

tion, great changes may be produced in some breeds of animals; but these are, after all, only varieties, and there is not a shadow of evidence for the assumption that new species have been, or can possibly be, in this way produced. All experience tends to prove, that hybrids cannot propagate their species, and that the teaching of the ancient record is true, that animal and vegetable are alike to multiply after their kind. In his book, on "The Origin of Species," Darwin supported his theory by an assumed hypothesis of "natural selection"; but after some years in his "Descent of Man," he added, "sexual selection," of which he says in his second edition, referring to criticisms, "my conviction of the power of sexual selection remains unshaken, but it is probable *or almost certain* that several of my conclusions will hereafter be found erroneous."* This, he might, I think, have rightly said of his whole system, and more especially of his attempted deduction, by evolution, of the mental and moral faculties, and of the moral sense or conscience, which he admits to be "by far the most important of all the differences between man and the lower animals."†

But these views are most fully maintained and expounded by Herbert Spencer, who appears to be accepted as the chief authority upon Agnosticism, and the process of evolution, which he would apply both to matter and to mind, framing a universal system of philosophy, which he defines to be "completely unified knowledge," and endeavoring to show how ethical principles are gradually evolved in the same manner as physical conditions. According to one of his admirers, "the only complete and methodical exposition of the theory of evolution is to be found in Herbert Spencer's system of philosophy." As some of you may be aware of the applause bestowed upon his writings, without having any opportunity of perusing them, I give you his own definition of evolution—that it is "an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."‡ From this definition, you will perceive that his treatises

*Preface, p. 21.

†Descent of Man, p. 97.

‡Herbert Spencer's First Principles, sect. 145, p. 396.