

# Creation or Development? <sup>1</sup>

By Herman Bavinck

Unless we are mistaken in our interpretation of the signs of the times, the twentieth century, upon which we have just entered, is to witness a gigantic conflict of spirits. Faith and unbelief, says Goethe, is the deepest theme of the history of the world. This it has been in the centuries that lie behind us. This it was in that one which we have just closed and abandoned to the past. And this it will be above all things else and in an entirely special sense in the twentieth century, which has just disclosed itself to us. For the conflict of convictions and intentions has spread itself across an ever-widening domain, and has assumed an even more radical character. It is well known that at present this conflict is no longer confined to one or another article of our Christian confession, to the authority of Scripture or tradition, to justification or election; and not even any longer to the Deity of Christ or the personality of the Holy Spirit. But in the spiritual conflict which is now waging in every part of the civilized world, the points at issue more and more are the principles of Christianity itself, and the very fundamentals of all religion and of all morality. This conflict extends the whole length of the line. More serious and fiercer than ever before the conflict is between the old and the new world-view. For man has undertaken the gigantic effort of interpreting the whole world, and all things that are therein, in their origin, essence, and end, what is called purely and strictly scientifically, that is, without God, without any visible, supernatural, spiritual element, and simply and alone from the pure data of matter and force.

Such effort, indeed, has been tried before. But then the men who undertook to do it stood isolated, and wielded only a limited influence in their own circles. Ordinarily also they succeeded no further than a few crude outlines of world-interpretation, but failed of furnishing the data from which to work them out and to apply them to the divisions and subdivisions of what exists. The systems which they offered did not agree; lame parts were soon discovered in them; they allowed too

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much room for accident. Even such a thinker as Spinoza was not able to establish other than a mathematical relation between the substance and its attributes and modes, and left the origin of the world altogether unexplained. But, it is said, all this is now entirely changed. Hegel's pantheism has furnished the idea of the absolute, eternal process of becoming. The materialism of Feuerbach has applied this idea to the world of matter and force as the only existing one. And in the struggle for existence, in the natural and sexual choice of propagation, in the inheritance of the acquired properties, and in the accommodation to surroundings, Darwin's theory of development has provided the necessary means to make this process of the eternal becoming intelligible in the material world. Thus with the change of the century there has been gradually a new world-view arisen which undertakes to interpret not merely the inanimate but also the animate creations, not merely the unconscious but also the conscious, and all this without exception independently of God, and only and alone from an immanent self-development.

As a matter of course the followers of this doctrine of development do not all go equally far in the application. There are many who shrink from the inferences, who halt at a given point, and who in imitation of Kant abandon a lesser or greater domain to mystery. These are the agnostics, the dualists, who say, "We do not know," and also, "We shall never know," and who take it for granted that the realm which is accessible to science is surrounded by an unknown land of impenetrable mystery of the unknowable. While they limit the real, the strictly scientific knowing to the world of the sensually observable, and of the measurable and ponderable things, they seek to maintain round about this world an inaccessible domain which can be peopled by each individual with the representations of his faith or the creations of his imagination. Despairing of an all-embracing and all-inclusive world-view they leave faith and knowledge divided and irreconciled, and they keep two sets of books of truths.

But it is readily perceived that this standpoint is untenable. All conservatism stands weak over against radicalism, with which it agrees in principle. He who fully accepts the theory of development in the sensual, observable world cannot dismiss it at once and without explanation when spiritual phenomena appear. Even though provisionally a small domain is then set aside for faith, this domain is bound to become ever smaller; even as it was with the domain of the redskins in America, as they were forced to recede from before the invading whites. One fortification after another must then be sacrificed, one line of defense after another be abandoned, and one concession after another be granted. There is no immovable conviction in these conservative dualists, no strength of faith, no enthusiastic courage. And hence they are ever bound to lower the flag before the radicals, who have the courage of their

convictions, who shrink from no inferences, and who, beginning and continuing without God, are determined also to end without God. Hence these are the men of the future. Conservatives and liberals die out, but the radicals and socialists are to be the leaders of the twentieth century. They have agreed to hold a total and final clearing out of whatever of the old Christian world-view consciously or unconsciously still remains in our laws and morals, in our education and civilization. For they realize that in the long run man, who thirsts after unity, cannot live by the duality and amphibiousness of believing and knowing. They feel the urgency of the need of harmony between all our convictions, tendencies, and deeds. And therefore they exert themselves all the more strenuously by philosophic thought to erect upon the foundation of the materialistic natural science a well-finished and harmonious world-view which will put an end to the imperfect knowledge as well as to the foolish faith of former days and cause all things to appear before the soul's eye in the magical light of a world-embracing system.

Thus presently over against the old world-view there will be placed the new world-view thought out to its latest instance and consequently applied to every department of life, namely, the irreligious over against the Christian, the atheistic over against the theistic, the mechanical over against the organic, or as it has been named, the world-view of development over against that of creation. It is our purpose to compare these two world-views at three points, as the questions are put after the origin, essence, and end of all things, in order that the comparison may establish us the more firmly in the Christian faith and may gird us with strength for the conflict which, in lesser or greater measures of fierceness, awaits us all.

