

# The Fall of Man

*Evolution*

KIRTLEY F. MATHER in *Old Mother Earth* (Harvard Univ. Press):

Partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is a very real experience, both for each individual and for the human race as a whole. The patriarchs of Palestine had observed that one of the characteristics which distinguish man from other animals is his sense of moral law. And they were correct. Far back before the dawn of recorded human history certain ancestors of ours first said it would be right to do this thing, wrong to do that. A consciousness of moral law had emerged from the evolutionary processes which Old Mother Earth was directing. Man had partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And more than likely it was a woman who first considered the moral consequences of human deeds, and then taught a man what

she herself had learned. It was a real achievement, a major upward step in the progress of life, something of which we may well be proud and something which should clearly be distinguished from the so-called "fall of man." Not until human beings had attained a knowledge of good and evil could they be held morally responsible for their acts. Sin in the theological sense consists of wilfully doing what one knows to be wrong. Man could not "fall" until he had climbed; he should be blamed, not for climbing, but for the subsequent falling.

The parable continues; man discovers that he is naked. Anthropologists tell us that primitive folk did not at first attire themselves in clothing through any sense of modesty. Doubtless they are right. My own observations among uncivilized Indians east of the Bolivian Andes led me

several years ago to the conclusion that clothing there was designed as a protection against mosquitoes, midges, and gnats. Actually, modesty played no part in the determining of costume. Nevertheless, the adorning or covering of the body is a direct by-product of the consciousness of self, another characteristic which sets man apart from the animals, which display no indication of being self-conscious. Doubtless the emergence of self-consciousness from the brute consciousness of the lower animals must have been more or less contemporaneous with the dawning recognition of moral law.

Similarly the statement concerning the origin of man, set as it is in the midst of obvious figures of speech, should be considered as allegory rather than as science. Man is a creature of mixed motives and conflicting natures. At times he permits his animal instincts to rule his conduct; he exists upon a dead level with the beasts; he proves that he is of the earth, earthy. At other times he lifts his face toward the stars; he yearns for an understanding of himself and of his environment; he resolves to live a more useful life tomorrow than he has been living today; he is of the heavenly, divine. How better could this important truth be crystallized in the Hebrew annals than by describing man as made of the dust of the ground and the breath of life! To ascribe to that statement the idea that man was literally manufactured from mud is a libel upon Genesis. It is equivalent to maligning modern science with the charge that evolution means that man is a descendant from a monkey.

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The giraffe's chief weapons are his heels.

The grizzly bear is the world's largest carnivorous animal.

The U. S. Coast Guard was instrumental in saving 3,317 lives last year.

Brightly colored clothes tend to make an individual look larger.

The Library of Congress at Washington has one million maps in its files.

For the first time in eight years the British birthrate shows an increase.

## Modern Diogenes—Continued

the four years of the investigation are a first definite step towards finding out the tendencies in children and predicting success in living. These tests are not varied enough to show what a person would do in all kinds of situations where there is a chance to lie, cheat, or steal. But anyone who takes twenty of the tests is practically measured, the investigators declare. If a pupil cheats ten times in twenty tests, the chances are that he will cheat once in every two opportunities in all similar situations—until something happens to change his conduct.

Where the child or the grown person resorts to trickery, this is always a symptom that the psychologist reads as a sign of bad adjustment to life. Back of the dishonesty are the underlying causes that need looking into and remedying. The great mass of facts growing out of the Character Education Inquiry has shown that poverty, ignorance, stupidity, broken homes, all pull down the nation's standards of honesty. When still more is understood about causes of deceit, the task of controlling and reorganizing the behavior of children on scientific principles can be begun. It is a little like the task of the chemist who analyzes rubber or camphor in his laboratory and then proceeds to put together all the proper ingredients to make the

same thing in a test tube. Two thousand years after Diogenes, science has only begun in earnest to discover the ingredients that go into the making of an honest man.

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