to submit; or by yielding in everything, for want of knowing when to use their judgment.”

INTRODUCTION.

Τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεὶ πάντα συνῴδει τὰ ὑπάρχοντα,
τὰ δὲ ψευδεὶ ταχὺ διαφωνεῖ τὰ ληθῆς.—ARISTOTLE.

“For with the truth all things that exist are in harmony, but with the false the true at once disagrees.”

THE present work is devoted chiefly to the discussion of three topics which, although in a measure independent one of the other, are, nevertheless, so closely allied that they may be viewed as parts of one and the same subject. The first of these topics embraces a brief sketch of the evolutionary theory from its earliest beginnings to the present time; the second takes up the *pros* and the *cons* of the theory as it now stands; while the third deals with the reciprocal and little-understood relations between Evolution and Christian faith.

It is often supposed by those who should know better, that the Evolution theory is something which is of very recent origin; something about which little or nothing was known before the publication of Charles Darwin’s celebrated work, “The Origin of Species.” Frequently, too, it is confounded with Darwinism, or some other modern attempt to explain the action of Evolution, or determine the factors which have been operative in the development of the higher from the lower forms of life. The

purpose of the first six chapters of this book is to show that such views are unwarranted; that Evolution, far from being of recent date, is a theory whose germs are discernible in the earliest dawn of philosophic thought. In the two following chapters are given, in brief compass, some of the principal arguments which are usually adduced in favor of, or against, Evolution. These chapters, together with those which precede them, constitute Part First of the present volume; Part Second being wholly devoted to the consideration of the third topic, namely, Evolution in its relation to Catholic Dogma. For avowed Christians, to whatever creed they may belong, the subject relates to matters of grave import and abiding interest, and this import and interest, great as they are from the nature of the theme itself, have been enhanced a hundred fold by the protracted and violent controversies to which Evolution has given rise, no less than by the many misconceptions which yet prevail, and the many doubts which still remain to be dissipated.

Can a Catholic, can a Christian of any denomination, consistently with the faith he holds dear, be an evolutionist; or is there something in the theory that is so antagonistic to faith and Scripture as to render its acceptance tantamount to the denial of the fundamental tenets of religious belief? The question, as we shall learn, has been answered both affirmatively and negatively. But, as is evident, the response cannot be both yea and nay. It must be one or the other, and the query now is, which answer is to be given, the negative or the affirmative?

Whatever may be the outcome of the controversy, whatever may be the results of future research and discovery, there is absolutely no room for apprehension respecting the claims and authority of Scripture and Catholic Dogma. Science will never be able to contradict aught that God has revealed; for it is not possible that the Divine works and the Divine words should ever be in any relation to each other but one of the most perfect harmony. Doubts and difficulties may obtain for a time; the forces of error may for a while appear triumphant; the testimonies of the Lord may be tried to the uttermost; but in the long run it will always be found, as has so often been the case in the past, that the Bible and faith, like truth, will come forth unharmed and intact from any ordeal, however severe, to which they may be subjected. For error is impotent against truth; the pride of man's intellect is of no avail against the wisdom of the Almighty. False teaching and false views of nature are but the vain projections of the imaginations of men; false theories and false hypotheses are often no more than what St. Augustine aptly designates "the great absurdities of great teachers—*magna magnorum deliramenta doctorum*. How true, indeed, the words of the old distich:

Nostra damus quum falsa damus, nam fallere nostrum est,

Et quum falsa damus, nil nisi nostra damus.

The fictions of opinions are ephemeral, but the testimonies of the Lord are everlasting. *Opinionum commenta delet dies*, says Cicero. This utterance of