## I.

There are many, many things whose knowledge is of little consequence to man. No slightest value attaches to the knowledge of how many drops of water there are in the ocean, how many grains of sand lie on the shore of the sea, how many leaves there are on one tree, or how many hairs there are on our heads. There are those who busy themselves with these things and seek pleasure in curiosities. Even science is sometimes in danger in our times of losing itself in all sorts of detail investigation, and by reason of the numerous trees to lose sight of the forest. Literature, for instance, is often bent upon tracing out the smallest particulars from the lives of the poets and especially to exhibit their *chronique scandaleuse* in broadest folds, without adding thereby the least help to a better knowledge and a broader appreciation of their art products. But science is not aided by all this. For science is no knowledge of

all sorts of insignificant minutiae, but an insight into the essence of things, and an understanding of the idea, the logic, and the universal which is to be observed in things.

But even then, on scientific ground there is a great difference in the value of knowledge. There is knowledge which is of highest importance to the school which tends to the development of the head, but which is altogether apart from the interests of the heart, and has therefore no significance for life. The saying of Schopenhauer contains a great truth; namely, You do not cease from praising the reliability and accuracy of mathematics; but what does it avail me to know with utmost certainty the thing which does not concern me? Thomas Aquinas has truly said that the least that can be known of highest interests is more desirable and of greater value than the completest and most accurate knowledge of futile and indifferent things.

There is knowledge which is of highest interest and urgent necessity to every man, without distinction. These are questions of life, whose answer each man requires because it stands in closest connection with the temporal and eternal well-being. Whatever is said, all people are conscious of it in turn that the life of man is no play, but an awful reality, whose seriousness creates concern, since nothing less than an eternity hangs on it. Each man is convinced of this in the deepest parts of his soul, and shows it by seeking, even though in wrong ways, after a highest, enduring, and eternal good. Our heart is created for God, and it does not rest until it finds this at his Father heart. Hence we should know whence we come, what the source and origin of all things is, whether the last ground of all existing things is matter or spirit, force of person, unconscious impulse, or almighty will of God, he Creator of heaven and earth.

The development theory of our times meets this question with the answer that in reality there is no origin and no beginning of things. All what is always was, though it be in other forms, and always shall be. The law of substance, that is, the theory the every equal quantity, of the indestructibility of matter and force, especially since the famous treatise by Helmholtz on *Die Erhaltung der Kraft*, published in 1847, is according to naturalists irrefutably demonstrated and established beyond all doubt. This is the great discovery of the nineteenth century. Said Professor Haga at Gronigen last year, in his rectoral oration on the development of natural science, "A particle of water can be traced from the moment it falls on the tops of the mountains as a snowflake, and as glacier-ice requires years to be pushed ahead, until it melts and in the brook is carried along to river and sea, where once more it evaporates and becomes fluid in the atmosphere as part of a cloud."

This is taught of matter. But this same law is valid with reference to the power

which can be moved and changed but never reduced or increased in quantity. The railway train, said the same professor, which has suddenly the brakes put on loses its capacity of motion, but the heat developed in the skid, wheels, and rails represents an equally great quantity of capacity of work.

From this important law many present-day naturalists infer that substance is eternal. There is no origination and no passing away in any actual sense, no being born and no dying. What is was from all eternity and shall be to all eternity. There is change of form, of appearance, and endless transformation; there is an eternal process, an unbegun and a never-ending circular movement of matter and force. But the substance is indestructible; it is the only, absolute, eternal being, which penetrates and fills eternal time and infinite space. It is, if you please, the Deity of the newer world-view. There is no other god. It has no other properties, no higher virtues and perfections, no more exalted names than matter and force. And it is no blessed, glorious, and all-sufficient being, but a restless becoming, and eternal urgency subject to an ever-continuing process of motion.

From this motion, which is taken as eternally belonging to matter and force, the origin of all things is to be interpreted. Development, evolution is the eternal law, which governs and directs everything that exists; with its blind fate and incalculable accident it displaces Divine Providence. The origin of our planetary system is explained according to this law. Our world in its present form was preceded by thousand others, which in turn came into being after this same law and have passed away. When the last preceding one had dissolved itself into a gaseous mass of mists, from which, according to a probable esteemed hypothesis of Kant and Laplace, the present world has appeared with its sun, moon, and stars, and also our earth, gradually by consolidation, rotation, and forming of the globe. But as everywhere else, upon this earth also development continues itself by the ceaseless motion of matter and force. Along long, immeasurably long lines of regularity the higher develops itself from the lower. By all sorts of evolutions the earth forms itself into a fit dwelling place for living things. First there is the inanimate, the formation of seas and lands, of mountains and streams, of minerals and layers of earth. Then matter organizes itself ever along finer lines and the operations of force become every more intricate, until at length under favorable circumstances from inorganic matter the cell originates, which is the bearer of life. And when it is once again come, then in the course of centuries there develop themselves the kingdoms of plants and animals, in every higher formation, richer variety, and greater numbers. There is no deep, broad chasm between the animate and the inanimate, but a gradual transition. There is only a more intricate construction, finer organization, a higher development. Along the same way at length man arrives upon the scene. He also is not brought by the

hand of the Creator, bearing his image; but he is the higher development of that species of animals, whose next of kin still continue to live on in the orangutan, gorilla, and chimpanzee. In the fierce struggle for existence some animals, by acquiring and inheriting every more excellent properties, have gradually developed themselves in one or other part of the earth into men. There has not been a first man. No one is able to indicate where the animal ceases and man begins. There is a slow, gradual development spreading itself across many centuries; by the smallest possible changes in the largest possible spaces of time from the lower all the higher has come forth; and man himself is the result of a process covering many millions of years.

