

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE

## WILL YOUR SCEPTICISM STAND THE TEST?

"Is there really a God, and is Christianity real after all?" Many times a question of this nature flashes through the minds of the young people of this generation. To a limited extent, scientific theories are responsible for this tendency toward unbelief. Of course, no one would desire, even if it were possible, to check the progress that is being made today in the field of science. During the past twenty-five years the world has progressed far beyond the expectations of most nineteenth-century thinkers. We are now living in a fast-moving age of automobiles, aeroplanes, telephones, phonographs, radios, etc. And we can thank science for these inventions that have given new life to civilization. Nevertheless, is there not a possibility of allowing scientific speculations and free thinking to carry us into erroneous channels, and lead us away from the truth?

Let us consider very briefly the theory of evolution. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Darwin and his apostles (Huxley and Tyndall) advanced a theory of evolution based on the principle of natural selection. For many years this theory was accepted by leading scientists. At the present time, however, modern thinkers have discarded Darwin's theory, and formulated new ones to take the place of the one first advanced. Hence we see that scientific conceptions are changing. What theories will be formulated during the twentieth century? We must let the coming years answer this question.

Some scientists believe that the earth was at one time a part of the sun, and that tidal disruption caused our planet to be formed along with several others which revolve in the same plane. Other scientists believe that the earth was formed by small planets coming in contact with each other, and being held together by the attraction which a body has for all other bodies. But historical geology gives us no evidence of a beginning or an end. We are also informed by geologists that during the Archeozoic era unicellular life existed on the earth; but there were no fossils formed during this period, and just where the first living cell came from is a mystery. The Proterozoic era saw the rise of primitive marine invertebrates; a few fossils were deposited at this time. During the Paleozoic era, higher invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, and lycopods slowly evolved, step by step, from the forms of life of the Proterozoic era. Various forms of reptiles, birds and archaic mammals came into existence during the Mesozoic era. The Cenozoic era marks the rise of higher mammals and the transformation of the man-ape into man. This paragraph gives us a brief account, according to the evolutionists, of the rise of man. In a similar manner, vegetable life is said to have evolved from unicellular life. Scientists have devised very ingenious methods for estimating the age of the earth and for tracing the various steps of evolution; but, in spite of all the researches that have been made, there are many "missing-links." Thus the evidences of the transformation from a simple form of life to a complex form are, in many cases, lacking; there are also great gulfs in

the evolution theory that have never been bridged. For instance, who can satisfactorily explain the gap between chaos and cosmos, the change from inorganic to organic life, and from vegetable to animal kingdom?

Moreover, historical geology merely shows us how the world may have originated, without giving us any definite proof of the evolutionary theories. The **Book of Genesis** gives us an account of the creation of the whole cosmos; but just how God created all things, remains a mystery that has never been solved. Nevertheless it cannot be said that evolution is an established fact; it is merely a theory that has never been proved. Henry Fairfield Osborn, a modern evolutionist, says science is "the body of well-ascertained and verified facts and laws of nature. It is clearly to be distinguished from the mass of theories, hypothesis and opinions which are of value in the progress of science." Hence the theory of evolution is merely philosophical speculation; and we should not allow it to weaken our faith in Christ and His doctrine.

Some of us make a grave error by spending time trying to prove that the **Bible** is a lie. Having faith in the infallibility of modern scientists, we compare their writings on evolution with the **Book of Genesis**. Of course, such a procedure will usually lead one to doubt the existence of God and the truth of His Word. Would it not be better for us to read the biography of Christ as told in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John); and draw religious conceptions from His teachings than try to figure out the principles of saving grace from a philosophical point of view?

If you are sceptical, let me ask you these questions: While you doubt the existence of a God and the power of saving grace, do you ever think that perhaps you are wrong and that there is a God after all? If you were to be severely injured in an accident, could you die with a firm faith in your infidelity and feeling confident that there is nothing after death?

You may say, "that is all very well, but Christianity is too vague for me to understand." What did Christ tell Nicodemus, who came to interview Him at night? He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." When Nicodemus failed to understand the meaning of this statement, Jesus said unto him: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Nearly two thousand years have passed since these words were spoken; yet today there are thousands who are doubting as the Jewish ruler did in the time of Christ. I have much sympathy for doubters. I was a doubter for several years—an honest doubter too. While I found it hard to believe in God or an Eternity, I often thought that perhaps there was a God and that Christianity was real after all. I can now say from experience that it takes much more faith to be an infidel than to be a Christian.

As we turn to the physical world, are there not many things in Nature that we cannot understand? For instance, when one sees a tall, broad-shouldered man walking rapidly

along the street, one does not doubt for an instant that the man has life in his body. Then if that man should suddenly drop dead, and all the medical skill in the country failed to revive him, one would not hesitate to say that life had left the body of the unfortunate man. What is life? What has left this man's body, never to return? His organs have ceased to function; something has gone. Yet no biologist can tell us what life is. One may ask, "What is electricity?" After watching a street car climb a steep hill, no one would doubt the fact that electricity has tremendous power. But where is there a physicist who can tell us what electricity is? Men can make it, transform it, and make it serve them in several ways; yet they cannot tell us what it is. No one disputes the fact that water runs down hill, and we say that this is caused by the force of gravity, or the attraction which the centre of the earth has for all bodies on the surface of the earth. But just why the center of the earth should attract bodies—that is why a body should have an attraction for all other bodies is a question that has never been solved. So if we can have faith in physical things which we cannot understand, why can we not have faith in spiritual things, even if we cannot understand them?

Many people doubt the reality of Christianity because professing Christians live immoral lives. It is true that there are many "false prophets" in the world today; but we still have true Christians who are not hypocrites. No one should doubt the power of Saving Grace because he sees Godless church members, or because a backslider tells him there is nothing in Salvation. Has any man a right to condemn a certain type of automobile because his neighbor drove one and was not satisfied with it? Would it not be far better for the man to try that type of car himself before condemning it, in order that he might speak from experience instead of merely advancing the opinion of others? As far as Christianity is concerned, therefore, would it not be wise for one to put it to the test before he begins to preach infidelity?

Before the Crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." As light draws a flower towards it, so Christ will draw towards Him any one who will merely let down the barriers of prejudice and allow the light of the Gospel to enter his soul. The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts many times; but if we reject the pleading, there will come a time when the voice will cease speaking to us. It is our duty, therefore, to get right with our Maker when the Spirit first speaks to us. Let us not neglect the salvation of our souls, but choose to follow Christ at our earliest opportunity. "Behold, now is the day of salvation."

I should like to ask all skeptics who read this short article to begin a systematic study of the **Bible**; the Word of God is a library of sixty-six books. You need not begin at **Genesis** and read through to **Revelations**; although you should read the whole **Bible** as soon as possible. From a literary point of view, the **Bible** is a wonderful book; its diction is pure, and it contains numerous literary forms—history, biography, sermons, allegories, short stories, lyric love poems, etc.

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