

"How Does the Butterfly Get Out?"

by Walter Lewis Wilson, M.D.

THE THEORY of evolution has permeated our schools and colleges to such an extent that it is time that we Christians deliver such messages as will counteract this false teaching. The opportunity of addressing the students of one of our colleges was given me, and I learned that the hypothesis of evolution had permeated this school, until there were very few evidences that any Christian faith was left.

My address concerned the origin of things. I stated that no one could produce a plausible theory for the origin of odor, color, taste, shape or power. My argument was that none of these were the product of development, but were the result of a definite decision on the part of the living God. I called the students' attention to the fact that strawberries always have the same odor, no matter where they are grown, and that their odor is never confused with the odor of any other thing in all the world. Every fruit has its own odor and so does every animal. The odor of the one is never like the odor of the other.

I reminded them that the taste of vegetables, fruits, nuts, grains, meats, etc., always remain the same in each case, and that one is never mistaken for another. I stated that only the living God could give peaches their peculiar taste and fish their peculiar flavor; that colors could not have happened by themselves; that bananas are yellow because God made them so, and plums are blue or red because God made them so. I stressed the fact that an intelligent God designed each of these by His own sovereign power and will. I mentioned that each plant and animal has its own shape. Chickens do not grow as large as ostriches, neither do bananas grow as long as broomsticks. There are no square apples and no oblong pumpkins with square edges. Everything has its own peculiar shape from God.

Again, I reminded them that the origin of power is a great mystery. Who knows how the sun was first placed in the heavens, or when the first gallon of water ran over Niagara Falls? All of this is a mystery, except as we believe the Word of God concerning creation.

While developing the subject, I made reference to the resurrection, saying, "Every corn field is a graveyard. A grain of corn is planted in the spring, and while it is dying tender shoots are formed which force their way up through the hard soil to emerge into the sunshine and to grow into a stalk. Every living plant comes out of a grave. We do not

understand the power of life, nor how it is that a soft, tender leaf can force its way through the hard ground, break the topsoil, push up a heavy clod and emerge. Every spring we see it done and we rejoice that it is so. The sun above us has the power to dispel the darkness about us, and draw latent life into the light."

At the close of my address, a young man came to me with the air of one whose intelligence had been insulted. He said, "Surely, you do not mean to tell me that you believe in the resurrection?" I replied, "Certainly, I do. A resurrection of the human body will take place in God's good time, just as there is a resurrection of seeds in their appointed time." He looked at me in astonishment, as though he thought I had very poor sense and really needed someone to look after my affairs. Then he said to me, "Do you mean to tell me that you believe that Lazarus came out of the grave when Jesus spoke to him?" "Yes," I replied, "certainly and positively; there is no question about it. Jesus had given him his life. Jesus had allowed it to be taken from him, and then Jesus could give it back to him again, and He did so." Again my young friend expressed his disdain for my foolish belief, and said, "You look intelligent. How is it that one who is intelligent would believe such foolishness?"

By this time I thought it fitting that I should check up on this wise young man and see how much he really knew, so I said to him, "I suppose you reject the record of the resurrection because you cannot understand it. Am I correct in this?" "Yes," he replied, "you are! Tell me, how did Lazarus come out of the grave?" I said to him, "Now you have changed the question. First, you inquired as to whether Lazarus did come out, and I replied that he certainly did. Now you ask me *how* he came out, and I must reply that I do not know."

The young man seemed to think that he had gained a signal victory, so I said to him, "Do you reject the truth of the resurrection simply because you cannot understand it?" He answered me most emphatically, "Yes sir; I will believe nothing that I cannot understand."

I thought it was only fair that I should take him at his word and so I said, "Do you believe that butterflies come out of cocoons?" He replied that he did. I then asked, "How does the butterfly get out?" This question baffled him. The other students standing around had a hearty laugh, while he was seeking to find some answer that would reveal his marvelous knowledge and his wonderful understanding of nature.

After a few moments he replied rather officiously, "It bites its way out, of course."

"How many teeth does a butterfly have?" I asked.

He hardly knew what to say to this simple question, so he replied, "I do not know. How many teeth does it have?"

"Well, you see there is at least one thing that you do not know," was my reply. "As a matter of fact a butterfly does not have any teeth at all, not even a mouth, but only a long, slender proboscis." Again I asked him, "How does the butterfly get out?"

He replied, "I suppose it emits a sort of acid which burns a hole through the cocoon."

To the great amusement of the other students, I asked him if he did not think it would be a strange paradox if a butterfly could emit an acid strong enough to burn through the tough cocoon and yet would not burn the butterfly. He admitted that this was true and that he must be wrong.

"That is right," I said, "So there are two things that you do not know. Tell me, how does it get out?"

By this time other students had gathered around in large numbers to see the young man who would believe nothing he could not understand. His reply to my third question was, "I suppose it must swell up and burst its way out."

Quickly I answered, "Now there are three things that you do not know, for the cocoon is waterproof, airproof, light proof and heat proof. How could it swell up when there is no air with which to expand? Did you ever try to tear a cocoon with your hands?" (I noticed that he had large, strong hands like a blacksmith's) He replied that he had often tried to do it, but had never succeeded.

Then I said to him, "You cannot tear a cocoon with your big, strong hands, but you are so wise and well informed that you are confident that the soft, tender butterfly could tear it by swelling up with air which it does not have."

By this time the students standing around were saying various and sundry things about this young man who knew so much.

Again I asked him, "How does the butterfly get out?" He began to color and reveal his discomfort. His guessing was at an end. He had to admit that he did not know. I then asked him, "Does the butterfly come out of the cocoon?"

"Yes, certainly it does," he answered.

"So did Lazarus come out of the tomb when Jesus spoke," I replied, "but I cannot tell you how he did it."

This argument ended the hostile attitude of the young man. He retreated from the room defeated. I did not have the opportunity of presenting the gospel to him. However, that evening a number of those who listened to him and realized the foolishness of his argument attended the services at the church. Their curiosity had been aroused, their hostility removed, and a few of them accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord in subsequent meetings.

We do not always win those with whom we converse, but we should always explain the things of God in such a way that those who are "of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us."

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