This is the new and newest interpretation of the origin of things. There is something imposing, something which takes hold of one mightily in this view. There is contained in it unity of thought, boldness of conception, and sequence of principle. It is readily understood that it charms many. Yes, when one does not believe in revelation which furnishes another interpretation of all creatures, one is bound in a similar way to render the origin of things in some measure intelligible to himself. They must have come from somewhere and have originated in some way. The theory may still be incomplete and leave many phenomena in the physical and psychical world unexplained, nevertheless, according to Straus, Darwin is hailed as the greatest benefactor of the human race, because he has opened the door through which a more fortunate posterity will be able to cast out the miracle for good. An age which denies the supernatural and even shakes off all religion, cannot do other, all opposition notwithstanding, than expect all salvation from the reason, its own thinking, and to see the solution of all the riddles of the world in development.

But however much this system may seem to be inwardly united and however readily we may account for its influence and popularity, it is not a product of science, but of the imagination; it is a play of conceptions on the part of the understanding which thirsts after unity. It is said to be built upon the foundation of empirical physics, aided by logical thinking; but it is a castle in the air, without any solid foundation, and without any severity of style, an air castle in the true sense of the word. With the laying of the very first stone it abandons empirics, the reliable results of physics. It is no science in any serious sense, no science exacte, as it is claimed to be, but a world-view with which the subject plays his parts, a philosophy as uncertain as any system of the philosophers, and individual opinion of as much significance as that of every other man.

That this assertion is correct is shown by the fact that though this system has been more broadly worked out in this century just closed and furnished with data from physics, in principle it has been thought out and recommended by philosophers long ago. Neither in former centuries nor in this has materialism been

the result of severe scientific investigation, but the fruit of philosophical thought. Indeed, from the nature of the case physics can never go back of nature. It stands on the ground of nature, assumes its existence, and hence cannot answer the question of origin. As soon as it undertakes to do this it leaves its lines, ceases to be physics and becomes philosophy, on an equal standing with the other philosophical systems which as grass and flower of the field may bloom today but wither tomorrow. Physics may have discovered in this century the law of the conservation of work-capacity, but with no logical possibility can the inference be drawn from this that matter and force are eternal. What exists now has for this reason not existed always. And what human power is not able to destroy is therefore not indestructible. The word "eternal" has no place in the vocabulary of physics, for it has only to do with the finite and the seen things and is limited to the relative. It steps across its own boundaries when it speaks of eternal matter, eternal force, infinite space, and time without end. Whenever it does this it plays with words whose meaning it does not understand and whose copulation is as contradictory as that of a wooden iron and a square circle.

It is more foolish still when it speaks of eternal motion. An eternal motion would also have been run down eternally and this be a standstill. For what falls in time is transitory, and what is eternal does not fall in time. Motion assumes a moving force, which gives the impetus, which produces and maintains it. Greek philosophers were so convinced of this, that from the motion of the world they concluded a first mover. It may, indeed, be said that the universe moves itself, that it is a *perpetuum mobile*; but aside from this being a miracle equally great as the creation, it is as little possible to think this of the world as a whole as of one of its parts. For it is always the same substance, the same matter and force which dwells in the whole universe and in each of its parts. And motion is not everything. There is no motion without direction. What is the force, which not only moves but also leads the motion in a given direction? What is it owing to that motion takes such a direction, that it results in the formation of sun and planets, of heaven and earth, of minerals and plants, of animals and man in an ascending series? An appeal to the blind force of substance by way of explanation is equally absurd, as when, after the example of Cicero, one accounts for a book such as the Iliad from an accidental cast of a thousand letters.

But, apart from all this, what does physics know of the substance of things? Because it moves continually in the world of things that are seen it asserts that there is nothing else than matter and force contained therein. Always dealing with matter it disregards and denies spirit. Theology is accused, and justly so, of having usurped, in early times, all the sciences. But no science has ever done this more entirely than physical science of the present day. It claims to be the only science and even

outstrips English and Russian imperialism in its ambition for annexation. It declares consecutively biology and psychology, theology and philosophy as incorporated with itself, it forces its method upon all the sciences, and considers the mechanical interpretation the only one that is warranted to the claim of being scientific.

And, after all, it does not know what to do with all the phenomena which constitute the object of these several sciences. She does not know what substance is, and when she claims that it is nothing but matter and force, she cannot tell what each of these is, nor how they are related. Such a man as Haeckel, who shrinks from no riddle, was bound to confess that the inner essence of things is unknown. And little as she is able to penetrate the essence of matter and force, she is still less able to analyze the innermost being of life. Life, all life, is a secret which is to be revered but not explained. He who analyzes it kills it. All tracings and investigations have not lifted a corner of the veil which hangs across this mystery of creation. By the studies, especially by those of Pasteur at Paris, it has been shown that even with the lowest organic beings, namely, the *infusorien*, life does not originate of itself by mechanical changes of matter; there is no *generatio aequivoca*. Despairing of a mechanical interpretation, others, such as the English naturalist Thomson (Lord Kelvin), sought refuge in the supposition that life-germs had fallen in meteor stones from other planets upon this earth and thus had imparted existence to organic creatures; and this, as is seen at once, merely puts the problem off, while, moreover, it ascribes the origin of living creatures in the earth to a pure accident. With Haeckel it was held that life needs no interpretation, since it is equally eternal as matter and force and motion—which is no better than a mere play of words and is equivalent to a confession of weakness. With younger investigators, such as Bunge, Rindfleisch, Driesch, Ostwald, Reinke, Pictet, etc., returns were made to the at first disdainfully rejected life-power and alongside of a mechanical, an organic, energetical principle was also adopted in the world-view. *Omne vivum ex vivo*, all the living comes forth from the living, is still the latest word of science.

