

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

WHICH WERE THE MORE RESPONSIBLE; JUDAS OR ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA?

Question. – What difference should we recognize as between the condition of Judas Iscariot and his crime, and Ananias and Sapphira and their crime? The one sinned before the holy spirit was dispensed at Pentecost; the others subsequently. If Judas' case merited the verdict of Second Death, would not the others merit the same? If Ananias and Sapphira did not sin the sin unto death, how should we regard the case of Judas?

Answer. – There would appear to be considerable [R3191 : page 143] difference between these two cases. Both crimes were committed against much light; both were reprehensible; but that of Judas seems to us to be much the more serious of the two. While he lived prior to Pentecost, we are to remember that he was one of the twelve upon whom Jesus had specially conferred a measure of his spirit – such a measure as permitted him, with the others, to perform miracles of healing, casting out of devils, etc., as recorded. His position was one of special closeness to the Lord and his personal instruction, both by precept and example. We remember our Lord's words to the disciples, "To you it is *given to know* the mysteries of the Kingdom; but to them that are without these things are spoken in parables." All this privilege, opportunity, knowledge, contact, made Judas specially responsible. Then, too, his crime would have been bad, wicked, had it been against any ordinary person; but was seriously intensified by being a crime against him who spake and acted as never man spake or acted before. It is from this standpoint that our Lord's declaration, that he was the son of perdition, seems to have special weight, or import, as implying that he had enjoyed a sufficiency of light and knowledge of righteousness to constitute a trial, and that his deliberate sin against such light and knowledge meant the Second Death.

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira they were beginners; they had not been long in the Church; they never met the Master, and had not known the apostles a great while. They saw others consecrating their goods and noted that they were correspondingly appreciated in the Church. They wished to have such an appreciation, and wished to do some good with their means; but a selfish feeling, combined, perhaps, with a feeling of caution, ensnared them into a wrong course of conduct which the Apostle Peter denominates "lying unto the holy spirit." We do not positively say that they will have any future or further opportunity for gaining everlasting life; we know of no Scripture which guarantees to us that they will have any such; yet it seems to us not improbable that they will have a further opportunity in which they will have greater light, and greater knowledge of right and wrong, and of the results attaching.

SHALL WE USE THE TERM "EVOLUTION," ETC.?

Question. – I note your opposition to the Evolution theory; yet in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., page 31, you remark the possibility that something of an evolutionary development was used by our Creator in bringing the various species of animals each to its own perfection. Let me ask, then: Cannot we Christians hold to the word "evolution" with propriety? and may we not even think of Adam as having reached *human perfection* by a process of development as one of the species animal?

Answer. – No; to both questions. We regard the words *Evolution* and *Evolutionist* as now definitely attached to a particular theory. These words belong wholly to those who invented and now have them, and we believe that, as Christians, we would do well to avoid them thoroughly, as the thought connected with the word is a mechanical one, pure and simple, as in opposition to a creative one. We would hold that God did develop different species, each to its perfection, and that he developed these, either by a long or a short process, from the earth itself; but we cannot admit, as evolutionists

would claim, that this was merely a development which needed not the Life-giver to start it, and to maintain and direct it. We would claim that God is the director of all the forces of nature, and that they are all of his own creation, and results, therefore, of his direct creation in every instance – fish, fowl, brute, man.

It would not strike us as reasonable to suppose a gradual development of a perfect man by an evolutionary process without his having some measure of responsibility added at some stage of his career before he reached perfection. Neither would it be reasonable to suppose the evolution of a man from a lower order of being to absolute perfection of his own kind, without a history, literature, etc., etc.; neither would it be reasonable to suppose a human being so evolved from a lower order of being to human perfection, as being in ignorance of good and evil up to the time that he reached perfection. If we who are in a fallen condition are held to be responsible to divine law, would not those of the human family who had not yet reached full perfection, but who had considerable intelligence, be reasonably amenable to law also? – supposing your theory to be true.

From whatever standpoint we would view the matter we can find no ground whatever for supposing that Adam ever had a human father, either perfect or imperfect in the flesh. Much more would we disbelieve that he ever had a father of a lower order of being, who could give him life in the divine likeness, in heart and head. Furthermore, to suppose such a possible evolution of a man to perfection from a condition of imperfection, would be to suppose that man, in the present-time imperfect condition, is his own savior, and could re-commence a process of evolution just as well as he could have carried on such a process before reaching perfection. If such a proposition should be considered true, it would negative all the Scriptural teachings we have respecting the necessity for a Redeemer and for his interference in order supernaturally to bring about times of restitution of all things.

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