

true than the statement of the astronomer that God is infinity, or of the evolutionist that God is power, or of the materialist that God is matter. Each of these statements is an approximation toward truth. Since men are characteristically and essentially spirit, their first clear ideas of God were as spirit. Knowing little of matter, they clothed God with the common attributes of men; described him as irregular, capricious, selfish, vengeful, tyrannical; so that Ingersoll was moved to say, "An honest God is the noblest work of man." With the development of natural science came the knowledge of natural law and evolution. Scientists could no longer accept the theologians' ideas of God. By a revulsion of thought many men turned from the theological idea to an equally fragmentary idea based on materialism or on evolution. Caprice cannot coexist with natural law, and absolute and final perfectness is inconsistent with evolution. Gradually it has come to be generally realized that law is universal, and the theological idea of God has been modified accordingly. Evolution as a process in nature is now generally accepted, but it has not yet found a place in the theological system. The idea of an omnipotent and absolutely perfect God cannot be reconciled with the imperfections of the universe as we know it. But an evolving God is in harmony with all the facts we know, and cuts the knot of many an unsolved problem. This idea of evolution as an essential character of God is not easy to grasp fully. It contradicts the common view of God as unchangeable or as the Absolute. The whole known universe is in the march of evolution. Its essence is therefore evolving. Its plan is being formed. Its aims are more clearly defined now than ever before, its consciousness clearer and more extensive. Of a beginning or an end science knows nothing. The process only is seen. We are conscious portions of the universe. God is in us and is through us enlarging the plan and developing its parts. We have no reason to suppose there was ever an original design perfect in all details. The design itself is growing into consciousness in the heart of the universe, just as it grows in the life of an individual.

The problem of evil is recognized and its solution attempted by every known system of theology, from the ancient Egyptian down to the most modern Eddyism. The Zoroastrian doctrine of twin deities—one of them good, the creator of light and life; and the other evil, the creator of darkness and death—has been partly incorporated into the Miltonian doctrine of a good and powerful God who has already defeated and will ultimately destroy the arch-rebel Satan, the source of all evil. Mrs. Eddy shifts evil into the realm of idealism, explaining it as delusions of mortal mind,—which are to be at last all cleared up.