This new world-view involves itself still more in a net of contradictions when it handles the question of the origin of man. It is indeed stated, as the consistency of the starting point claims, that man descended from the animal. But it has not been demonstrated by a single phenomenon. It was known in earlier times that all sorts of relationships exist between animal and man, it is taught in the Scriptures, and at most has been indicated in our age in several particulars. With the animals man was created on the sixth day. His body also was formed from the dust; of the earth he is earthy. But all the features of relationship give no right to the conclusion that man and animal belong to one family and that they are blood relations. For greater far than the undeniable points of similarity is the far-reaching difference between man

and animal indicated by the vertical position, formation of hand, skull, and brains, and still more by the reason and self-consciousness, by thought and language, by religion and morality, by science and art. Moreover, no single sample has been produced of the transition forms which with a common descent must have existed in great numbers. Some finds of human bones and skulls have been hailed enthusiastically as remnants of the so ardently longed-for transition forms. But a more accurate investigation brought ever again to light that all these remnants were original with common people, men of like movements with ourselves. In spite of diligent and zealous investigations there is nothing in advance this day of the word of Rudolf Virchow, that every fossil type of lower human development is wanting. No one has thus far demonstrated where and when and how the animals have developed themselves into men. As far as we can go back into the past, animals have been animals and men men. The descent theory of Darwin may be an indispensable link in the doctrine of development; it finds no support in facts. Man always has and still does form a distinct species in the world of creatures.

For this reason there is still room in science for the wondrously beautiful narrative which the opening chapters of the Bible contain concerning the origin of things. We, too, acknowledge a unity which holds and binds together all created things. But we do not take this unity to lie in a cold, dead substance, but in the living God, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. It lies in his consciousness, in his will, in his counsel. In the beginning it was not chaotic matter, the unconscious force, the impulse devoid of reason, but the conscious, spoken and at the same time speaking Word, which called all things into being. The creatures do not owe their origin to an emanation from, or to an evolution of the Absolute, that is, God. For both are contradictory to the conception of the Absolute, which is in itself unchangeable, eternal, and perfect being, and admits of no emanation of development. Creation alone, which harmonizes with the being of God as well as with that of the creatures, interprets the origin of things. And thus the Scripture states it. In an ascending series, covering a period of six days, by the word of his power the Almighty brings all things to appear from the unseen world of thought. He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. He calleth those things which be not as though they were. Heaven and earth, firmament and clouds, mountains and streams, sun, moon, and stars, grass and herbs, creeping and four-footed animals. He forms them all by the breath of his Spirit from the chaos of being. And he crowns his work with the creation of man after his image and likeness. Hence everything is of divine descent, allied to the Son, animated by the breath of the Spirit; everything is resting upon thought and will, upon understanding and counsel; and therefore everything mutually allied is one world, one cosmos, which receives its crown and

glory, its lord and master, in Man of God's own family.

What an insight into the origin of things! What an exalted simplicity! Here is poetry and truth and religion all in one. This is both natural science and philosophy. Experience and thought, head and heart are here reconciled. Here is a view of the world which satisfies both consciousness and conscience and responds to all the aspirations of man. From the other side, it may be said, better be an ennobled ape than a degenerate Adam, or, better be the highest of animals than the lowest of gods; but these very sayings betray the pride of man, who will be his own creator and in science also fails in the temptation of equality with God. They not only reject the Word of God, and are therefore devoid of wisdom, but they also extinguish the light of reason, saying in their heart, "There is no God," and are darkened in their understanding and vain in the thoughts of their heart.

## II.

Equally important as the first inquiry into the origin is the second, which investigates the essence of things. What is the world? What is humanity and the individual? What am I? An answer to these questions is also indispensable to the unity of our thought and the peace of our heart.

The new world-view is at once ready with its answer. It asserts, of course, that in reality all creatures are one and the same. There is nothing but matter and force, which constitute the substance of all things and only changes in endless series of forms. There is no God, there are no spirits, there is no heaven, there is no world of invisible things, no kingdom of eternal goods, no moral world-order. Nothing exists save this visible world of measurable and ponderable things, which is moved by purely mechanical and chemical forces. In a word, the world is a machine, and, as a clock, runs down. It is distinguished, however, from a machine made by man, in that the latter has been put together by a reasonable will and is still governed by it. But the world—wonderful saying—is a machine which has construed itself, which continuously holds itself in motion, and which, completely blind, without reason and purpose, eternally runs on and never down. Hence the world is no living, animated organic unity, but an eternal existence of one and the same sort, a circular motion devoid of purpose, an endless, useless round upon round, monotonous and wearisome as the wave-beat of the ocean and the flying wheels of a factory.

