

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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SOMETHING NEW

By A. Prentice

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5: 17)

GOD MADE MAN toward the end of the sixth ‘day’ of the creation ‘week’ (Genesis 1: 27, 31): ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.’

On the seventh, God ‘rested’, the term apparently indicating a cessation of the creative project. The human species may, therefore, be seen as the termination point of the overall process whereby the Creator instigated and established life on earth. However, Man was not the incidental *by-product* of graduated development. He was always the end in view (Isaiah 45: 18): ‘For this is what the LORD says – he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited – he says: I am the LORD, and there is no other.’

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MUSINGS

On the Faculty of Religious Faith

With the advent and growth of *Evolutionism* as a *quasi*-philosophy, there are many sceptics who condemn the religious sentiment as being an immature product of Man’s imagination and fantasy, the delusion of stupid minds. The near-universal urge to seek out and put trust in a Supreme Being has been dismissed as “the stream of tendency by which all things strive to justify the law of their being” (Matthew Arnold). Religious faith, say they, is not only irrelevant, but a hindrance in the way of social and intellectual advancement.

As to the origin of this religious sentiment, we have at least two options open to our consideration:

First, that it was implanted or created in Man as a special or deliberate act. Viewed this way, the question would be settled.

Second, that in common with the rest of human emotions, it arose through a process of Evolution.

If we adopt this second view, we are faced with two additional questions:

A. What are the *circumstances* to which the genesis of this sentiment is due?

B. What is its *purpose*?

As to A, if we regard *all* human faculties to be the result of accumulated modifications caused by the interaction of the organism with its environment, we must conclude that there exist in the natural order certain phe-

nomena which have determined the growth of religious feeling, and that it is, therefore, as *normal* as any other faculty.

As to *B*, assuming the development of simpler forms into the more complex, the end to which the progressive changes tend must indicate adaptation to the *requirements* of life. Therefore we are compelled to infer that religious feeling is in some way conducive to human welfare.

This might lead us to ask why Evolution has bestowed on Man a faculty which impinges upon the powers of his mind, thus depriving him of true intellectual progress and rendering the majority of the race unable to appreciate the atheistic arguments of the minority.

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York University Press; 1956; repr. 1984), Preface (ix)

‘The re-establishment of the state of Israel in the same land with the same people and same language after 1900 years of exile seemed to me a unique historical event. I could not think of anything comparable. The history of the Jews is in any case intensely peculiar in the fact of having given the Western world its concept of origins and monotheism, its ethical traditions, and the founder of its prevailing religion, yet suffering dispersion, statelessness, and ceaseless persecution, and finally in our times nearly successful genocide, dramatically followed by fulfillment of the never-relinquished dream of return to the homeland. Viewing this strange and singular history one cannot escape the impression that it must contain some special significance for the history of mankind, that in some way, whether one believes in divine purpose or inscrutable circumstance, the Jews have been singled out to carry the tale of human fate.’



Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the evacuation of Dunkirk, nicknamed ‘Operation Dynamo’, which began May 27, 1940 and lasted until June 4 (*from his speech delivered before the House of Commons, June 4, 1940*)

‘The enemy attacked on all sides with great strength and fierceness, and their main power, the power of their far more numerous Air Force, was thrown into the battle or else concentrated upon Dunkirk and the beaches. Pressing in upon the narrow exit, both from the east and from the west, the enemy began to fire with cannon upon the beaches by which alone the shipping could approach or depart. They sowed magnetic mines in the channels and seas; they sent repeated waves of hostile aircraft, sometimes more than a hundred strong in one formation, to cast their bombs upon the single pier that remained, and upon the sand dunes upon which the troops had their eyes for shelter. . . . Meanwhile, the Royal Navy, with the willing help of countless merchant seamen, strained every nerve to embark the British and Allied troops; 220 light warships and 650 other vessels were engaged. They had to operate upon the difficult coast, often in adverse weather, under an almost ceaseless hail of bombs and an increasing concentration of artillery fire. . . . The numbers they have brought back are the measure of their devotion and their courage. The hospital ships, which brought off many thousands of British and French wounded, being so plainly marked were a special target for the Nazi bombs; but the men and women on board them never faltered in their duty. . . . [T]he Navy, using nearly 1,000 ships of all kinds, carried over 335,000 men, French and British, out of the jaws of death and shame, to their native land and to the tasks which lie immediately ahead. . . . Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.’

DRAGNET

Items of interest from the World Wide Web

Britain

Patenting 'synthetic life'

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science_and_environment/10150685.stm>

Europe

The EU falling out of favour?

<<http://blogs.euobserver.com/foa/2010/05/25/why-do-they-hate-us-2/>>

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