

EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE.

WHETHER in the beginning, God by His creative act woke out of chaos the various species of plants and animals now on the earth, or whether in the process of time they were evolved by successive differentiations from primordial germs, is a question on which, since Charles Darwin published his book on the *Origin of Species*, in 1859, much has been written and said. Among ancient philosophers, and some of their adherents of modern times the word "evolution" seems to have had a particular charm in relieving so many perplexities concerning the origin of the cosmos. To them it has been the ultimate cause of all reality, of mind as well as of matter, thus discarding entirely the existence of a Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe. Setting aside this materialistic view of cosmogony let us examine the other side of the question, viz., whether all organisms lower than man, and even the human body itself, may have been evolved from preexisting matter without any direct creative act on the part of an overruling intelligence.

There seems to be much misunderstanding among all classes of people as to the real merit of the scientific speculations of Darwin; on the one hand, on the part of those who know nothing of Theology and who are therefore incapable of judging the compatibility, or non-compatibility of the Darwinian theory of development with Bible teaching, and on the other hand by Bible readers whose knowledge of science in general is too limited to enable them to understand Darwinism in its true bearing on revelation.

In the opinion of the latter, natural

development from a primordial germ is inconsistent with creation, and consequently at variance with scriptural teaching. They seem to lose sight of the fact that those plants and animals which are potentially contained in nature need not be supposed to have been called into existence by the creative fiat at the beginning, but may have been evolved from lower species through the course of ages, and indeed that certain organisms may have originated directly from inorganic matter through cosmical agencies, acting in obedience to the laws primarily laid down by the Creator.

There is nothing in the language of Scriptures to prevent any one from believing that all organisms lower than man were originally life-germs brought into existence in the beginning by the creative fiat of the omnipotent, and developed in the process of time by natural causes into the multiplicity of species of animal and vegetable life now on the earth; that, therefore, all living things outside of intelligent beings were brought to their present state of perfection by an indirect act of the Creator, through the agency of nature.

Some parts of the Mosaic narrative bearing on cosmogony cannot be understood in their literal signification. It is certain that the word "day," as it is found in the book of Genesis, does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, for it was only on the fourth day, as the Scripture tells us, that God created the sun, by whose apparent revolution around the earth day and night are constituted. Moreover, scientific research has conclusively proven that vegetation existed on the earth many millions of