The organism, the living being, and man also have their place in this mechanism. For there are no creatures who differ from each other in being; there are no species which, though allied, are separated from each other in origin. All living beings are

automatons, machines, even as inorganic creatures, only more finely construed and more artistically constructed. Man also forms no exception. He has neither a soul nor liberty, neither responsibility, independence, nor personality. In fact, he does not live, he is being lived. There are phenomena peculiar to him which we call psychical. But this gives us no warrant to conclude that these are altogether his own. For practical reasons they are only provisionally distinguished from physical, sensually observable phenomena. For in kind and nature they are really the same. They are but the finest products of the richest developed change of matter.

Simply because man is more finely construed than animals, and again because his highest and noblest construction is the brain, he produces finer and nobler products than other creatures. Hence all the psychical phenomena which we find with man find their preparation and analogy with plants and animals. Understanding, reason, consciousness, will, feeling, passions, tendencies, all occur in an undeveloped form with lower organisms. The difference is in degree, not in kind. With man all these phenomena are produced in the same mechanical, chemical way. What a man thinks and wills and does, he must think, will, and do. Even as bile separates itself from the liver, so thought separates itself from the brain. The better, the finer, the greater the brain, the better, the deeper, the richer the thought. *Ohne Phosphor kein Gedanke* (“without phosphorous no thought”). In a word, as a man eats, so is he.

This same interpretation is applied to all spiritual and moral goods which are common to man. Language, religion, morality, art, science, law, history, etc., at its latest instance, is all product of change of matter, results of circumstances. If animals, says Darwin, were educated as men, they too would be men. Fate of accident alone, whichever you please to call it, has determined it otherwise. First living as beasts, climbing the branches of trees, in communion with women, without any sense of right or law, of good and evil, compelled by circumstances, in the manner of bees and ants and beetles, they have gradually formed colonies. And in those colonies, alongside and over against the animal and selfish inclinations which are originally common to man social instincts have slowly developed, which weighed up against the others, and held them in balance, and caused men to live not exclusively for themselves but to some extent for others. Protected and encouraged by society these social instincts have gradually fostered the sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, of true and false, and quickened the need of arts and sciences. Hence there is no moral world-order, no objective right, no unchangeable law of morals, no absolute distinction of good and bad. It is all the product of circumstances. Under other relations the moral law would be entirely different, good would be evil, right wrong, and truth falsehood. Even religion has no objective value. It is born from the conflict of the feeling of self and the feeling of need. Dependent upon and oftentimes helpless

over against nature, and bound to maintain himself in a physical or ethical sense, man reaches out after invisible powers which he takes to exist analogous to his own spiritual life, first in and afterward above nature, and by sacrifice and prayer he tries to engage their help in the conflict. But there is no religion in the sense of a service of God, for there is no God. At most, religion has a subjective value. Man alone is the standard of things.

Such is the thought of the newer world-view concerning the essence of material and spiritual phenomena. One might almost ask, How is it possible? And in any case, How can faith in such a view be claimed in the name of science? For it is at once clear that from this view-point there is no difference of good and evil, of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood. Everything is good and beautiful and true in its time and place, according to the individual faith and choice. And yet the adherents of the newer world-view claim to have the truth—the pure, full truth, which chases away the mists, expels error, and opens the state of happiness. They think they have a world without riddle, without mystery, and with unknown boldness they force it upon others. Skeptical according to their principle, they are on the one side hardened dogmatists in practice, and oftentimes worse fanatics than the adherents of religious belief. While they do not acknowledge objective truth, they are more certain of the truth of their own teaching than many an orthodox believer. By which single fact they pay homage to the validity and the value of the old world-view at a radical and decisive point. Sin is always doomed in spite of itself to pay homage to virtue, and falsehood in whatever garment it hides itself is compelled to confess respect for the truth which it antagonizes. When in the name of science, that is, in the name of truth, the defenders of the new world-view demand faith in their system, they cannot do otherwise than acknowledge the objective, of human opinion, independent difference of truth and falsehood, and thus also of good and bad, or right or wrong, of the beautiful and the unsightly.

Yea, more, when with the warmth of conviction, with eloquence of speech, and force of argument they seek to make their truth the common good of humanity and thereby contribute to the state of future happiness, which is the realm of the true, good, and beautiful, the “trinity of monism,” they mean the world of unseen goods which far excels the world of visible things and rules and dominates it. By their trying to break the compulsion of nature by their serious thinking and strong will they show that they themselves are citizens of a higher, reasonable, and moral world which is exalted far above the mechanical order of nature and differs from it in essence. They themselves do not rest content with the physical necessity, but they honor the independence and the liberty of human personality. They furnish the

strongest proof that they are no machines, no animals, but men—men of God's own generation, created after his image.

Indeed, this image never allows itself to be entirely wiped out. It operates also in the most deeply sunken and most widely errant man. It bears an indelible character, and asserts itself even in the unrest and in the accusation of the conscience. Man can adhere to falsehood, but he never does it and never can do it save as he holds it to be truth, and thereby pays homage to the truth. He can be the servant of sin, but he never is nor ever can be, except as he reckons evil to be good and so pays his respect to the good. He can kneel down to an idol, but he never does it and he never can do it except as he thinks that in the idol he sees the only true and living God and confesses awe and fear of the Eternal Being. God leaves himself without witness to no man. In each man's consciousness and conscience, reason and heart there reveals itself a kingdom of eternal and unseen goods, which steps not out of the way of any doubt and shrinks from no bold denial. The materialist may gaze himself blind upon the material world; spiritual, ideal goods are also goods, though they cannot be weighed or measured, or converted into bank notes. Sin, guilt, remorse, repentance, grace, love, comfort, forgiveness, etc., are also phenomena which must be interpreted, as well as the world of ponderable material and mechanical force.

