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[p. 173d]

‘Natural Selection and Man.’

The two essays of Mr. Alfred R. Wallace on this subject are republished by Chatfield & Co., of New Haven, in the University Series of tracts. Mr. Wallace is as frank in discrediting Natural Selection as a cause in accounting for man’s existence, as he is enthusiastic in applying it to other parts of creation. He emphasizes his belief in Natural Selection, and seems to accept with no hesitation the coördinate theory of “correlated growth,” which indeed he must, for, slender as its claim to be called a legitimate offspring of science, it is absolutely essential to the former theory in helping it over rough places. Whenever the former goes lame the latter jumps in to the rescue, and between the two, one has never a chance for an objection but what shall be instantly silenced. It is very convenient to have a two-bladed instrument, like a pair of shears, with which to cut out any desired device and proclaim it, in the name of science, as the true pattern of evolution and its mysterious history. But a line must be drawn somewhere, and Mr. Wallace chooses to draw it at man, as well he may. He holds that man may have been obedient to the common law of Natural Selection and correlated growth, but that beyond a certain point some unknown cause came in, and the body ceased to pass through progressive changes as in other animals. According to Natural Selection, no characteristic ought to prevail which is not immediately useful to the creature’s life, still less could anything injurious prevail; and Mr. Darwin has admitted that one such case fully proved would be fatal to his theory. Such cases would prove some other power at work in the problem, and if modifications are found, which at the time of their production were useless or injurious, but afterward came to be highly advantageous, we should see in them the evidence of the action of mind which Mr. Wallace very wisely, and with a very different spirit from that which prevails in many quarters, says opens an inquiry as thoroughly scientific and legitimate as any other. In a survey of man he finds the brain is developed to a size, even in savages, far beyond that of any of the ape tribe, admitting of a possibility of intellectual development far beyond any present need or usefulness of tribes whose style of living is scarcely above that of brutes. The savage has in an undeveloped state faculties which he has no occasion to use. The variation from the hairy hide of animals to the naked skin and back of man is something positively injurious. Savages of the lowest type all recognize the necessity of some covering for the back from wet as the weakest part, even when they cover nothing else. And wherever hair is found to grow in superabundance the back is always bare. Mr. Wallace holds it absolutely certain that the hairless-backed man could never have developed from a hairy-backed ancestor by natural selection. So the hands and voice of man, and greater than these, mental and moral faculties, are entirely outside of the theory, and must be explained by some other cause unknown. A multitude of characteristics in man can be thus shown to be originally useless or positively injurious which are plainly necessary for the full after development of human nature. The inference which he draws is, that “a superior intelligence has guided the development of man in a definite direction, and for a special purpose, just as man guides the development of many animal and vegetable forms.” It is but a short step from such a thoroughly philosophical view as this, to the position taken by any intelligent Christian, that a superior intelligence has guided all things from the beginning, no matter through how many intervening second causes and administrations of laws, toward special ends and objects. The resolution of all supposed difficulties

between natural science and religion lies in the recognition of a *superior mind-power* over all evolutions, which science may see plain enough if it will only open its eyes.

COMPARATIVE CRANIOLOGY.

In summing up the facts regarding the site of the human brain, Mr. Alfred R. Wallace makes the following statements: The average capacity in the Teutonic family is 94 cubic inches; of the Esquimaux, 91; some of this family have been observed as large as 113 inches, or nearly equal to the largest known; of the Negroes, 85 inches; of Australians, 82; Bushmen, 77. The remains of pre-historic man do not indicate any material inferiority of size. The skull from the lake dwellings at Mellen corresponds exactly to that of a Swiss youth of the present day. The Neanderthal skull had a larger circumference than the average, and a capacity estimated not less than 75 cubic inches. The Eugis skull, which is perhaps the oldest known, might well have belonged to a philosopher, according to Huxley. Whenever an adult European has less than sixty-five cubic inches of brain, he is invariably idiotic. The orang-utan is quite as bulky as a small-sized man, but has a brain of only 28 inches, while the gorilla, which is considerably above the average size of man, has 30 inches; the largest specimen ever known was 34 ½ cubic inches. The proportions of average sizes may be put in the following figures: Apes, 10; savages, 26; civilized man, 32, indicating a much wider space between the ape and the savage than between the savage and civilized man.

—It is not many years since we were constantly told that animal life was impossible at the depths of the ocean. This was an illustration of a prior reasoning, and the main premise was that life must be out of the question under so great a pressure of the water. We now know that life abounds at the bottom of the sea, and that the most delicate shells are not crushed. Such contradictions, which are continually occurring, of theory by fact show us how exceedingly uncertain are the deductions of human reason when attempting to solve in advance the mysteries of nature. Much of modern theory is simply telling how men would have made things if they had been Creators, or how they ought to have been made. The history of science, however, is but a long illustration of the old-time truth that our ways are not God's ways.

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The Alfred Russel Wallace Page, Charles H. Smith, 2015.