The interpretation which the newer world-view offers of these spiritual and moral phenomena is really not worthy of the name. Confess, can it be called an interpretation when personality is robbed of its liberty; when the objective existence of true and false, of good and evil, of right and wrong is denied; when religion and morality is dissolved in a fancy? We do not dispute the warrant of tracing out as far and deep as possible the unmistakable connection and mutual relation of the spiritual and material phenomena. But as little as he who anatomically and physiologically investigates the brains, interprets the thought, or he who anatomically or physiologically investigates the heart, interprets love, just so little has he discovered the secret of religion and morality, of art and science, who exposes to the light their connection with the social conditions of any given period of time. Whoever thinks this mocks, indeed, at the needs of the human heart. They do as the unmerciful friends in Jesus' parable: when we ask them for bread they give us a stone; when we ask them for fish they give us a scorpion, as a proof that the mercies of the wicked are still cruel, and he who will feed on this bread of science will, according to Isaiah 29:8, be as a hungry man who dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but when he awaketh his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreams that he drinks, when he awakes, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.

The development theory, therefore, is unable to interpret the richness and variety of creation. Indeed, the word development is not in place at the view-point of

the mechanical world-interpretation. Evolutionists have unlawfully appropriated it and use it as a device to hide their poverty, and as a flag which does not cover their cargo. But development does not stand over against creation, but is only possible upon its foundation and belongs to its confession. Development produces nothing of itself, it is not the mother of being or of life; it is only a form of motion, which can only reveal what lies hidden inwardly in the germ. But the so-called development theory has no knowledge of germs; it knows nothing of disposition or capacity, of fitness and susceptibility. In its system there is no room for anything save atoms and complexes of atoms, which are altogether passive in themselves and are collocated only and alone in a mechanical or chemical manner by circumstances from without. This makes no mention of development in its real sense. No one thinks of development with reference to a machine whose parts are prepared in a factor piece by piece and afterward put together. Development is given an opportunity only when by almighty creation existence is given to beings who by way of organic growth must become what in germ and principle they already are. He who speaks of development refers to thought, plan, law, end; he who names development names God, who laid the "cidos" in the "hyle," the completed organism in the germ, the future in the present, and who in the creation had an eye to all times and opportunities. So little does development stand over against creation that there is scarcely any choice left between creation with the richest development on one side and mechanical combination by the accident of a host of similar atoms on the other. Development stands between origin and end; under God's providence it leads from the first to the last and unfolds all the riches of being and of life to which God gave existence.

When, therefore, in distinction from materialistic one-sidedness we embrace not merely a few but all phenomena in our world-view, how greatly does our outlook upon the universe change and enlarge itself. For then the world is no monotonous monism, no mechanical process, no irrational machine, but an organic, living whole. It contains not only matter and force, but also spirit and consciousness, reason and will. No merely mechanical and chemical, but also spiritual and moral powers operate herein, and not only are there dominant in it laws for material nature, but also laws for plants and animals, for angels and men, for social and political life, for religion and morality, for science and art, and for all the realms of the true and good and beautiful. The world is a unity, but that unity reveals itself in the richness and most beautiful variety. From the beginning heaven and earth have been distinguished from each other; sun, moon, and stars were given a task of their own; plant and animal and man each have their proper nature. Everything is created by God with a nature of its own and exists and lives after its own law. And although the

creatures are thus distinguished, they are not separated from each other. Together they form one whole, one organism, one art product, of which God himself is the artist and the master builder. In him, in his counsel, in his will all created things find their origin and maintain their existence. Everything comes forth from him and in him everything is and moves and has being. He is no Deus ex machina, no help in extreme need, whom man invokes as a last resort to assist in his conflict with the mighty forces of nature. But he is the source of all being, the origin of all life and light, and the overflowing fountain of all good, who exhibits his virtues in the world and fills it with his glories.

Again, the newer world-view has no need of God; still less is its need of Christ. It has no knowledge either of sin or of guilt. It needs no Savior and saves itself. It makes mention of a development and of a civilization which leaves the heart unchanged and at most puts a check for a time upon the "wild animal" in man. But it knows nothing of a regeneration and renewal by the Holy Ghost, or of a faith that justifies the ungodly and that overcomes the world. It is the world-view of the heathen who, knowing God, does not glorify him as God, and gives thanks that the truth of God changes into falsehood, and honors and serves the creature above the Creator, to whom be glory forever and ever. It disdains the salvation from above and undertakes from the depths to lift up self on high; it will have nothing to do with the incarnation, the becoming of man on the part of God, but replaces it by the reaching forth unto deity on the part of man. But behold, amid this world of sin and sorrow, of riddles and mysteries, there stands before us on the heights of Golgotha, the cross of Christ. And at that cross God and the world, angels and men, peoples and nations, yea, all creatures take each other by the hand and exchange the token of reconciliation and of peace. In the cross all the riddles of being and of life solve themselves in principle. For thereby has God reconciled himself to the world, and triumphed gloriously over all principalities and powers. All things are of God, they are and remain in God and by God, and from their scattering they shall once return unto God. Is not this world-view more real, more beautiful and richer than that which views the whole universe as an accidental play of lifeless atoms?

### III.

The third question about the end and aim of things is no less important than the other two. What is the end of the world? What is the issue of the world's history? Whither am I going?

At this point the insufficiency and unsatisfactory character of the theory of

development is especially evident. In a word, it knows nothing of an end; it has no mention of a plan and of any destiny of things; there is no room in its system for any history of the world and of man. It is true that oftentimes life appears more potent than doctrine and practice frequently gains the day over theory. In the writings of evolutionists we meet repeatedly with the mention of a purpose. Haeckel, for instance, declares that “the construction of ear, eye, and hand answers the purpose so wonderfully” as to induce us to accept the errant hypothesis of a “creation after a preconceived plan.” But the mention of a purpose occurs in these instances either unconsciously or without ground. The system of the development theory offers no room for a plan or a purpose. Nothing is dominant, then, save the compulsion of fate of the capriciousness of accident. Everything is as it is, without reason and without purpose. The theory of evolution furnishes no answer whatever to the inquiry to what purpose everything serves. On this question it remains silent.

There is no purpose which the individual man serves. He exists, but why and to what end cannot be told. He is, remains here for a time, and departs. Then it is done, *la farce est jouée*, death is the end of a pitiful life. Since there is neither soul nor spirit, immortality is folly and faith in it is nothing but egoism, the grave, or better yet, the cremation oven, is man’s latest dwelling place.

There is no purpose for humanity. History is no theater of liberty, but is dominated just like the physical world, and with equal necessity, by mechanical forces and laws. The study of history which reckons with the will, with individuals and persons, and deems the course of history dependent upon these is entirely wrong. And homage is due to the method of physics, which views the only and all dominating factor of history in society, in the masses, in economical relations, and in social conditions, and from this interprets men with their thoughts and wishes, their religion and morality, their art and science. Irrational, planless, purposeless humanity goes forward to meet its ruin.

There is no purpose for the earth, the present world as a whole. Science teaches that a certain end awaits the whole planetary system of which the earth forms a part. Even as it once proceeded out of the mass of vapors so it shall once return into the same. There are a few who assert that present conditions will continue eternally. But physics disputes this point and deems it untenable. Endless duration together with and endless progress is inconceivable for the earth as well as for man. An end must come. To reckon with millions of years, in the past or in the present, is child’s play and unworthy of mature minds, and is at best of no greater value than the gigantic numbers of Indian mythology. All physicists teach that after some millions of years the earth shall come to an end. However rich in provisions, the earth is not inexhaustible. Coal, wood, peat, minerals, etc., decrease gradually in quantity as the

human race increases and covers the whole earth. For this reason alone the development of humanity cannot be taken as endlessly progressing. To this is added that gradually a violent disturbance must occur in our whole planetary system. The velocity in the earth's revolution is diminished according to computation by at least one second every six hundred thousand years. This may be ever so little; after billions of years it is bound to bring about a change in the relation of day and night which renders life on earth simply impossible. The only point of difference among physicists is, which of the two will last longer, the sun or the earth. If the sun will be first to consume his provision of warmth, the earth is bound to face death by congealing. If the earth will be the first to be exhausted, it will land in the sun, and finds there its ruin. But whether by freezing or by burning, death is the end of the world as well as of the individual man and of the entire human race.

And when in view of this future the defenders of the development theory are asked to what purpose all things here have existed and lived, they have nothing to say and leave us without answer. When once it shall have come thus far, says Von Hellwald, then the eternal rest of death shall dominate over the earth. Robbed of its atmosphere and of its living creatures, in eternal moonlike ruin the earth will revolve around the sun, as before; but the human race, its culture, its struggles and efforts, its creations and ideals shall have been. And with the question "to what purpose" unanswered, he closes his history of culture. This is the eschatology, the doctrine of the last things in the dogmatics of the theory of development. It is evident that no one can live by so sad an expectation. The defenders of evolution often say that in science the question is not, What brings comfort? but What is true? And they mock at the first question of the Heidelberger, What is thine only comfort in life and death? But in the end even they cannot afford to go without comfort in life. And since in the far future everything appears deathlike and dark to them, they comfort themselves with the thought that it will take millions of years still before it comes about. The books and writings are not actual, said Professor Haga in his oration referred to above, in which the earth is described as missing all warmth of the sun, and the last human pair is pictured as dying in a cold embrace. It were childish indeed, says Henne am Rhyn, to bemoan the fact that once everything shall have been, and that no one shall then take notice of us and our efforts and labors. For there are still innumerable centuries before us, and it is worth the pains to establish something substantial for our children and our children's children.

As the latest future becomes darker and sadder, the evolutionists foster a proportionately higher expectation of the future near at hand. Man cannot live without hope. The individual may perish; after millions of years the human race may burn up or be frozen; in the near centuries a blessed and glorious future awaits us all.

The paradise of the past was a piece of the imagination, according to the prophets of the development theory, in the near future it will be a tangible reality. A heaven above earth is a pious but idle dream, but a heaven upon earth is near at hand. The development theory is made serviceable to this expectation. Behold, how far man has already advanced. He was an animal; he became a man; why should he not also become an angel? His dominion over the earth is extended ever more broadly. All the forces of nature are becoming subject to him. The riddles of creation disappear before his searching gaze. Life is enriched and glorified by his inventions and discoveries. Still a little while and paradise is instituted in the earth. From the mist the day shall break.

With glowing colors this future state is drawn by many evolutionists. When that day shall have come, says Haeckel, the service of the true, good, and beautiful shall be universal, and displace the old religion. Modern man shall have no more need of a church building. In free nature, wherever he looks out upon the boundless universe, he will find his church in nature itself. Nordau prophecies that in that day humanity shall no longer be an abstraction but a reality. Happy shall be the later born generations to whom it is apportioned to be bathed in the pure air and clear sunshine of this future, to live in the fraternity of humanity, and to be true, wise, free, and good. And Allard Pierson proclaims that, in that future the man who prizes the higher civilization shall love woman as his sister, and the woman who respects herself shall love man as her brother, and the noblest of men shall indeed be children of one and the same family. The young man shall company with the young woman, and nothing shall divert their mind from the study and practice of highest interests; innocence shall have been restored.

Thus do the defenders of the so-called strictly scientific development theory dream dreams and picture pictures. They abandon themselves to greater illusions than the Chiliasts among Christians, who look for a kingdom of Christ in this present dispensation. For what can science know of the future? Who assures us that the high culture which the nations have attained unto shall endure and not become trodden down underneath threatening revolutions? Where is the culture of the Babylonians and the Assyrians, of the Egyptians and Persians, even the Greeks and the Romans? Has nothing been heard of the black, yellow, and red danger, of social revolutions, which threaten our whole civilization with overthrow and ruin? And what can one build upon a development which in days like the present is made serviceable to the strongest, to the triumph of violence, and to the glorification of the "Wille zur Macht"?

Anarchism refuses to practice patience any longer and is no more satisfied with the idle promises but distant future. The men of a faithless science have continually

reproached the Christians for confronting the comfortless with the promise of a blessed life in the hereafter. Now the complaint comes back upon their own heads; it is cast at their feet by their own spiritual children. What will it benefit us, they say, that thousands of years from now our posterity will taste of peace and plenty and gladness, while in the meantime we and our families must perish of hunger and need? The orthodox take out a draft on heaven, the liberals on a misty future. Both are equally uncertain. Provide us with means this day to live, to eat, and to be merry! And threats are on the increase, that unless this be willingly granted they will obtain the same by violence, with the aid of petroleum and dynamite, of revolution and slaughter. No, truly, the golden age, so eagerly expected by many, has not yet come. Its dawn is not yet seen on the horizon. Watchman, what of the night?

No wonder that the increase is ever larger of such as wean themselves of expectation of the future and in gloomy despair preach pessimism. It is simple illusion, they say, to hope for better times. Socialistic equality is folly. To a few only it is given, at the price of the life and happiness of thousands, to devote themselves to the beautiful, to live in wealth and luxury, and to make use of the right of the strongest. They are the *Übermenschen* (the overmen), the elect, the only blessed, the gods of the earth. But men have been animals and will remain such. Hence what befalls one man befalls humanity. It passes through its periods of infancy, youth, and years of maturity. After that it becomes aged, loses its strength, and desires nothing save rest and quiet, the rest of death, the silence of the grave, the eternal sorrowlessness of the nothing.

Complete bankruptcy, moral and spiritual, is the end of the modern world-view. It confirms the significant word of Paul, that he who is without God and without Christ is also without hope in the world. We Christians, however, thank God, have another hope, and a better founded expectation. We can talk of more glorious things since God has revealed them unto us in his word. The Holy Bible is a wonderful book. It narrates the creation of man after the divine image, and his terrible fall in sin and death. But at once the description follows of how God in infinite grace has appointed in history and prophecy, in psalm and proverb the deliverances which he wrought for his people. And finally it leads us to the manger, places us at the foot of the cross, where the Christ dies, bearing our sin and reconciling the world unto God, and in the end points us to a glorious prospect of a new heaven and earth, in which God will dwell with his people and be all in all.

This is the development theory, and this is the course of history according to the Scriptures; this is its expectation of the future; and this also the hope and desire of the children of God; they foster this hope without any fear that science can deprive them of it, for what can science know of tomorrow? Foolish are the expectations by

which science seeks to displace the hope of Christians. There is indeed no other choice save between the ruin of all existing things as taught by present-day science, and the hope of the glory of the children of God, as preached by the Holy Scripture. And can the choice be doubtful? It is true that this future of the Christ will not be accomplished except by a violent crisis and conflict. Jesus came to the earth, not to bring peace but the sword, and to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. They of a man's own household will be his foes. Nevertheless the future is glorious and the hope certain. The kingdom of heaven, founded by Jesus in the earth, is and abides, and shall nevermore be banished from the earth. The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are his. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church. The near future may be the portion of the world and Satan, the later future belongs certainly to Christ. If we had no knowledge except that of an immanent self-development, we would have no ground for this hope. The kingdom of heaven has not once come along the lines of gradual ascent, neither will it come along these lines in the future. Not from beneath but from above do we expect the righteousness and life, the blessedness and glory of God. But Christ who has come down to earth is he who has also ascended above all heavens, that he might fulfill all things. And he is exalted that once every knee to him should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.